

Ketoret - קטרת

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ketoret is the transliteration of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word קטרת, which is translated, in English, as incense. The word *ketoret* means *bonding or connecting*. This bonding, as we shall see, is necessary to build the unity of the [body](body.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html). ketoret is a substance which is associated with joy, [prayer](prayer.html), and protection. Clearly, ketoret is a most unusual substance!

In this [study](study.html) I would like to take an in-depth look at a substance which is so powerfull that it can halt a [plague](plagues.html). Because it can halt a [plague](plagues.html), those who compound it *incorrectly* will incur the death penalty. Lets start this [study](study.html) by examining what the Torah [teaches](teacher.html) us about ketoret, by examing the [first](one.html) use of ketoret:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 25:1*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying, 2* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an* [*offering*](korbanot.html)*: of every man that giveth it willingly with his* [*heart*](body.html) *ye shall take my* [*offering*](korbanot.html)*. 3 And this is the* [*offering*](korbanot.html) *which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’* [*hair*](hair.html)*, 5 And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and* [*shittim*](stages.html) *wood, 6 Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7 Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. 8 And let them make me a* [*sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*; that I may* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *in them.*

From this [first](one.html) verse we see that incense is an [offering](korbanot.html) which is associated with [HaShem](hashem.html) [dwelling](dwelling.html) in us.

The ketoret , offered up twice a day, symbolized Israel’s [desire](needs.html) to serve [HaShem](hashem.html) in a pleasing way. This [offering](korbanot.html) was brought twice daily, once as part of the Shacharit (morning) service and once as part of the Mincha / Musaf (afternoon) service. This happened [seven](seven.html) days a week, every day of the year, including [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html). [Five](five.html) pounds of ketoret was burnt daily, half in the morning and half in the afternoon.

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 30:7*** *And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *throughout your* [*generations*](toldot.html)*.*

In our morning [prayers](prayer.html) we read about the specifics of the ketoret:[[1]](#footnote-1)

*It is You,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, our God, before Whom our forefathers burned the ketoret (incense­ spices) in the* [*time*](time.html) *when the Holy* [*Temple*](temple.html) *stood, as You commanded them through Moshe Your prophet, as is written in Your Torah:*

[***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***30:34-36, 7-8*** [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses: Take yourself spices — balsam, onycha, and galbanum — spices and pure frankincense; they are all to be of equal weight. You are to make it into ketoret (incense), a spice-compound, the handiwork of an expert spice-compounder, thoroughly mixed, pure and holy. You are to grind some of it finely and place some of it before the Testimony in the Tent of* [*Appointment*](appointm.html)*, where I shall designate a* [*time*](time.html) *to meet you; it shall be a holy of holies for you.*

*It is also written: Aaron shall burn upon it the incense-spices every morning; when he cleans the lamps he is to burn it. And when Aaron ignites the lamps in the afternoon, he is to burn it, as continual incense before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *throughout your* [*generations*](toldot.html)*.*

*The Hakhamim* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: How is the incense mixture formulated?* [*Three*](three.html) *hundred sixty-*[*eight*](eight.html) *maneh were in it:* [*three*](three.html) *hundred sixty-*[*five*](five.html) *corresponding to the days of the solar year — a maneh for each day, half in the morning and half in the afternoon; and* [*three*](three.html) *extra maneh, from which the* [*Kohen*](kohen.html) *Gadol would bring both his handfuls [into the Holy of Holies] on Yom* [*HaKippurim*](kippur.html)*. He would return them to the mortar on the day before* [*Yom Kippur*](kippur.html)*, and grind them very thoroughly so that it would be exceptionally fine.* [*Eleven*](eleven.html) *kinds of spices were in it, as follows:*

*(1) balsam,*

*(2) onycha,*

*(3) galbanum [chelbena],*

*(4) frankincense — each weighing* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *maneh[[2]](#footnote-2);*

*(5) myrrh,*

*(6) cassia,*

*(7) spikenard,*

*(8) saffron — each weighing sixteen maneh;*

*(9) costus —* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *maneh;*

*(10) aromatic bark —* [*three*](three.html)*; and*

*(11) cinnamon —* [*nine*](nine.html)*.*

*[Additionally] Carshina lye,* [*nine*](nine.html) *kav[[3]](#footnote-3); Cyprus wine,* [*three*](three.html) *se’ah[[4]](#footnote-4) and* [*three*](three.html) *kav, if he has no Cyprus wine, he brings old white wine; Sodom salt, a quarter[-kav]; and a minute amount of a smoke-raising herb. Rabbi Nassan the* [*Babylonian*](bavel.html) *says: Also a minute amount of* [*Jordan*](stages.html) *amber. If he placed fruit-honey into it, he invalidated it. But if he left out any of its spices, he is liable to the death penalty.*

*Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: The balsam is simply the sap that drips from balsam trees. Why is Carshina lye used? To bleach the onycha, to make it pleasing. Why is Cyprus wine used? So that the onycha could be soaked in it, to make it pungent. Even though urine is more suitable for that, nevertheless they do not bring urine into the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *out of respect.*

*It is* [*taught*](teacher.html)*, Rabbi Nassan says: As* [*one*](one.html) *would grind [the incense] another would say:*

*‘Grind thoroughly, thoroughly grind,’*

*because the sound is beneficial for the spices. If* [*one*](one.html) *mixed it in half-quantities, it was fit for use, but as to a* [*third*](three.html) *or a quarter — we have not heard the* [*law*](law.html)*. Rabbi Yehudah said: This is the general rule — In its proper proportion, it is fit for use in half the full amount; but if he left out any* [*one*](one.html) *of its spices, he is liable to the death penalty.*

*It is* [*taught*](teacher.html)*, Bar Kappara says: Once every sixty or* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *years, the accumulated leftovers reached half the yearly quantity. Bar Kappara* [*taught*](teacher.html) *further: Had* [*one*](one.html) *put a kortov of fruit-honey into it, no person could have resisted its scent. Why did they not mix fruit-honey into it? — because the Torah says: ‘For any* [*leaven*](chametz.html) *or any fruit-honey, you are not to burn from them a* [*fire*](fire.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.”*

End of the morning [prayers](prayer.html) that [speak](mashal.html) about ketoret.

The Torah does not give the exact recipe for the ketoret that was burned daily in the [Temple](temple.html). Only in the Oral [Law](law.html) do we find a list of all [eleven](eleven.html) ingredients. Our Hakhamim [taught](teacher.html):

The ketoret contained [**eleven**](eleven.html) spices. There were [seventy](seventy.html) maneh each of

(1) **balsam**,

(2) **onycha**,

(3) **galbanum**, and

(4) **frankincense**.

There were sixteen maneh each of

(5) **myrrh**,

(6) **cassia**,

(7) **spikenard**, and

(8) **saffron**.

There were [twelve](twelve.html) maneh of

(9) **costus**,

[three](three.html) measures of

(10) **aromatic bark**,

and [nine](nine.html) measures of

(11) **cinnamon**.

Each maneh weighed [five](five.html) pounds. The total weight was 368 maneh - [one](one.html) measure for each day, plus 3 extra for [Yom Kippur](kippur.html), or 1,840 pounds (836.36 kg).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - The Song of Songs I:62.*** *R. Johanan applied the verse to the incense of the House of Abtinus. THE BAG OF MYRRH: this is* [*one*](one.html) *of the* [*eleven*](eleven.html) *spices which composed it. R. Huna explained [why there were* [*eleven*](eleven.html)*]. It says And the Lord said unto Moses: Take unto thee sweet spices (Ex.XXX, 34)-this is* [*two*](two.html)*: balsam, and onycha and galbanam--this makes* [*five*](five.html)*; sweet spices--if you say this means only* [*two*](two.html) *more, we have already had this; [therefore take it in conjunction with the next words], of each shall there be a like weight; add* [*five*](five.html) *to the previous* [*five*](five.html)*, making* [*ten*](ten.html)*. With pure frankincense --this makes* [*eleven*](eleven.html)*. On the basis of this verse the Sages investigated and found that nothing is better for the incense than just these* [*eleven*](eleven.html) *spices.*

The *Acharit Shalom* observes that whereas the [eleven](eleven.html) above-mentioned ingredients are listed in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), the remaining ingredients are listed in Aramaic. He presumes that Chazal did this deliberately in order to differentiate between the actual spices and the remaining ingredients that are merely (to enhance the quality of the main ingredients).

The incense was compounded from [eleven](eleven.html) ingredients: balsam, onycha, galbanum, frankincense (in quantities of [seventy](seventy.html) manehs each in weight), myrrh, cassia, spikenard, saffron (sixteen manehs each), costus ([twelve](twelve.html) manehs), aromatic bark ([three](three.html) manehs), and cinnamon ([nine](nine.html) manehs), altogether 368 manehs, [one](one.html) for each day of the year, half offered in the morning, and half in the evening, and [three](three.html) extra manehs for the Day of [Atonement](kippur.html). But in an ordinary lunar year there were 11 manehs over (the lunar year being 354 days); and though these 11 manehs were necessary for supplementing the incense in intercalary years (see [calendar](calendar.html) [study](study.html)), they had to be bought from the [new](new.html) donations given on the [first](one.html) of [Nisan](feasts.html). Some method had to be devised, therefore, of making the remainder of the old incense valid for the [new](new.html) year.

The lye obtained from a species of leek and the Cyprus wine which are mentioned in [connection](connection.html) with the incense, were nor actual ingredients, but were used simply for whitening the onycha, and also for making its odour more pungent, as we shall see.

Rabbi Moshe Sofer[[5]](#footnote-5) explains the symbolic meaning of the names of the [four](four.html) main incense spices, as well as the Karshina lye and Cyprus wine:

*The* [*four*](four.html) *spices that are written explicitly in the Torah are tzori-balsam, tziporen-onycha, chelbenah-galbanum, and levonah zakah-pure frankincense.*

*Tzori alludes to the Torah which is a tzori-balsam and healing for the entire* [*body*](body.html)*.*

*Levonah zakah alludes to God’s love for His people through which He me’laven-whitens and bleaches their* [*sins*](sin.html)*. Between these* [*two*](two.html) *are placed the tziporen and chelbenah.*

*As* [*known*](daat.html)*, chelbenah alludes to complete sinners.*

*The tziporen, on the other* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, alludes to the majority of the* [*Jewish*](gen-jew.html) *people. Like a tziporen-fingernail, they are smooth and unblemished on the inside, and only darkened on the outside... It is for this reason that we are required to rub the tziporen with Karshina lye, to beautify it and remove its external blackness. This alludes to teshuvah-repentance and good deeds... Soaking the tziporen in Cyprus wine to make it azah [pungent or strong] alludes to the wine [*[*secret*](sod.html) *teachings] of the Torah which imbues Israel with the ability to remain firm and unyielding in their faith when they* [*walk*](walking.html) *among the* [*nations*](nations.html)*.*

# The Significance Of The Amounts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COUNT** | [**NAME**](name.html) | **WEIGHT** |
| **1** | **balsam** | 70 maneh |
| **2** | **onycha** | 70 maneh |
| **3** | **galbanum** | 70 maneh |
| **4** | **frankincense** | 70 maneh |
| **5** | **myrrh** | 16 maneh |
| **6** | **cassia** | 16 maneh |
| **7** | **spikenard** | 16 maneh |
| **8** | **saffron** | 16 maneh |
| **9** | **costus** | 12 maneh |
| **10** | **aromatic bark** | 3 maneh |
| **11** | **cinnamon** | 9 maneh |
|  |  | **368 maneh** |

What is the significance of the various amounts of each fragrance?

Each of the major [four](four.html) fragrances explicitly mentioned in the Torah contributed [seventy](seventy.html) maneh. The [number](nchart.html) [seven](seven.html) represents the natural universe, created in [seven](seven.html) days. [Seven](seven.html) corresponds to the framework of the [physical](physical.html) universe, especially the boundaries of [time](time.html) with its [seven](seven.html)-day week.

[Seventy](seventy.html) is the [number](nchart.html) [seven](seven.html) in tens. The [number](nchart.html) [ten](ten.html) represents both plurality and **unity**, so [seventy](seventy.html) conveys the idea of **unifying** the multitude of forces in the natural [world](worlds.html). This is the underlying message of the ketoret. These holy fragrances illuminate and uplift the plurality of natural forces.

After the [first](one.html) level of [four](four.html) fragrances sanctified the dimension of [time](time.html), the second tier of [four](four.html) fragrances sanctified the dimension of space. The [number](nchart.html) [six](six.html) corresponds to space, as any location is made up of [six](six.html) vectors (the [four](four.html) directions, up and down). It can also be visualized as a cube, representing all [physical](physical.html) objects, which has [six](six.html) faces.

[Time](time.html) is a less [physical](physical.html) aspect, and more receptive to [spiritual](physical.html) elevation. Thus, for the [first](one.html) [four](four.html) fragrances representing the dimension of [time](time.html), the [number](nchart.html) [seven](seven.html) was multiplied by [ten](ten.html). Space, on the other [hand](fourteen.html), is only influenced by its closeness to holiness. Therefore, the unifying quality of [ten](ten.html) is only added to the [six](six.html), so that sixteen maneh were used of each of these fragrances.

The final amounts of [twelve](twelve.html), [nine](nine.html), and [three](three.html) represent the limitations of the divided [physical](physical.html) realm. [Three](three.html) is the [first](one.html) [number](nchart.html) to demonstrate *multitude*, and [nine](nine.html) is the last [number](nchart.html), before the multitude is once again combined into a unit of [ten](ten.html)[[6]](#footnote-6).

# [Eleven](eleven.html) Spices

Rashi, in Shemot 30:34, explains that the ketoret was comprised of [*eleven*](eleven.html) ingredients. Often, we find that the [number](nchart.html) [*ten*](ten.html) is used to represent a [spiritual](physical.html) *full set*. [Eleven](eleven.html) refers to the conveyance of the Divine light which transcends the limits of the [world](worlds.html) within the limits of the [world](worlds.html).

***Pirke Avot 5:1*** *The* [*world*](worlds.html) *was created with* [*ten*](ten.html) *utterances.*

[Eleven](eleven.html), thus, refers to a level above the limits of the set of [ten](ten.html). Nevertheless, since it is also a [number](nchart.html) which follows in sequence to [ten](ten.html), we can understand that it refers to the fusion between the transcendent Divine light and the framework of limited worldly existence.

There were [ten](ten.html) fragrant spices in the ketoret, the incense, and [one](one.html) foul smelling spice (Chelbena -galbanum). There were [ten](ten.html) tzaddiks[[7]](#footnote-7) in the [synagogue](synagog.html) yet no [prayers](prayer.html) on a fast day were heard without a sinner’s [prayer](prayer.html).

***Keritot 6b*** *Every communal fast that does not include sinners of Israel is not a fast.” This is derived from the fact that the incense included Chelbenah-galbanum. Just as the Chelbenah was necessary to give the other spices exactly the right fragrance, a congregation is not complete without someone who has also fallen and who must reelevate himself through repentance. In particular, when a difficult punishment has been decreed against Israel because of some evil deed, this very evil must be taken and elevated.* ***Thus, the idea of transforming evil by elevating it back to its source in holiness is intimated in the incense****. It is for this reason also that a communal fast must include “the sinners of Israel”.*

# The [Number](nchart.html) [Eleven](eleven.html)

There is an interesting story regarding who can count to a minyan attributed by some to the Noda Biyehudah and others to Rav Chaim Brisk. Once he was on a [journey](stages.html) and it was getting late in the afternoon so he asked his talmidim to make a minyan. With difficulty, they assembled [ten](ten.html) men but the rav noticed that [one](one.html) of them was not particularly frum and asked them to find another. The talmidim explained the difficulty and suggested that, in the extenuating circumstances, they should allow him to count that [one](one.html) [time](time.html). The rav insisted so [one](one.html) of them said that the [Gemara](orallaw.html) rules that the [prayers](prayer.html) on a taanit tzibbur[[8]](#footnote-8) must include such a sinner to be effective just as the ketoret (incense) had to contain chelbenah, an evil smelling spice. The rav responded to point out that the ketoret had to have [eleven](eleven.html) spices!

The [number](nchart.html) [eleven](eleven.html), which is how many spices there were in the ketoret , at [first](one.html) seems rather odd. However, Kabbalistically it is a [number](nchart.html) of tremendous importance for it alludes to [one](one.html) of the most prized possessions in all of history: [Daat](daat.html) Elohim, G-dly [knowledge](knowledge.html).

Why was the [number](nchart.html) [eleven](eleven.html) selected for the production of the ketoret? In order to answer this question, let us consider some other appearances of the [number](nchart.html) [eleven](eleven.html) in the Torah:

In Bereshit 36:40-43, the Torah enumerates the [eleven](eleven.html) chieftains that were born to [Esav](edom.html).

***Bereshit (Genesis) 33:11*** *Take, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have all (kol). And he urged him, and he took it.*

Rashi points out a very basic difference between [Yaaqov](israelja.html) and [Esav](edom.html)’s outlook on life. When [Yaaqov](israelja.html) described his material status, he exclaimed, “I have all that I need”! [Esav](edom.html), on the other [hand](fourteen.html), arrogantly stated, “I have much, much more than I need”! In contrast to [Esav](edom.html)’s “much”, [Yaaqov](israelja.html) had *kol*, ***everything***. Kol always refers to the [spiritual](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) because in this [world](worlds.html), even if you have the whole [world](worlds.html) it is simply “much”. It is only when we connect to the source that we can have *everything*!

The [number](nchart.html) [ten](ten.html) represents a completeness; a full integer count. The [number](nchart.html) [ten](ten.html) represents [Yaaqov](israelja.html) ‘s purposeful existence. The ideology of [Esav](edom.html), of seeing no limits or goals and amassing “much, much more” than [one](one.html) [needs](needs.html), is represented by the[number](nchart.html) [eleven](eleven.html). It is indeed appropriate that his [nation](nations.html) originated with ‘[eleven](eleven.html)’ chieftains. Yet for all his amassment of wealth, [one](one.html) who follows such an ideology will actually end up with less, not more. As our Sages put it,

***Sanhedrin 29a***[*one*](one.html) *who adds, takes away.*

Similarly, in the area of kashrut[[9]](#footnote-9) we are told that:

***Chulin 58b*** *an animal with an extra limb is likened to an animal missing that limb.*

If an animal missing a leg is considered to be a Tereifah (unfit for [food](food.html)) and not kosher, [one](one.html) that has an extra leg is also a tereifah and not kosher.

***Megilah 29a***[*One*](one.html) *who is arrogant is considered to be blemished.*

This above [Gemara](orallaw.html) follows the same principle. The arrogant person considers himself bigger, or more fit, than others, while in truth, his extra fitness is no more than a lack of fitness. He is blemished, or flawed.

In Sanhedrin 29a, the [Gemara](orallaw.html) derives the rule that “[one](one.html) who adds, takes away” from a verse in Shemot 26:7. The verse states that the goat’s [hair](hair.html) covering on the [Mishkan](mikdash.html)[[10]](#footnote-10) consisted of [eleven](eleven.html) curtains of goat’s [hair](hair.html), sewn together into [one](one.html) very long curtain which was draped over the [Mishkan](mikdash.html). The word the Torah uses for [eleven](eleven.html) is *Ashtei* *Esreh*. Had the Torah left out the [letter](letters.html) Ayin from *Ashtei*, the [Gemara](orallaw.html) explains, it would have meant [*twelve*](twelve.html). Now that the Ayin is added to the word, it takes away from its meaning, such that it only means [*eleven*](eleven.html).

Note that this rule is learned from the [number](nchart.html) [eleven](eleven.html). [Esav](edom.html)’s attitude of “much, much more than I need” is summed up by the [number](nchart.html) [eleven](eleven.html). All of his additional wealth just takes him farther from attaining the true goals in life.

Interestingly, according to Rashi on Tehillim 80:14, a [letter](letters.html) Ayin which is raised above the rest of the word in which it appears is used to represent [Esav](edom.html)’s [wickedness](wicked.html).

# The Death Penalty

The following narrative is from Meam Loez:[[11]](#footnote-11)

Also included in the incense was an herb [known](daat.html) as maaleh ashan. This herb caused the smoke to go straight up like a pole and not to spread to the right or left. No [one](one.html) [knew](daat.html) the identity of this herb except members of the family of the House of Avtinus mentioned earlier. These are the ones who were able to make the incense based on the tradition of their ancestors and they would not reveal it to any other person.

This herb had to be placed in the incense even though it did not have any fragrance. This is because it is written, “[Speak](mashal.html) to Aaron your brother and let him not come at all times to the [sanctuary](mikdash.html) inside the veil which is before the ark”.[[12]](#footnote-12) Moses was told to go to Aaron the [High Priest](priests.html) and tell him not to go into the Holy of Holies at any [time](time.html) other than Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html). Even on Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) he could not go into the Holy of Holies empty-handed. The Torah therefore continues:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:2*** *For in cloud I shall be seen on the ark cover.*

The only [time](time.html) the [High Priest](priests.html) could enter the Holy of Holies was when he brought incense and the cloud of smoke covered the ark cover. The cloud mentioned here is the smoke of the incense. As the Torah says later:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:13*** *The cloud of incense shall cover the ark cover.*

Since the Torah says, “In a cloud I shall be seen on the ark cover” and it does not say, “With incense I shall be seen on the ark cover,” our sages [taught](teacher.html) that this herb [known](daat.html) as maaleh ashan must be placed in the incense. If maaleh ashan was not placed there the incense would burn but there would not be this heavy smoke. Since the Torah speaks of a “cloud” of smoke we learn that there must be smoke. The only substance that makes this heavy smoke is the maaleh ashan, which made this smoke go up straight like a pole.

If a different [type](types.html) of herb were used, the smoke would not go directly up; rather, it would spread out to all sides of the Holy of Holies. It would then not be right over the ark cover and the Torah says explicitly, “The cloud of incense shall cover the ark cover.” This cloud of smoke must cover the ark cover so the [High Priest](priests.html) does not see the Divine Presence.

If the [High Priest](priests.html) burned the incense and it did not contain this maaleh ashan he would be worthy of death.

Furthermore if he left out any of the ingredients he would be worthy of death. The Torah says:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:13*** *He should place incense on the* [*fire*](fire.html) *before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and the cloud of the incense should cover the ark cover which is above the Testimony.*

The Torah could have simply said, “He should place it on the [fire](fire.html) before [HaShem](hashem.html)”. Why did it say he should place incense on the [fire](fire.html)? The word “incense” appears to be redundant because it was already mentioned earlier, “a double handful of incense, finely ground perfumes”. Then the Torah should say, “He should place it on a [fire](fire.html) before [HaShem](hashem.html)”, and we would [know](daat.html) that the Torah is [speaking](mashal.html) about incense.

However, the expression, “the incense” (ha-ketoret ) [teaches](teacher.html) us that the incense must be complete without anything missing. Even a single dram of weight of any of the ingredients cannot be left out.

The Torah also [teaches](teacher.html) us that the smoke of the incense must cover the ark cover. This is why the maaleh ashan is placed in it. The Torah says:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:13*** *And he shall not die.*

From this we learn the opposite. If any of the ingredients are left out or if the maaleh ashan was not placed in the incense, the [High Priest](priests.html) was worthy of death. It did not matter how small an amount of the maaleh ashan was placed there as long as there was some.

[One](one.html) should read the section of the ketoret out of a Siddur.[[13]](#footnote-13) Saying it verbally is the same as actually burning this incense in the [Temple](temple.html), as is explained earlier. If [one](one.html) says it by [heart](body.html) it is possible that he will leave out [one](one.html) of the ingredients. This is the same as burning incense lacking ingredients for which [one](one.html) is worthy of death. Therefore it should be read from the written page. For the same reason it is good to count the [eleven](eleven.html) perfumes with [one](one.html)’s [fingers](body.html), so as not to skip any of them.

End of Meam Loez.

ketoret has the power to nullify any evil decree, even that of death. It is for this reason that when a [plague](plagues.html) broke out among the Bne Israel in the wilderness Moshe ordered Aaron to go through the [camp](stages.html) with the ketoret.

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 17:12-13*** *Aaron took the incense pan as Moses had commanded him... He offered the incense to atone for the people... and the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *was checked.*

Thus we see the healing properties of ketoret, especially to alleviate the [plague](plagues.html). If the ketoret had not been formulated correctly it would not have ended the [plague](plagues.html), thus condemning the people to death. This is why the death penalty is proper for those who leave out any ingredient while compounding the ketoret.

# ketoret Symbolizes Unity

ketoret was a unique substance whose [eleven](eleven.html) ingredients had the ability to symbolize unity, as we can see from the following [Gemara](orallaw.html):

***Kirithoth 6b*** *Said R. Johanan:* [*Eleven*](eleven.html) *kinds of spices were named to Moses at* [*Sinai*](stages.html)*. Said R. Huna: ‘Where is the text? Take unto thee sweet spices, at least* [*two*](two.html)*; balsam, and onycha, and galbanum, that makes together* [*five*](five.html)*; ‘sweet spices’ means another* [*five*](five.html)*, that makes together* [*ten*](ten.html)*; ‘with pure frankincense’, which is* [*one*](one.html)*, that is together* [*eleven*](eleven.html)*. ‘Why not say, ‘sweet spices’ [at the beginning] is a general statement, balsam, and onycha, and galbanum’ a specification, and ‘sweet spices’ [at the end] is again a general statement! [‘We have thus, a generalization followed by a specification and then by a generalisation, [in which case] only things sharing the qualities of the specification may be derived. Just as the [items of the] specification are things whose smoke ascends upwards and whose fragrance spreads, so include all things whose smoke ascends upwards and whose fragrance spreads. And should you say in this case only* [*one*](one.html) *[item of] specification should have been mentioned, [I would answer] No, all are necessary; for if ‘balsam’ alone was written, I might have said: Only things from the tree [are to be taken], but not things growing on the ground. It was thus necessary to state ‘onycha’. And if ‘onycha’ alone was written, I might have said: Only things from the ground, but not from the tree. It was thus necessary to state ‘balsam’. As to ‘galbanum’, its mention is necessary for its own sake, for its odour is unpleasant if so, it could have been derived from: Take unto thee. But perhaps say: ‘The sweet spices’ in the latter part [of the verse] mean* [*two*](two.html)*, as ‘the sweet spices’ in the former part? Then it should have written the* [*two*](two.html) *expressions ‘sweet spices’ next to* [*one*](one.html) *another, and then write ‘balsam, and onycha, and galbanum’. In the School of R. Ishmael it was* [*taught*](teacher.html) *thus: ‘Sweet spices’ is a generalisation, ‘balsam, and onycha, and galbanum’ is a specification, sweet spices’ again is a generalisation, and from a generalisation followed by a specification and then by another generalisation* [*one*](one.html) *can derive only things sharing the qualities of the specification. As the [items in the] specification are things whose smoke ascends upwards and whose fragrance spreads, so all things whose smoke ascends upwards and whose fragrance spreads. Perhaps this is not so; but take the generalisation with the* [*first*](one.html) *generalisation, the specification with the* [*first*](one.html) *specification? — Say: This cannot be; hence you must not expound according to the latter version but according to the former.*

*The Master said: ‘Perhaps this is not so, but take the generalisation with the* [*first*](one.html) *generalisation and the specification with the* [*first*](one.html) *specification? — Say: This cannot be, hence you cannot expound . . . ‘ ‘What is the question? — This is his difficulty: Let the sweet spices’ in the latter part [of the verse] mean* [*two*](two.html) *like ‘sweet spices’ in the former. ‘Whereupon he replied as was answered before: Then it should have written, ‘Sweet spices, sweet spices, balsam, onycha and galbanum’. What is the meaning of ‘and the specification with the* [*first*](one.html) *specification’? — This is his difficulty: Things of the tree are derived from ‘balsam’, and things of the ground from ‘onycha’; why not then derive from ‘pure frankincense’ all things which have* [*one*](one.html) *quality in common with it [viz.,] that their fragrance spreads, though their smoke does not ascend upwards? Whereupon he replied: If this was so, ‘pure frankincense’ should have been written among the others, so that you could derive therefrom. But if ‘pure frankincense’ was written among the others, we would have* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *spices. — ‘Pure frankincense’ should have been written among the others and ‘galbanum’ at the end. Resh Lakish says: From the word itself it can be inferred; for ketoret [frankincense] means something whose smoke ascends upwards.*

In other words, the incense used in the [Bet HaMikdash](mikdash.html), the House of the Holy [One](one.html), consisted of fragrant spices as well as the foul-smelling galbanum, which itself acquired a pleasant aroma when combined with the other spices of the ketoret. The [Gemara](orallaw.html) derives from this composition of the incense a similar phenomenon in the social, religious makeup of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people: When the [wicked](wicked.html) and righteous join together, the latter can positively impact upon the former to produce a single, “fragrant” unified [community](community.html).

Rav Kook explained that the ketoret was a link between the material and [spiritual](physical.html) realms. The word *ketoret* comes from the root *kesher*, a tie or knot. The incense rose straight up, connecting our divided [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) to the unified divine realm. From the sublime standpoint of overall holiness, it is impossible to distinguish between the separate, distinct fragrances. Each fragrance represents a particular quality, but at that elevated level, they are revealed only within the attribute of absolute unity. Only in our divided [world](worlds.html) do they acquire separate identities.

Because ketoret symbolizes the unity of the Bne Israel, when there is a lack of unity, ketoret is used to bring about that unity. In the case of [Qorach](qorach.html) and his followers, in Bamidbar 16, ketoret was used to bring about the death of [Qorach](qorach.html) and his followers and thus completely eliminate the heresy which had disrupted the unity of the Bne Israel.

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 16:5*** *And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. 6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7 And put* [*fire*](fire.html) *therein, and put incense in them before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 16:35*** *And there came out a* [*fire*](fire.html) *from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and consumed the* [*two*](two.html) *hundred and fifty men that offered incense. 36 And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying, 37* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the* [*priest*](priests.html)*, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the* [*fire*](fire.html) *yonder; for they are hallowed. 38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a* [*sign*](signs.html) *unto the children of Israel. 39 And Eleazar the* [*priest*](priests.html) *took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: 40 To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the* [*seed*](flower.html) *of Aaron, come near to offer incense before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to him by the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of Moses.*

Nadab and Abihu, in Vayikra 10, also disrupted the unity of the Bne Israel by [offering](korbanot.html) “strange [fire](fire.html)”. Therefore, we also see that the ketoret was instrumental in bring about their death as a judgment for disrupting this unity.

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 10:1*** *And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put* [*fire*](fire.html) *therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange* [*fire*](fire.html) *before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out* [*fire*](fire.html) *from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and devoured them, and they died before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

Rabbi Krohn said that we learn from the ketoretthe need for unity among all [Jews](gen-jew.html). If any [one](one.html) of the [eleven](eleven.html) ingredients was omitted from the mixture, the ketoret [offering](korbanot.html) was invalid. [One](one.html) of the ingredients, chelbana (galbanum), has a foul odor*.* This undesirable spice symbolizes the sinners in a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) congregation. Our Sages state that a public fast day in which at least [one](one.html) sinner does not participate is not considered a fast day: that is, it does not accomplish the purpose for which it was intended, whether relief from a drought or protection from [physical](physical.html) threats to the [community](community.html)*.* The requirement to mix chelbana into the ketoret reminds us that we must include those [Jews](gen-jew.html) who do not perform every [commandment](cmds613.html) properly in our [prayer](prayer.html) services and [community](community.html) activities*.*

Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 30:1ff introduces us to the “mizbach ha-ketoret,” the incense altar, upon which the [kohen](priests.html) would offer incense twice daily:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 30:1*** *And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of* [*shittim*](stages.html) *wood shalt thou make it. 2 A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and* [*two*](two.html) *cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. 3 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. 4 And* [*two*](two.html) *golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the* [*two*](two.html) *corners thereof, upon the* [*two*](two.html) *sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. 5 And thou shalt make the staves of* [*shittim*](stages.html) *wood, and overlay them with gold. 6 And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. 7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *throughout your* [*generations*](toldot.html)*. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, nor meat* [*offering*](korbanot.html)*; neither shall ye pour drink* [*offering*](korbanot.html) *thereon. 10 And Aaron shall make an* [*atonement*](atonemen.html) *upon the horns of it once in a year with the* [*blood*](body.html) *of the* [*sin*](sin.html)[*offering*](korbanot.html) *of atonements: once in the year shall he make* [*atonement*](atonemen.html) *upon it throughout your* [*generations*](toldot.html)*: it is most holy unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

[One](one.html) unique quality of the incense [offering](korbanot.html) emerges from the [Gemara](orallaw.html) in:

***Keritut 6b*** *Any fast day which does not include any sinners from among Yisrael is not a [*[*legitimate*](legitimate.html)*] fast day; for galbanum [‘chelbena’ in* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html)*] has a putrid odor, but yet the Scripture included it as* [*one*](one.html) *of the ingredients of the ketoret.*

In other words, the incense used in the [Mikdash](mikdash.html) consisted of fragrant spices as well as the foul-smelling galbanum, which itself acquired a pleasant aroma when combined with the other spices of the ketoret. The [Gemara](orallaw.html) derives from this composition of the incense a similar phenomenon in the social, religious makeup of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people: when the [wicked](wicked.html) and righteous join together, the latter can positively impact upon the former to produce a single, “fragrant” [community](community.html).

However, as Rav Meir Simcha Ha-[kohen](priests.html) of Dvinsk notes, this blend can occur only when a genuine sense of unity prevails among Bne Israel. The influence of the righteous upon the iniquitous can take effect only when true brotherhood is felt between the different segments of the population.

Bne Israel can survive exposure to [HaShem](hashem.html)’s revelation only through the joining together of the various elements of the population. The ketoret, the merging of the different sectors of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, protects the [nation](nations.html) from the potential divine wrath resulting from [HaShem](hashem.html)’s revelation. Individually, [one](one.html) cannot hope to emerge meritorious from divine judgment, the natural outcome of revelation; only the [nation](nations.html) as a whole, through the collective [merits](merit.html) of its individual components, can withstand the Shekhina.

Indeed, this theme is a dominant [one](one.html) in the Yamim Noraim, particularly on Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html), the day of revelation. No single [Jew](gen-jew.html) can claim sufficient worthiness to stand before the Creator in judgment. We do so only by identifying wholeheartedly with the entirety of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html), affording us the [merits](merit.html) of [one](one.html) another as well as the national [merits](merit.html) of our Patriarchs. Thus we see the [three](three.html) “extra” maneh of ketoret was burned on Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) to symbolize this unity.

# ketoret as a protection

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 17:11-13*** *“And Moshe said to Aharon. Take a censer, and put* [*fire*](fire.html) *in it from off the altar, and put on incense, and take it quickly... and ran... and made* [*atonement*](atonemen.html) *for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *was stayed” .*

We learn from the Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) service that the cloud of ketoret facilitates a vision of the Shekhina: *For in the cloud I shall appear above the kaporet*.

Like a sort of veil which serves to dull the dazzling revelation. Perhaps, this is indeed the function of the Mizbayach Haketoret (incense altar) throughout the year: it is meant to allow the Shekhina to [dwell](dwelling.html) in the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) by “screening” the revelation therein!

ketoret is brought by men to recognize the fact that [HaShem](hashem.html) is present amongst us. Furthermore, ketoret has the unique property of protection, which is necessary since as mortals we cannot handle the direct presence of [HaShem](hashem.html), so we need the incense and the incense altar to protect us from the glory of [HaShem](hashem.html). This is why when in verse 6, when describing where the Mizbayach Haketoret is put, it says:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 30:1*** *And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of* [*shittim*](stages.html) *wood shalt thou make it. 2 A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and* [*two*](two.html) *cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. 3 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. 4 And* [*two*](two.html) *golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the* [*two*](two.html) *corners thereof, upon the* [*two*](two.html) *sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. 5 And thou shalt make the staves of* [*shittim*](stages.html) *wood, and overlay them with gold. 6 And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony,* ***where I will meet with thee****. 7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.*

Geographically all it needed to say was to place it before the partition, but the full description [connects](connection.html) the Mizbayach Haketoret to [HaShem](hashem.html) meeting Bne Yisrael, such that the Mizbayach serves as a buffer and interface between us and the glory of [HaShem](hashem.html).

Not only the actual [offering](korbanot.html) of the ketoret, but even studying and reciting the parasha of ketoret yields remarkable power as the [Zohar](orallaw.html) writes:

[***Zohar***](orallaw.html) ***2:218*** *This matter is a decree issued by the Almighty, that whoever studies and reads the topic of the constitution of the ketoret every day is saved from all evil things and witchcraft in the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, and from all serious injury, from evil thoughts, from harsh judgment, and from death, and will not be harmed that entire day, for the evil force has no control over him.* [*One*](one.html) *must concentrate during this recitation. Rabbi Shimon said, if people would* [*know*](daat.html) *how exalted the concept of the ketoret is before the Almighty, they would take every single word in it and wear it as a crown on their* [*head*](body.html) *like a golden crown. Whoever involves himself in it must delve into the concept of the ketoret. If he concentrates on it every day, he earns a portion both in this* [*world*](worlds.html) *and in the next* [*world*](worlds.html)*, and death will be eliminated from him and from the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, and he will be saved from all prosecution in this* [*world*](worlds.html)*, from* [*impurity*](purity.html)*, from the judgment of Gehinnom and from subjugation to foreign rule.*

The Yalkut Meam Loez cites a story from the [Midrash](orallaw.html) Haneelam. Rav Aha once arrived in a certain town that had been ravaged by a [plague](plagues.html) for [seven](seven.html) days. The townspeople came to him and told him of their troubles. The [plague](plagues.html) was only intensifying, and they did not [know](daat.html) what to do. He said, “Let us go to the Bet Kenesset (House of the Congregation) and [pray](prayer.html) that it stops”. As they made their way towards the Bet Kenesset, people came and told them that the [plague](plagues.html) had claimed even more victims; others are about to die. He said, “Since the calamity is so severe and [time](time.html) is running out, we will not go to the Bet Kenesset. Rather, bring me [forty](forty.html) G-d-fearing people and they will divide into groups of [ten](ten.html), each of which should go to [one](one.html) direction of the [city](city.html) and recite ‘pitum haketoret’ (the Talmudic discussion of the ingredients of the ketoret) [three](three.html) times. They should then add, ‘Moshe said to Aharon: Take the firepan and place [fire](fire.html) upon it from the altar and place ketoret, and quickly bring it to the [nation](nations.html) and atone on their behalf… ‘until ‘and the [plague](plagues.html) ended’. They did as he told, and the [plague](plagues.html) stopped. All those who had been stricken were cured. A heavenly voice called out to the harmful spirits, “Do no more damage in this town, for the attribute of justice no longer has any control over them!”

Rav Aha was exhausted and fell [asleep](mashal.html). He dreamt that it was told to him, “Just as you eliminated the [plague](plagues.html) from the [city](city.html), so must you bring them back in teshuva, for [one](one.html) cannot endure without the other, because it was on account of their [sins](sin.html) that the [plague](plagues.html) was decreed.” He told this to the townspeople and they repented. They changed the [name](name.html) of the town to “Mahsiya,” which means “town of [compassion](jonah.html).” They kept the town’s [name](name.html) in their minds at all times so as to ensure that they would not return to their sinful ways.

**From Meam Loez:**

*The incense also had another great advantage. It was an enlightened remedy to* [*purify*](purity.html) *people from* [*sin*](sin.html)*. Whoever smelled the fragrance of the incense when it was being burned on the altar would have thoughts of repentance. His* [*heart*](body.html) *would be* [*purified*](purity.html) *of all evil thoughts and from the defilement of the Evil Urge. In this respect it was very much like the* [*forehead*](body.html)*-plate worn by the* [*High Priest*](priests.html) *upon which God’s* [*name*](name.html) *was written. Whoever looked at it would* [*experience*](experience.html) *great awe in his* [*heart*](body.html) *and would repent completely. The same was true of anyone who smelled the fragrance of the incense when it was being burned. This would break the power of the Other Side so that it could not* [*speak*](mashal.html) *evil against Israel.*

*This is why the incense altar was referred to as an altar, (mizbeach). [The word mizbeach comes from the* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html) *zevach, which denotes slaughter.] The incense altar was called a mizbeach even though no* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *was slaughtered on it because the incense had the power to break and subjugate the power of the Other Side. This place was called a mizbeach because it was a place where the Other Side was slaughtered.*

*Since the incense is so important, a person should be careful to read this chapter every day in the morning and the evening. He should not consider saying it difficult even though it might take a few moments since it brings great joy to God.*

*Incense is greater than* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*. As is well* [*known*](daat.html)*, the* [*prayers*](prayer.html) *were meant to be in place of the sacrifices, but as we have already said, the incense was more important and greater than all the sacrifices. Therefore it is obvious that the incense was greater than all the* [*prayers*](prayer.html)*. Moreover, it was a great remedy to* [*purify*](purity.html) *a person of all* [*sin*](sin.html)*.*

*In the* [*Zohar*](orallaw.html)*, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai says: If people* [*knew*](daat.html) *how great it is when they say the section Pitum Haketoret before God, they would take each and every word of the section and place it on their heads like a golden crown. Whoever says Pitum Haketoret each day in the morning and evening slowly without skipping even a single word, and understands what he is saying, is protected against all evil occurrences and evil thoughts and from an evil death. He can rest assured that all day he will not be harmed in any way. He will also be protected from the punishments of purgatory and will have a portion in the* [*World*](futures.html) *to Come.*

# ketoret for Simcha (Joy)

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) says:

***Tanhuma, Tesaveh 15*** *The Almighty said: Of all the sacrifices you offer, there is none dearer to Me than the ketoret [incense], for it comes not for any* [*sin*](sin.html) *or transgression or guilt, but rather for joy, as it says, ‘Oil and incense gladden the* [*heart*](body.html)*’.[[14]](#footnote-14) See how beloved the ketoret is, for through it the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *ended. Aharon found the* [*angel*](angels.html) *[of death]* [*standing*](mashal.html) *and destroying. He stayed opposite it and did not let it go. He said to Aharon: Let me go and carry out my mission. Aharon stopped it with the power of the ketoret.*

# In The [Temple](temple.html)

The ketoret must be made in the [Bet HaMikdash](mikdash.html), the House of The Holy [One](one.html). ketoret is [one](one.html) of the few offerings that can not be donated to the [Mikdash](mikdash.html), but must be purchased from public funds.

The ketoret was also an intrinsic part of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html),[[15]](#footnote-15) since it is the proper thing to place incense in the King’s Palace, prior to his entry, all the more so, [HaShem](hashem.html). Indeed, on a [number](nchart.html) of occasions in the desert, it was through the ketoret that the Shechinah rested in Israel.

ketoret was offered to bring joy and happiness to the [world](worlds.html). For this reason, it was the most beloved to [HaShem](hashem.html) of all the offerings[[16]](#footnote-16). And, it was the life-preserving qualities of the ketoret that the [Angel](angels.html) of Death [taught](teacher.html) Moshe on Mt. [Sinai](stages.html), which worked to [save](salvation.html) lives in the disagreement with [Qorach](qorach.html).

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 17:11-13*** *“Moses said to Aaron, ‘Take the censer and put* [*fire*](fire.html) *from the altar into it. Then take it quickly to the congregation and atone for them, for wrath has gone forth from the Lord, and the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *has begun.’ Aaron took it as Moses had said, and he ran into the midst of the assembly, and behold, the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *had begun among the people. He placed the incense on it and atoned for the people. He stood between the dead and the living, and the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *ceased.”*

Our Sages [taught](teacher.html) that the righteous are compared to pleasant smelling spices.[[17]](#footnote-17) That is why [Esther](esther.html) was also named Hadassah which means myrtle, while Mordechai is comprised of ‘mar dachia’, pure myhrr, [one](one.html) of the main ingredients of the incense. We have seen in the [teaching](teacher.html) of our Sages that sound is good for the incense. For this reason Mordechai, whose righteous deeds were pleasing to [HaShem](hashem.html) as incense, cried aloud in the midst of the [city](city.html). Through his intense [prayer](prayer.html) and beseeching on behalf of the [Jews](gen-jew.html), Mordechai saw that, as incense offered before [HaShem](hashem.html), he was able to nullify the harsh decree against the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. In this way, he ‘stood between the dead and the living’ much as Aaron used the incense to stay the [plague](plagues.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s wrath.

Among the other healing properties of the ketoret was that it was the part of the daily service that specifically atoned for lashon hara, derogatory speech about others.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Why all these special properties of the ketoret, more than any other [offering](korbanot.html)? The answer lies in the following:

***Brochot 43b*** *How do we* [*know*](daat.html) *that* [*one*](one.html) *should make a blessing over pleasant fragrances? For, it says, “Let all souls praise G-d”.[[19]](#footnote-19) Now, what thing does a soul enjoy that a* [*body*](body.html) *does not? Only a good smell.*

For, if the [body](body.html) enjoyed it too, such as in the case of [food](food.html), a blessing would be made for that reason alone. We need something that the [body](body.html) does not enjoy, but, yet, there is pleasure from the thing. That, says the [Talmud](orallaw.html), is a pleasant fragrance, and that, we can say, is the basis of the importance of the ketoret [Offering](korbanot.html).

# ketoret Symbolizes [Prayer](prayer.html)

***Berachoth 6b*** *R. Helbo further said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Huna: A man should always take special care about the afternoon-*[*prayer*](prayer.html)*. For even Elijah was favourably heard only while* [*offering*](korbanot.html) *his afternoon-*[*prayer*](prayer.html)*. For it is said: And it came to pass at the* [*time*](time.html) *of the* [*offering*](korbanot.html) *of the evening* [*offering*](korbanot.html)*, that Elijah the prophet came near and said . . . Hear me, O Lord, hear me. ‘Hear me’, that the* [*fire*](fire.html) *may descend from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and ‘hear me’, that they may not say it is the work of sorcery. R. Johanan says: [Special care should be taken] also about the evening-*[*prayer*](prayer.html)*. For it is said: Let my* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *be set forth as incense before Thee, the lifting up of my* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *as the evening* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*. R. Nahman b.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *says: [Special care should be taken] also about the morning.*[*prayer*](prayer.html)*. For it is said: O Lord, in the morning shalt Thou hear my voice; in the morning will I order my* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *unto Thee, and will look forward.*

***Revelation 8:1*** *And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*angels*](angels.html) *which stood before God; and to them were given* [*seven*](seven.html) *trumpets. 3 And another* [*angel*](angels.html) *came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the* [*prayers*](prayer.html) *of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the* [*prayers*](prayer.html) *of the saints, ascended up before God out of the* [*angel*](angels.html)*’s* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*. 5 And the* [*angel*](angels.html) *took the censer, and filled it with* [*fire*](fire.html) *of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*angels*](angels.html) *which had the* [*seven*](seven.html) *trumpets prepared themselves to sound.*

# The House of Abtinus

The House of Abtinus was the family responsible for making the ketoret, in the latter days of the Second [Temple](temple.html). The [secret](sod.html) of making the incense for the altar was hereditary. the Abtinus family were very talented in preparing the ketoret, etc. The Sages were very upset with them for refusing to convey their dexterity to others.

***Yoma 38a*** *MISHNAH. AND THESE WERE MENTIONED TO THEIR SHAME: THEY OF … THE HOUSE OF ABTINAS WOULD NOT* [*TEACH*](teacher.html) *ANYTHING ABOUT THE PREPARATION OF THE INCENSE; THEY OF THE HOUSE OF ABTINAS WOULD NOT* [*TEACH*](teacher.html) *ANYTHING ABOUT THE PREPARATION OF THE INCENSE.*

***Yoma 38a*** *Our Hakhamim* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: The house of Abtinas were expert in preparing the incense but would not* [*teach*](teacher.html) *[their art]. The Sages sent for specialists from Alexandria of Egypt, who* [*knew*](daat.html) *how to compound incense as well as they, but did not* [*know*](daat.html) *how to make the smoke ascend as well as they. The smoke of the former ascended [as straight] as a stick, whereas the smoke of the latter was scattered in every direction. When the Sages heard thereof, they quoted: ‘Everyone that is called by My* [*name*](name.html)*, I have created for My glory’, as it is said: The Lord hath made everything for His own purpose, and [said]: The house of Abtinas may return to their [wonted] place. The Sages sent for them, but they would not come. Then they doubled their hire and they came. Every day [thitherto] they would receive* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *minas, [from] that day* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html)*. The Sages said to them: What reason did you have for not* [*teaching*](teacher.html) *[your art]? They said: They* [*knew*](daat.html) *in our father’s house that this House is going to be destroyed and they said: Perhaps an unworthy man will learn [this art] and will serve an* [*idol*](idolatry.html) *therewith. — And for the following reason was their memory kept in honour: Never did a bride of their house go forth perfumed and when they married a woman from elsewhere they expressly forbade her to do so lest people say: From [the preparation of] the incense they are perfuming themselves. [They did so] to fulfill the* [*command*](cmds613.html)*: ‘Ye shall be clear before the Lord and before Israel.’*

# Lashon HaRa

The [offering](korbanot.html) of the “ketoret” was carried out in complete seclusion. The Torah tells us:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:17*** *any person shall not be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to provide* [*atonement*](atonemen.html) *in the* [*Sanctuary*](mikdash.html) *until his departure.*

Although this pasuk is found in the section of the Torah dealing with the Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) service, this [halacha](walking.html) is not limited to Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html). It was forbidden for any other [Kohen](priests.html) to be present in the [Bet Hamikdash](mikdash.html) while the [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol, the [High Priest](priests.html), was [offering](korbanot.html) his ketoret, whether it be Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) when it was offered in the Holy of Holies, or any other day that it was brought on the inner altar. This [offering](korbanot.html) that was always done in private serves to atone for lashon hara[[20]](#footnote-20) that is spoken privately.

The [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[21]](#footnote-21) [teaches](teacher.html): Because of lashon hara, tzaraat (leprosy) befalls a person. Yet [the [Gemara](orallaw.html) asks] doesn’t Rav Anani bar Sason [teach](teacher.html) that when the [kohen](kohen.html) gadol wears the garment [known](daat.html) as the me’il, this atones for the [nation](nations.html)’s lashon hara?

The [Gemara](orallaw.html), as explained by Rashi, answers: If the lashon hara caused a fight, tzara’at results. Otherwise, the wearing of the me’il atones.

Yet does not Rav Simon [teach](teacher.html) that the ketoret atones for lashon hara, for we read in this parasha that Aharon atoned for the people with ketoret? Yes, the ketoret, which is usually burnt privately in the inner sanctum of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), atones for lashon hara spoken in private, while the me’il atones for lashon hara spoken in public. [Until here from the [Gemara](orallaw.html).]

The Chafetz Chaim writes: It follows from this that lashon hara which causes a fight is punished by tzara’at even when spoken privately. ketoret atones for lashon hara spoken privately which causes no harm.

Why then did the ketoret provide [atonement](atonemen.html), in Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) 16:46, where the lashon hara was very public? Because Aharon took the ketoret out of the privacy of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) and burnt it in the midst of the [camp](stages.html).

The [Gemara](orallaw.html) records that [offering](korbanot.html) of the ketoret is done privately;[[22]](#footnote-22) that is, when the ketoret is offered, no [one](one.html) is allowed to be in the heikhal, the inner sanctum, other than the [kohen](priests.html) [offering](korbanot.html) the ketoret. While the Torah mentions this exclusion specifically regarding the special service of the [kohen](kohen.html) gadol on Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html),[[23]](#footnote-23) the [Gemara](orallaw.html) understands that it applies to the ketoret generally.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Given its very private nature, the ketoret symbolizes the mysterious, the unknown. However, the Torah explicitly [connects](connection.html) both offerings of the ketoret to the lighting of the menora. The menora is symbolic of the light of the Torah, the revealed Torah, while the ketoret is symbolic of the hidden aspects of Torah, of those parts that lie beyond human comprehension. The Torah links these [two](two.html) [commands](cmds613.html), highlighting the significance of striving to understand the Torah while recognizing that some aspects of Torah will remain difficult.

# Holy Deodorizer

Maimonides describes the function of the ketoret as the vanquishing of the unpleasant odors that might otherwise have pervaded the [Temple](temple.html). [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded that the ketoret be burned twice a day, each morning and afternoon, to lend a pleasing fragrance to the [Temple](temple.html) and to the garments of those who served in it:

***Guide for the Perplexed, part III, ch. 45*** *“Since many animals were slaughtered in the sacred place each day, their flesh butchered and burnt and their intestines cleaned, its smell would doubtless have been like the smell of a slaughterhouse... Therefore G-d commanded that the ketoret be burned twice a day, each morning and afternoon, to lend a pleasing fragrance to [the Holy* [*Temple*](temple.html)*] and to the garments of those who served in it.”*

But Maimonides’ words carry a significance that extends beyond their superficial sense. In the words of Rabbeinu Bechaya:

***Rabbeinu Bechayei on Torah,*** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***30:1*** *“G-d forbid that the great principle and mystery of the ketoret should be reduced to this mundane purpose.”*

As with all aspects of Torah, this is understood on many different levels. It is explained in the [Zohar](orallaw.html) that the [kohanim](priests.html) were not merely interested in converting unpleasant smells to pleasant ones; the inner purpose of the ketoret was to dispel the foulness of the Evil Inclination:

***The*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html) ***Shemot, Vayakhel Pg 218b*** *It is a ruling of the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, that whoever looks and reads the incense-*[*offering*](korbanot.html) *portion … will not be damaged that whole day.*

***Wisdom of the*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Tishby, III 933*** *Rabbi Shimon said: If men only* [*knew*](daat.html) *how exalted the section dealing with] the incense-*[*offering*](korbanot.html) *was in the* [*eyes*](body.html) *of the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, they would take each single word and make it an ornament for their heads, like a crown of gold. And whoever, wishes to* [*study*](study.html) *it should examine it in every detail. And if he concentrates upon it every day, he will have a share both in this* [*world*](worlds.html) *and the* [*world*](futures.html) *to come. Pestilence will disappear from him and from the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, and he will be delivered from all the [evil] judgments of this* [*world*](worlds.html)*, from evil powers, from the judgment of Gehinnom and from Judgment of the* [*alien*](aliens.html) *kingdom.*

Chassidic [teaching](teacher.html) explains that the animal sacrifices offered in the [Temple](temple.html) represent the person’s [offering](korbanot.html) of his own animal soul to [HaShem](hashem.html), the subjugation of his natural instincts and [desires](needs.html) to the divine will. This is the deeper significance of the foul odor emitted by the sacrifices which the ketoret came to dispel: the animal soul of man, which is the basic drive, common to every living creature, for self-preservation and self-enhancement, possesses many positive traits which can be directed toward gainful and holy ends; but it is also the source of many negative and destructive traits. When a person brings his animal self to the [Temple](temple.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) and offers what is best and finest in it upon the altar, there is still the foul odor, the selfishness, the brutality, and the materiality of the animal in man, that accompanies the process. Hence the burning of the ketoret, which possessed the unique capability to sublimate the evil odor of the animal soul within its heavenly fragrance.

Like the incense that burned in the [Temple](temple.html), the manifest function of teshuva, repentance, is to deal with negative and undesirable things. On the practical level, teshuva is repentance, a returning to [HaShem](hashem.html), a healing for the soul. But teshuva is also the dominant quality of Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html), the holiest day of the year. On the day before Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) we grind the spices a second [time](time.html) to insure that they are the absolute finest. Thus, the ketoret that burned in the Holy of Holies was the manifestation of the function of teshuva; to deal with [sin](sin.html) and its ability to disrupt the unity of the [body](body.html) and the soul of the [nation](nations.html)..

The Avodah

*(Adapted from the Rambam)*

Any [Kohen](priests.html) was eligible to bring the daily ketoret, not specifically the [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol. The [Kohen](priests.html) would bring half of that day’s ketoret (a Manah daily) in the morning, between the preparation of the Menora and the conclusion of the [Korban](korbanot.html) Tamid, and half in the afternoon, between the kindling of the [five](five.html) lamps of the Menorah and that of the remaining [two](two.html). This is how the Rambam describes the Avodat ha’ketoret :[[25]](#footnote-25)

*The* [*Kohen*](priests.html) *who won the right to clear the Mizbei’ach ha’Zahav would enter the Heichal with a holy vessel made of gold (*[*known*](daat.html) *as a ‘Teni’) that held* [*two*](two.html) *and a half Kabin. Placing it on the ground in front of the Mizbei’ach, he would proceed to scoop the ashes and the spent coals that remained on the Mizbei’ach with his* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *and empty them on to the Teni. Whatever was left, he would sweep into it.*

The [Kohen](priests.html) who won the right to bring the ketoret would then take a covered vessel (called a *Bazach*) already heaped with ketoret. This, he would then place inside another vessel called a *Kaf* (a giant spoon) which he covered with a cloth. He was now joined by a second [Kohen](priests.html), who had won the right to perform the Avodah of the *Machtah* (the pan), and who had taken burnt coals from the middle of the second arrangement of firewood from on the Mizbayach HaOlah, with a silver shovel. He now descended and poured the coals into a golden shovel. If no more than a Kav of coal spilt, they would sweep it into the Amah (the stream that ran across the Azarah), whereas on [Shabbat](sabbath.html), since it could not be handled, they would simply cover it with a vessel. If more than a Kav of ashes spilt, they would shovel it back on to the silver shovel, and from there on to the golden [one](one.html). The [two](two.html) [Kohanim](priests.html) then entered the Kodesh (The Holy place) together.

Meanwhile, the [Kohen](priests.html) who had cleared the Mizbayach, had taken the Teni with the spent ashes, prostrated himself, and left the Heichal. The [Kohen](priests.html) with the golden pan would then empty its contents on to the golden altar, and flatten them across the top, using the base of the pan. Then he too, would prostrate himself and leave.

The remaining [Kohen](priests.html) would then remove the Bazach from the Kaf and [hand](fourteen.html) it to another [Kohen](priests.html), who would then pour the contents of the Bazach (together with whatever spilt onto the Kaf) into the [Kohen](priests.html)’s [two](two.html) [hands](fourteen.html), prostrate himself and leave the Kodesh.

Before the remaining [Kohen](priests.html) began emptying the ketoret from his [hands](fourteen.html) on to the Mizbayach, those present would warn him not to begin pouring it at the point closest to him, to avoid getting burned as his [hands](fourteen.html) moved over the burning ketoret towards the far side of the Mizbayach.

The [Kohen](priests.html) in charge would announce ‘Hakter’ (‘Proceed to [sacrifice](korbanot.html) the ketoret ’), adding the title ‘Ishi [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol’ if it was the [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol who was performing the Avodah that day, and the [Kohen](priests.html) would pour the ketoret from his [hands](fourteen.html) across the surface of the Mizbayach (gently, like [one](one.html) sifts flour), beginning at the far end, as we explained.

The moment the [Kohen](priests.html) gave the order to proceed, everyone had to leave both the Kodesh and the innermost area in the Azarah, [known](daat.html) as ‘between the Ulam and the Mizbayach ‘.

According to the [Zohar](orallaw.html), the incense [offering](korbanot.html) is the most precious part of the [Temple](temple.html) service in the [eyes](body.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). The ketoret was so desirable that the [Kohanim](priests.html) ([Priests](priests.html)) had to wait to do it. No [Kohen](priests.html) ([Priest](priests.html)) ever did it twice in order to give all the [Kohanim](priests.html) the chance to do it at least once. [One](one.html) of the reasons that the ketoret [offering](korbanot.html) was so desireable was because the ketoret [offering](korbanot.html) was a way to increase [one](one.html)’s wealth, as the [Talmud](orallaw.html) indicates:

***Yoma 26a*** *It never happened that a person repeatedly offered incense. Why? Rabbi Chanina said: Because, the Incense-*[*Offering*](korbanot.html) *enriches.*

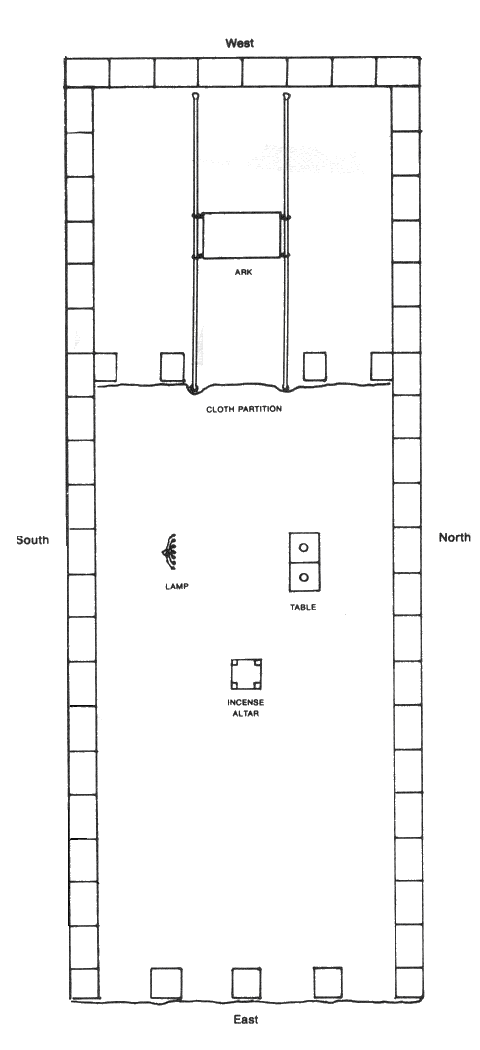
The procedure regarding the ketoret is that a [Kohen](priests.html) does not perform the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of [offering](korbanot.html) ketoret more than once in his lifetime. [HaShem](hashem.html) rewards the [Kohen](priests.html) who offers the ketoret with wealth. Thus, we want to afford the opportunity to as many [Kohanim](priests.html) as possible to become wealthy.

# Mizbayach Haketoret (Incense Altar).

The placement of the Mizbayach Haketoret , the golden altar, in the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), and the [Temple](temple.html), is very significant. The Mizbayach Haketoret was centered in the Kodesh, the holy place. It was centered left to right and front to back. It was exactly in the center of the Kodesh. We have learned elsewhere that when something is centered, it carries with it the connotation of “[connection](connection.html)“. The more centered the object, the greater the [connection](connection.html) to life. That is why the [heart](body.html) is in the center of the area covered by a shirt. That is why the [midbrain](brain.html) is located in the center of the [head](body.html), and why the uterus is in the center of the area from the belt to the bottom of the torso. This is why [Jerusalem](city.html) is in the center of Israel. Thus we learn that the Mizbayach Haketoret was the most important feature of the kodesh.

The details of the construction of the Mizbayach Haketoret is detailed in Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 30. The details of it’s construction are given after all of the other furniture in the [Mishkan](mikdash.html). This placement is to [teach](teacher.html) us that nothing is as important as the ketoret. The ketoret has extremely high status!

The placement of the Mizbayach Haketoret can be seen in the following picture:



The Ramban also had an explanation for why the Mizbayach Haketoret was mentioned last:

“The Golden Altar’s function was entirely different from that of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) as a whole. The objective of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) was essentially to provide an appropriate setting for [HaShem](hashem.html) to rest His Presence upon Israel. However, His proximity creates the danger that those who do not honor His Presence are subject to the Attribute of Justice, which would in no way tolerate their infractions. Such was the case of Nadav and Avihu, who lost their lives when they brought an unbidden, and therefore forbidden, [offering](korbanot.html). Therefore, by means of this Altar and the incense [offering](korbanot.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) provided a means to shelter the [nation](nations.html) from such potential danger. When offered in obedience to G-d’s [command](cmds613.html), incense has the unique property of being able to quench the [fire](fire.html) of divinely inflicted [plague](plagues.html). Consequently, once the agency of bringing His presence to the [nation](nations.html) was provided through the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), G-d now gave Moshe the means of protecting the people through the Mizbayach Haketoret .”

There is some evidence that the Mizbayach Haketoret does not play as vital a role as the other components. The [Gemara](orallaw.html) in Zevachim 59a concludes that the ketoret could continue to be offered on that venue even if the Mizbayach was uprooted.

# The Discovery

In April 1992, Vendyl Jones and his team discovered 600 kilos of “reddish-brown organic substance” in a carefully sealed rock silo in another part of the Qumran cave complex. Subsequent analysis determined that this substance contained traces of at least [eight](eight.html) of the [eleven](eleven.html) spices that were used in the manufacture of the ketoret.

In 1994, the incense spices were presented to the now late Rav Yehudah Getz, late Chief Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Places in Israel. A sample was also given to Hakham Ovadiah [Yosef](joseph.html). Hakham Ovadiah had his own chemist analyze the mixture to confirm its organic nature. Then both Hakhamim requested that Vendyl Jones “burn” some of the incense for scientific purposes (not with [fire](fire.html) but with hydrochloric acid). At their suggestion, he had the spices combined together with the sodom salt and karshina lye that was also found stored separately in the cave in Qumran.

The results were astonishing according to all accounts. Although the spices had lost some of their potency over the [two](two.html) [millennia](millenium.html) since their burial, it was still powerful. The residue of its fragrance lingered in the vicinity for several days following the experiment. Several people present reported that their [hair](hair.html) and clothing retained the aroma. [One](one.html) account of the incident states:

*“The aroma released from the spice compound during its processing was profuse and almost immediate. It initially saturated my* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *as well as the clothes that I was wearing. Within a matter of minutes my laboratory and the surrounding area (for an area of several meters) was affected by the scent released from the spices... On the* [*first*](one.html) *day of processing, the aroma was so intense that I could almost taste it... Upon my return home that evening, the scent that had attached itself on my* [*body*](body.html) *and clothes was really apparent to both my wife and daughter. During the course of the week, the odor lessened slightly but was still noticeable in and around my lab. Within a few weeks the distinct aroma of the spices diminished to a freshness or cleanness of the air in my lab and the surrounding area. This aroma was in evidence, if even so slightly, for approximately* [*two*](two.html) *months”.[[26]](#footnote-26)*

\* \* \*

The [name](name.html) Ketura[[27]](#footnote-27) shares the same root as does the word for incense, ketoret. She was called ‘Incense’ because her acts were sweet as incense.[[28]](#footnote-28) It is also interesting to note that to this day the Orient, especially India, is famous for its incense. This modern [Eastern](east.html) influence has made incense very popular in the Occident. Ironically, sacrificial use of incense was paramount in Biblical times and the sweet aroma of the [East](east.html) has reawakened [Jews](gen-jew.html) to their own ancient tradition of the role and power of incense (e.g., frankincense and myrrh).

\* \* \*

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1. “Siddur קול ששון”, *The Orot Sephardic Weekday Siddur*, by Rabbi Eliezer Toledano [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Maneh**: A unit of weight: According to Rabbi [Avraham](avraham.html) Chaim Naeh, a Mishnaic maneh equals 480 grams (slightly less than half a kilogram and slightly more than 1 pound). A second opinion is that of Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (The Living Torah, Exodus 30:34, p. 445; The Torah Anthology, Volume 11, p. 43), according to which a maneh equals 100 biblical shekels, or 5 pounds. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **Kav**: A unit of volume; approximately 1 gallon. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. **Sa’ah**: Approximately 6 gallons [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Chatam Sofer, Derashot 18; quoted in Siddur Chatam Sofer ad. loc. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Adapted from Olat Ri’iah 136-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Righteous men [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Minor fasts [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Kashrut (כַּשְׁרוּת) is the set of Jewish dietary [laws](law.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The Tabernacle in the wilderness [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Meam Loez on Ki Tissa: The Incense Spices [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A prayerbook [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Mishlei (Proverbs) chapter 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The Tabernacle in the wilderness. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Midrash Tanchuma, Tetzaveh 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Megilla 13a [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Yoma 44a [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Tehillim 150:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Evil speech [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Erachin 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Yoma 43b-44a, Zevachim 88b, [Mishna](orallaw.html) Kelim 1:9, Rambam Hilkhot Temidin u-Musafin 3:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Yoma 44b [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Hilchot Temidin u’Musafin 3:4-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Dr. Terry Hutter, Palynological Asessment of the Qumran Spices, May 5, 1994, in Vendyl Jones’ Report on the Excavations at Qumran. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Bereshit (Genesis) 25:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Rashi quoting [Midrash](orallaw.html) Rabba [↑](#footnote-ref-28)