

PRAYING MAKES SCENTS!

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

"... and the priest shall offer it in its entirety upon the altar, an elevation-offering, by fire, for a 'pleasing scent' to G-d." [1:9]

The *Chidushei HaRim* offers an understanding of the sacrifice as a 'pleasing scent' to G-d. He explains that a "*Reyach*," or scent, is something that is recognized or detected far away. Thus anything that one can sense or feel from far off is called a "*Reyach*."

A sacrifice must serve as a messenger of good, meaning that through the sacrifice one can immediately sense that good deeds will be done henceforth by the one giving the offering. This, says the *Chidushei HaRim*, is the main purpose of a sacrifice - that repentance bring the person to better actions in the future. Without that, *HaShem*, blessed be He, has already said, "Why do I need all your sacrifices?" [Isaiah 1] It is the early indication of future deeds that makes a sacrifice a "pleasing scent."

Today, our prayers serve in place of sacrifices. These too must bring us to repentance and prod us to do better actions in the future. Every one of us (save angels and those who have never been to synagogue) has gone to synagogue and said the words, but has not really gained from the experience. "Dry ritual" is not sufficient! Every prayer is an opportunity for growth, one that will indicate "good deeds to follow." Let's not miss that opportunity!

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