

**"You shall make a copper laver... and put water there... Now take for yourself choice spices... of it you shall make sacred anointing oil... Take for yourself spices... You shall make it into a spice compound (for the incense)..."
(30:18,23,25,34,35)**

The section devoted to the *Mishkan* and its appurtenances closes with a discourse regarding three natural substances which are designated for use in the *Mishkan*. They are: water, reserved for washing and consecrating the *Kohanim*; choice spices, which were to be mixed with oil to anoint the *Kohanim* and various holy objects; and sweet spices, assigned to the offering of incense. *Horav Eli Munk, z.l.*, conjectures that although no obvious thread connects these elements with sanctity, nonetheless, they, each have a distinguishing characteristic that makes them well-suited for holiness. Water's clarity and simplicity are the traits that symbolize external purity. Choice spices are derived from exotic plants that grow in far-off countries. The sweet spices used for the *ketores* are a combination of spices which have both sweet and repugnant odors.

Horav Munk suggests that the *Torah* is teaching us a valuable lesson. *Kedushah*, holiness, is not limited to a given substance. It is neither conferred upon a specific person, nor bound to a single place. The most vile or tarnished substance -- or even the one farthest removed from the Sanctuary -- can still serve as a vehicle for sanctity, if the correct intention is manifest. No creature should be automatically rejected, no substance denigrated. All matter has a place in the realm of *kedushah*. Nothing is viewed as naturally distasteful or lacking the dignity to become an instrument of holiness. The Almighty created everything for one purpose -- *Kiddush Hashem*.