ויש נוהגים לקרוא פטום הקטורת בתפלה מתוך קלף בכתב יד אשורית, הכתוב על ידי סופר, כמו בספר תורה, והיא סגולה לפרנסה טובה ועושר, כמו שכתוב בספרים. [ראה בסדר היום ובכה"ח פלאג'י, ובכה"ח סופר סי' קלב ס"ק כג]

ומכל מקום הואיל ודעת מרן השלחן ערוך להחמיר שלא לכתוב פסוקי תורה בודדים, אין לעשות כן לכתחלה, כיון שאנו קבלנו הוראות מרן, ושב ואל תעשה עדיף. ורק סופר אשכנזי שכותב את פטום הקטורת, מפני שסומך על דעת הרי"ף שהתיר, שפיר דמי. ובדיעבד שנכתבה על ידי סופר ספרדי, רשאים לקרות את פטום הקטורת מתוכה. [יבי"א ח"ט חיו"ד סי' כג]

Handwritten on parchment

Some people observe the practice of reading *ketoret* from a handwritten text inscribed on parchment by a professional scribe. This, according to a number of *Aharonim*, is said to be an auspicious practice, bringing wealth to those who observe it.

Nevertheless, according to Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh* it is forbidden to write individual verses in this manner. Since Sefardic Jews have accepted the rulings of Maran, it is incorrect to write the passages of *ketoret* on a parchment. An Ashkenazic scribe may write them, however, since Ashkenazic Jews rely on the opinion of Rabbenu Yitzhak Alfasi who permitted it. If someone possesses such a parchment [even if] written by a Sefardic scribe, he may use it to recite *ketoret*.[54]

This is not a reason to avoid reciting *ketoret* altogether. In fact, the *Magen Avraham* (132:5) cited the *Bet Yosef* and testified that the proper custom is to recite *ketoret* every day. See the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (132:27).

Counting the ingredients with one's fingers

Harav HIDA (*Kesher Godel* #73) wrote that it is commendable to count the eleven principle ingredients of the *ketoret* on one's fingers while reciting them. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Miketz* halakha 8) explained that by doing this, we demonstrate the importance of these ingredients. Furthermore, this act spurs us to concentrate on the meaning of the words we recite [and ensures that none will be omitted]. He added another reason – since we hope that God will consider our reciting of *ketoret* as if we had offered it on the Altar, we wish to include some physical act other than simply speaking the words.

Fingers of the right hand

The *Ben Ish Hai* instructed us to count the eleven ingredients on the fingers of the right hand only. This is because the right hand is always favored for performing mitzvot. Furthermore, in the *Bet Hamikdash*, the *kohen* offering *ketoret* must do so with his right hand. He emphasized that one must not count them on the fingers of both hands, although there is such an opinion among the *Poskim*. Apparently, he was referring to the *Hesed La'alafim* (48:5, cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Palachi 11:8), who wrote that one should count the ingredients using both hands so that both hands will participate in the mitzvah.

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (48:4) rejected the ruling of the *Hesed La'alafim*, since we wish our reciting to be considered as if we had offered the *ketoret* and if the left hand offers *ketoret* it is invalid. Therefore, we must follow the *Ben Ish Hai's* instructions to use the fingers of the right hand only.

The *sefer Mizahav Umipaz* (page 666) defended the position of the *Hesed La'alafim*, explaining that although we hope to receive credit as if we have offered the *ketoret*, we are not actually offering it and the rules of offering it do not apply to our reciting of the passage. After all, we are not standing in the *Bet Hamikdash* and most people reciting it are not *kohanim*. Furthermore, the *kohen* must be standing when he offers *ketoret*, while we recite it seated in the synagogue. Therefore, there can be nothing wrong with counting the ingredients on the fingers of the left hand.

In conclusion, both opinions have a valid basis. One may follow either opinion.

54. Reading *ketoret* from a text handwritten on parchment

The *Kaf Hahayim* Palachi (17:18) cited the *Mishpat Tzedek* explaining that it is commendable to write the passage and *baraita* of the *ketoret* on parchment in square letters (the type used in Torah scrolls) and to read *ketoret* from the parchment each day. This practice should help to bring wealth and prosperity, just as we are taught (*Yoma* 26a) that the act of offering *ketoret* brought wealth to the

נח. אם אומר סדר הקטורת במרוצה ובעל פה, לא יהיה לו שום תועלת מאמירה זו. [כה"ח פלאג'י סי' ט"ו אות ח"י, הו"ד בכה"ח סופר סי' קלב ס"ק ח"י]

Reciting it with care

58) Nothing is gained if someone recites the *ketoret* by heart and hurriedly, without paying attention to the words' meaning.

kohen. He repeated this in his *Ru'ah Hayim* (132:4). The original source for this practice is the *Seder Hayom* (page 9), authored by Rabbenu Moshe ben Makhir, a contemporary of Maran Harav Yosef Karo. He emphasized the importance of writing the passages of *ketoret* on parchment and to read the text in the morning and afternoon. He guaranteed its effectiveness. This was repeated in the *Ma'avar Yabok* (Unit *Anan Haketoret* chapter 2, page 161a). This is a common practice in many communities.

Writing one section of the Torah

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. IX, #23) noted, however, that this practice seems to counter the rulings of Maran. In *Yore De'a* (283:2), Maran ruled: "One must not write any portion of the Torah on a parchment by itself. Likewise, one may not write a portion of the Torah for a child to study." This follows the ruling of Rambam (*Hilkhot Sefer Torah* 7:14), based on the Talmud (*Gittin* 60a): "Abaye asked Rabba whether it is permissible to write a single section of the Torah for a child to study from, and Rabba replied that it is forbidden."

Rabbenu Yitzhak Alfasi, however, ruled that it is permissible to write a single section of the Torah. Rabbenu Asher and Rabbenu Nissim challenged this ruling since it directly contradicts the Talmud. In the *Bet Yosef*, Maran reconciled Rabbenu Yitzhak's ruling, explaining that Ribbi Yohanan and Rish Lakish disagreed with Rabba concerning this matter. Their position is that in our times it is necessary to permit these texts so that Torah knowledge will be perpetuated through our exile. They applied the principle of, "It is time to take action for God; we ignore Your laws" (*Tehillim* 119:126).

Despite this defense of Rabbenu Yitzhak Alfasi, Maran ruled stringently in the *Shulhan Arukh* that it is forbidden to write individual sections of the Torah. The Rama did not comment one way or the other. The *Bayit Hadash*, however, complained that the common custom is to be lenient, following the ruling of Rabbenu Yitzhak Alfasi. The *Ture Zahav*, the *Sifte Kohen* and the *Bet Hillel* all ruled leniently as well, and this appears to be the opinion of the *Hazon Ish* (*O.H.* 60:11; *Y.D.* 167:10).

Maran the Rishon Letziyon suggested that we can be lenient as well, especially since Maran highly praised his defense of Rabbenu Yitzhak Alfasi's ruling. He then demonstrated that Harav HIDA (responsa *Yosef Ometz* #69) and Harav Yosef Hayim (responsa *Rav Pe'alim E.H.* #14, page 85d) wrote that the rule is that whenever the *Shulhan Arukh* contradicts the rulings of the *Bet Yosef*, the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* overrides the other.

In conclusion, Maran the Rishon Letziyon ruled that one should not write the passage of *ketoret* on a parchment, but if one finds it already written it is permissible to use it.

An opposing opinion

The responsa *Tefilla leMoshe* (Vol. III, #27) ruled that although Maran ruled that it is forbidden to write individual passages of the Torah, it is permissible to write the passage of *ketoret*. To simply write an individual passage is forbidden since it belittles the Torah's honor, but when one writes the passage of *ketoret* together with the *baraita* that explains it in practical terms, one's main objective is to study its explanation according to the Oral Torah. Since we are permitted in our times to write down the Oral Torah, this is permitted as well.

The *sefer Pinehas Yefalel* (Vol. I, page 14) ruled leniently likewise. He demonstrated that the kabbalists use hand-written prayer books that include individual passages from the Torah. If so, it must be that the stringent ruling of Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh* was never accepted. The *sefer Mizahav Umipaz* (page 217) ruled leniently likewise.

Harav Yehiel Zilber pointed out (*Kovetz Bet Hillel* Vol. IV, page 83) that since the source for this practice is the *Seder Hayom*, it adds weight to the *Bet Yosef's* ruling against that of the *Shulhan Arukh*. He testified that a copy of *ketoret* on parchment hangs in the Lederman synagogue in Bnei Brak and that it was written with the consent of Harav Hayim Kanyevski, who relied on the lenient position of the *Hazon Ish*. See also the responsa *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* (Vol. IV, #18).

Defending Maran the Rishon Letziyon

The *Yalkut Yosef* (Vol. I, page 141) upheld the position of Maran the Rishon Letziyon. He argued that although the Talmud is filled with individual verses from the Torah, those verses are invariably used as part of the teachings of the Oral Torah and therefore it is permitted. The passage of *ketoret*, however, stands by itself. The *baraita* written following it does not explain the meaning of those verses, nor does it use those verses to derive any of the halakhot it lists. Therefore, we cannot consider the Torah passage of *ketoret* as part of the Oral Torah.

נט. בפטום הקטורת יש לומר קוֹשְׁט שנים עשר, בשי״ן שמאלית. ויש לומר קושט, בלא ה״א, שרק בד׳ סממנים הראשונים המפורשים בכתוב מזכירים ה״א הידיעה. [יבי״א ח״ח סי׳ יא אות ו]

ס. אחר סדר הקטורת אומרים אביי הוה מסדר וכו׳. והוא מטעם מה שקבלו חז״ל: שבזמן שאין בית המקדש קיים, ואין יכולין להקריב קרבנות, מי שעוסק בהם ובפרשיותיהם מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו הקריבם. [משנ״ב סי׳ מח ס״ק א]

ופשוט שמי שיודע ספר, שמצוה שילמד בגמרא פירוש המימרא הזו [משנ״ב שם, ביאוה״ל סי׳ א סוד״ה ופרשת עולה]

סא. יש מדקדקים לומר אביי ״הוא״ הוה מסדר סדר המערכה, כדי שלא תדבק אות יו״ד של אביי, עם תיבת הוה, ויהיה כהוגה את השם באותיותיו. ומעיקר הדין אין צריך לעשות כן, כיון שאינו מתכוין לשם ה׳. ומכל מקום טוב שיפסיק מעט בין תיבת ״אביי״ לבין תיבת ״הוה״. [הליכו״ע ח״א עמ׳ עב]

Details of the text

59) The first four ingredients are the only ones prefixed with the letter *he*. The proper text is to pronounce the ninth ingredient of *ketoret* as קשְׁט שְׁנֵים עָשָׂר – *qost shenem asar*, not *qosht* or *haqosht*.[55]

Abaye hava

60) The passages of *ketoret* are followed by that of *Abaye hava*, and then the prayer of *Ana bekho'ah*. The purpose of reciting *Abaye hava* is to fulfill our Sages' teaching that even when the *Bet Hamikdash* does not exist anyone who studies the halakhot of the *korbanot* will be rewarded as if he had participated in offering them to God. Of course, anyone who is capable of studying the meaning of the words in this passage must do so.

Abaye [hu] hava

61) Some people use the version of *Abaye hu hava mesader* [alternatively – *Abaye mesader*], since without the word *hu* people might run the syllables into one another and it will sound as if they are pronouncing God's Name as it is written (*Aba yehava*), which is a capital sin. See below in *Siman* 5:19. Technically, this is not necessary since no one intends to invoke God's Name in this part of the prayers. Even so, it is best to pause slightly after the name Abaye and before the word *hava*.[56]

Day 19

Regarding the argument of Harav Zilber, Maran the Rishon Letziyon saw that Maran chose to rule against Rabbenu Yitzhak Alfasi, so the fact that the *Seder Hayom* ruled leniently carries no more weight than that. Harav Kanyevski ruled leniently because he followed the Ashkenazic *Poskim*, but this does not affect the ruling for Sefardic Jews who have accepted the rulings of Maran.

Using an Ashkenazic scribe

According to Maran the Rishon Letziyon one may not hire a Sefardic scribe to write the passage of *ketoret*. He agreed, however, that Ashkenazic scribes may write it since their tradition is to follow the Ashkenazic *Poskim*. Thus, Sefardic Jews can use a handwritten *ketoret* written by an Ashkenazic scribe. Even if he writes it using the Ashkenazic style of forming the letters, it is still valid for use by Sefardic Jews. Sefardic Jews may even use a Torah scroll written in the Ashkenazic style, following the ruling in responsa *Yehave Da'at* (Vol. II, #3).

55. This is the ruling of Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. VIII, #1:6), citing the *Bayit Hadash* (*Siman* 133). He found support for this opinion from Rambam's commentary to the Mishna (*Ukatzin* 3:5). Harav Meir Mazuz concurred with this as well, adding that the word is *qost* and not *haqost*. Only the first four ingredients, which are listed specifically in the Torah, are prefaced with the letter *he*. Although the *sefer Libi Er* asserted that according to Maran the Rishon Letziyon the correct version is *haqost*, the *Yalkut Yosef* (Vol. II, page 504) wrote that the author misinterpreted his ruling.

56. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Miketz* halakha 9) stated that some people make sure to say *Abaye hu hava me-*