

פרשת שמיני

רש"י ויקריבו לפני ה' אש זרה אשר לא צוה אתם. ותצא אש מלפני ה' וכו' וימתו לפני ה' [א-ב] brings down an opinion that נדב ואביהוא died because they entered the משכן while intoxicated. However, if we look in the פסוק, the תורה seems to give a different reason. It says that they brought a fire, אשר לא צוה אותם, a fire that they were not commanded to bring and not because of entering the משכן while intoxicated.

The שפת אמת answers that first we must understand why they drank wine altogether. נדב ואביהוא were not acting with frivolity or with lack of proper respect by coming to serve in the משכן after drinking wine. These were great people that such behavior was totally foreign to them. Rather they felt that since one must serve ה' with the proper frame of mind, wine would raise them to a much higher level of שמחה. These intentions, however, were misplaced. As kohanim serving in the משכן, they were שלוחי דרחמנא, messengers with heartfelt inspiration to carry out the will of ה'. This should be done with their own כוחות הנפש, and not by using any external stimuli. This is what the תורה means אשר לא צוה אותם, doing the עבודה without their own self motivated enthusiasm as ה' expected from them.

As we leave the יו"ט of פסח with the taste of מצה still fresh in our mouth, and we head towards מתן תורה, we must remember that the whole objective and תכלית of that time to say נעשה ונשמע, we too must strive to be self motivated and inspired in our daily עבודת ה'.

Have a good Shabbos.

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