Class # 25 - Parshat Shemini: Are we close or far from Hashem?

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class

Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7utL5HonSw>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH-mhZLuGRk>
3. **“God himself could not sink this ship!”**

Unknown *Titanic* crew member to embarking passenger, Mrs Sylvia Caldwell

The Eighth Day; Nadav and Avihu Die

9:1 On the eighth day, Moses summoned Aaron, his sons, and the elders of Israel.9:2 He said to Aaron, 'Take yourself a calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, [both] unblemished, and sacrifice them before God.9:3 Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to take unblemished [animals]: a goat for a sin offering, a yearling calf and a lamb for a burnt offering, 9:4 and a bull and a ram for peace offerings. They shall sacrifice these before God along with a meal offering mixed with oil, because God will reveal Himself to you today.'9:5 They brought what Moses ordered to the front of the Communion Tent, and the entire community came forth and stood before God…..9:22 Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. He then descended from [the altar where he] had prepared the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings.9:23 Moses and Aaron went into the Communion Tent, and when they came out, they blessed the people. God's glory was then revealed to all the people.9:24 Fire came forth from before God and consumed the burnt offering and the choice parts on the altar. When the people saw this, they raised their voices in praise and threw themselves on their faces.

1) At this point in the 8th day of the inauguration process, how did the Jewish people feel?

10:1 Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire pan, placed fire on it, and then incense on it. They offered it before God, [but it was] *Aish Zara*/unauthorized fire, which [God] had not instructed them [to offer].10:2 Fire came forth from before God, and it consumed them, so that they died before God.

10:3 Moses said to Aaron, 'This is exactly what God meant when he said, `I will be sanctified among those close to Me, and I will thus be glorified.'' 10:4 Moses summoned Mishael and Eltzafan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and he said to them, 'Come forth and remove your close relatives from inside the sanctuary. [Bring them] outside the camp.' 10:5 They came forth and carried [Nadav and Avihu] outside the camp, in their tunics, as Moses had said. 10:6 Moses said to Aaron and his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, 'Do not go without a haircut and do not tear your vestments; otherwise you will die, bringing divine wrath upon the entire community. As far as your brothers are concerned, let the entire family of Israel mourn for the ones whom God burned. 10:7 Do not leave the entrance of the Communion Tent lest you die, because God's anointing oil is still upon you.' They did as Moses had said.

2) What did Nadav & Avihu do so wrong?

3) How does the punishment fit the crime?

Innovation & Change in Judaism

4) Women rabbis/partnership minyanim/women aliyot/women leading services/egalitarian services at the kotel/orthodox agnostics/ etc.

**“Responding within Limits**  
Judaism has historically been and continues to be responsive to the needs of both the community and the individual. But, the Rav taught, it has its own orbit and its own speed, it responds to a challenge with its own criteria and principles. The Rav followed the rabbinic traditions of his grandfather, Rav Chaim, who believed in striving for leniency based on the personal needs of the inquirer. However, even Rav Chaim’s skills had limits. When you reach the boundary of halachah beyond which you dare not pass, you must say: “I surrender to the will of the Almighty.”

Torah study is a yoke because we lack the authority to change its laws. Shinuy, change, is unacceptable. Chiddush, innovation, creative interpretation, is the very heart of halachah. It is the engine of halachic continuity throughout the ages. But these chiddushim must be within the discipline, internal to the system of halachah and not originating from the outside. They must soberly represent the humble and fearful surrender to the Torah we have learned from the Sages. They must respect the past and continue the mesorah whose responsibility of transmission rests on our shoulders.”

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