

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR RABBI AHARON DANIEL

## Precautions, Proximity, and Peril

Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons... [Aharon] should not come at all into the Sanctuary... so he will not die. (16:1-2)

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah would compare this to a sick man visited by doctor, who told him, "Don't eat cold food or lie in a damp, chilly place." Another [doctor] came and told him [the same thing, with a warning]: "...So you won't die the way so-and-so died." The [second doctor] motivated him more effectively. [Similarly, Moshe used Nadav and Avihu's untimely demise to apprise Aaron of the importance of being careful with the sanctity of the Mishkan (Tabernacle).] (Rashi)

WHAT WAS BOTHERING OUR SAGES THAT they needed to draw out their point by way of a parable? Would we not have understood why Hashem prefaced this command to Aharon with the mention of his sons' deaths?

Also, we find a veritable plethora of sins suggested as having precipitated their deaths. How are those various explanations to be reconciled with the plain reading of the verse, stating that they died "when they approached before Hashem," unbidden?

Rav Shimon Schwab, of blessed memory, explains as follows. The Tal-

mud (Yoma 86b) expounds upon two verses that tell us that the first three times a person commits a given sin, he is forgiven. *Da'as Z'keinim* in Parashas Nit-zavim explains that there are three barriers in the heavens, behind which the *Shechina* (Hashem's Presence) resides, as it were. The effect of a first offense only reaches the first level, at which point prayer and *t'shuva* (repentance) can successfully prevent any punishment from ensuing. If the sin is repeated a second, then a third time, the effects penetrate further, beyond the next two barriers; with *t'shuva*, the sin can yet be expiated. But the fourth time that sin is committed; it reaches a point at which Hashem responds (Amos 2:6), "I shall not reverse it." We see from this that if someone sins in a setting where he is closer to the *Shechina*, Hashem no longer evinces His attribute of mercy.

This is the meaning behind Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah's metaphor. Eating cold food or lying down in a chilly location would not kill a healthy person. But if someone who's already in a perilous situation places himself in harm's way, all the medication in the world won't save him. The patient whose doctor tells him merely not to go out without a coat won't realize the risk of not complying, because he doesn't perceive it to be a direct threat. Only the patient whose doctor admonishes him, "You're already sick. Don't do anything that will further

endanger yourself!" will act to ensure his well-being.

Similarly, the true cause of the deaths of Nadav and Avihu was one particular sin—the exact nature of which is subject to debate. So long as they had not brought themselves close to the *Shechina*, Hashem allowed them the power to repent. But once they indeed entered the Mishkan, a place in which no merit could save them from Hashem's pure and strict judgement, they were akin to the sick patient, eating cold food, past the point of recovery.

One of the reasons to which our Sages ascribe Aharon's sons' punishment is that, at Mt. Sinai, they gazed at the *Shechina* while rejoicing over the Giving of the Torah. This represents the same idea, that any imperfection, however slight, is not tolerated when in proximity to such holiness—past the last barrier, so to speak. This is why the Torah warns Aharon not to enter the Holy of Holies—*p'nima*, the innermost sanctum—without all of the preparations associated with Yom Kippur. Without them, he will be left unprotected from punishment, just as were his sons.

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# At the Kollel

**KEY:** 🖐️ Beginners 🖐️ Intermediate 🖐️ Advanced 🧑 for men and women

**Looking for a chavrusa?** See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!  
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

## Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**  
(Jewish Law & Parasha)  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM  
*Grand Deluxe breakfast served*

## Tuesday

🧑🖐️ **Partners in Torah  
at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

## Wednesday

🧑🖐️ **Torah Treasures for  
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....10:30–11:15 AM

🧑🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn  
at Strauss & Troy**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....12–1 PM

## Thursday

🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM  
*Homemade refreshments served.*

## Minyanim Daylight Time

**Shacharis**  
Sunday .....8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday .....7:20 AM  
Shabbos .....N/A

**Mincha**  
Sunday .....7:45 PM  
Monday–Thursday .....5:45 PM  
Shabbos .....6:30 PM

**Ma'ariv**  
In the Beis Midrash:  
Sunday–Wednesday .....9:45 PM  
Thursday .....10 PM  
Shabbos .....N/A

## Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**  
(Maseches B'choros)  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....  
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**  
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....  
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**  
Live video conference!  
Rabbi Dani Schon.....  
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

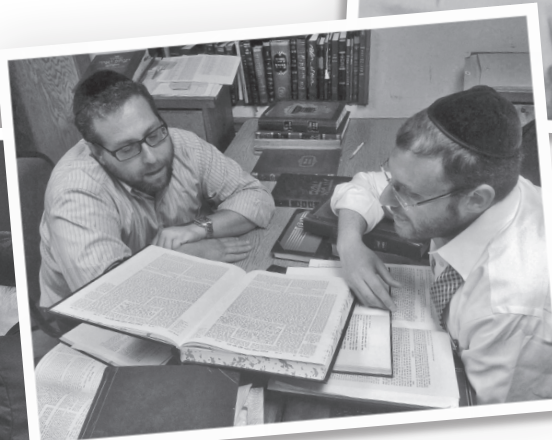
🖐️ **Daf Yomi**  
Rabbi Meir Minster.....  
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM  
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
& Binyamin Teitelbaum .....  
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

**Chavrusa Learning**  
(private & small groups).....times vary

## Precautions, Proximity, and Peril CONTINUED

May we all strive to perfect ourselves, during this period of Counting the Omer, to be better prepared for Shavu'os, when, as our Sages tell us, the counterpart of the Great Light of the Revelation at Har Sinai illuminates those who accept the Torah once more. 🕯️



This week  
in our  
Beis Midrash