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The Judgment and Mercy of ADONAI
10: 1-20

History tells us again and again of people who had auspicious beginnings filled with promise and yet who, in an unguarded moment, suddenly fell. The nature of their errors might seem relatively mild at first glance: a leader loses his temper and strikes the rock instead of speaking to it **(Num 20:9-13)**; sinful hands touch the holy things of **God's** sanctuary **(2 Sam 6:6-8)**; unauthorized fire is burned in the holy place **(Lev 10:1).** These events might seem small in our estimation – but this is not **God's** estimation, for their error turns what was a place of salvation into a place of judgment. Many calamities have fallen on the house of **the LORD** in the shape of apostasies, false doctrines, unholy living, and reckless rebellion. **Leviticus 10** is the report of such a mistake.



On their graduation day, the first day on the job, **Aaron's** two sons, **Nadab** and **Abihu**, brought **strange fire** into the Holy Place in **their** censers – something that **ADONAI** had not commanded **them** to do. Immediately, **the fire** of **Ha'Shem** destroyed **them** for **their** disobedience. The divine judgment was swift and final. It had to be so because **their** violation of the Sanctuary and **the priesthood** came at the very beginning of the Israelites ability to draw near to **ADONAI**. Without such an immediate response, the corruption of the offerings would have been rapid and perhaps unstoppable. And yet **the priesthood** survived this judgment; it did not come to an end because of **their** disobedience, as the aftermath of the episode showed. On the contrary, these verses turn out to be a confirmation of **Aaron's**

high priesthood and a reinforcement of **his** duties.[141] Therefore, despite such a negative beginning, **Leviticus 10** does end positively. This chapter is divided into two sections: **The Death of Nadab and Abihu – 10:1-11 (to see link click Bh),** and **The Mercy Shown to Eleazar and Ithamar – 10:12-20 (Bi).** The Torah displays both judgment and mercy.