

# How Close is Too Close?

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## 1. Vayikra 16:1

**XVI**

1. And God spoke [as follows] to Moshe after the death of the two sons of Aharon: "It was because of their drawing near before God that they died."

טז א וידבר יהוה אל-משה אחרי מות שני בני אהרן בקרבתם לפני-יהוה וימתו:

## 2. Vayikra 10:1-3

**X**

1. And Aharon's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his pan, put fire into them and placed incense upon it, and they brought near before God strange fire which He had not commanded them.

א ויקחו בני-אהרן נדב ואביהוא איש מחתתו ויתנו בהן אש וישימו עליה קטרת ויקריבו לפני יהוה אש זרה אשר לא

2. Then fire went forth from before God and consumed them, and they died before God. 3. And Moshe said to Aharon: "This is what God spoke, [saying]: 'I will be sanctified by those near to Me and thus I will be honored by all the people.'" And Aharon was silent.

צנה אתם: ב ותצא אש מלפני יהוה ותאכל אותם וימתו לפני יהוה: ג ויאמר משה אל-אהרן הוא אשר-דבר יהוה. לאמר בקרבי אקדש ועל-פני כל-העם אפבד ויידם אהרן:

## 3. R. Samson Raphael Hirsch on Vayikra 16:1

1. *It was because of their drawing near before God that they died.* The cause of their death was that they dared to draw so near to God. The subjective aspect of their sin, "drawing near (to God)," lay in their overweening estimation of themselves, which caused them to misunderstand the loftiness of the Jewish ideal and to fail to recognize their own inadequacy. That is why they died (see notes to Chapter 10:1).

## 4. Bamidbar 16:8-10

8. And Moshe said to Korah: "Hear now, O sons of Levi. Is it too little for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Yisrael, to have you come near to Him to do the service of the Dwelling Place of God and to stand before the community to minister before them? 10. And since He has thus brought you and all your brothers, the sons of Levi with you, near to Him, will you now seek the priesthood also?"

ח ויאמר משה אל-קרח שמעו-נא בני לוי: ט המעט מכם פיהו הברדיל אלהי ישראל אתכם מענת ישראל להקריב אתכם אליו לעבד את-עבודת משכן יהוה ולעמד לפני העדה לשרתם: י ויקרב אתך ואת-כל-אתיך בני-לוי אתך ובקשתם גם-כהנה: