

In שליש we read (10:1 & 2):

וַיִּקְחוּ בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא אִישׁ מִחֶתְתּוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ בָּהֶן אֵשׁ וַיִּשִּׂמוּ עָלֶיהָ קִטְרוֹת
וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֹתָם
וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

And the sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, took each one, his censer (incense holder) and put fire in them and incense, and offered before the Lord strange fire, which he had not commanded them. And there came out fire from before the Lord and eat them up, and they died before the Lord.

Although his sons died we can presume that their offering was accepted.

Why ?

Look at the beginning of שליש (9:24):

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת הָעֵלָה וְאֶת הַחֲלָבִים

This is almost the identical wording.

Further, at the beginning of צו (6:2) we read:

צו אֶת אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תֹּרַת הָעֵלָה הִוא הָעֵלָה עַל מוֹקְדָה עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
This is the law of the burnt offering: this burnt offering (will remain) on its firewood, on the altar.

And Rashi explains, about the repetition of the word **הָעֵלָה** that:

לומר תורה אחת לכל העולים ואפילו פסולין שאם עלו לא ירדו

To tell us that this repetition is to teach us that there is only one law for all sacrifices, namely that once brought up to the altar, even if they were unfit פסול , they are not brought down again.

The חכמים explain why this is:

שהמזבח יקדשם

Because the altar makes them holy

We can learn from this that Nadav and Avihu's offerings of incense were accepted, even though they were unfit to start with, having been offered, they became fit and acceptable to Hashem.

We can also learn from this a very important lesson for today.

Our sages teach that the table, where we eat our meals with blessings before and after, and discuss Torah as we are doing now, has replaced the altar; and our daily prayers have replaced the sacrifices. We often feel that our blessings, discussions and prayers are at such a low level compared to what they could be, that we feel discouraged and wonder what good it's doing.

But remember *the altar makes them holy* , whatever the level of our learning, our prayers, our blessings, as long as we were sincere when we said them, they **are** accepted by Hashem.