



SHEMINI

This week, we are reading Parshat Shemini, which discusses, amongst other things, some events which occurred on the day the Mishkan was inaugurated.

Moshe thought that his brother, Aharon, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest), had made a mistake regarding an offering and criticized him. Aharon explained why his action was indeed proper. The Torah then tells us, "And Moshe heard and it was good in his eyes."

What lesson for life can we learn from Moshe's reaction? Many people, when they find out that they were wrong about something, become defensive. They are embarrassed by their mistake, and then try to defend themselves or attack the other person on a character basis, rather than dealing with the facts.

If we are aware of this tendency, we can learn to hold back the urge in ourselves and respond more appropriately. The goal of discussions should be achieving clarity and truth, not defending our own fragile egos.

The commentator, Rabbi Obadia Sforno, explains that Moshe felt joy upon hearing the reasoning of Aharon. He had pleasure that Aharon was indeed correct in his decision. This is a wonderful and high-level response. Moshe so loved wisdom and truth, and his brother Aharon, that he took great pleasure even though he himself was wrong and embarrassed. Our goal is to strive for truth and clarity, even at the risk of making ourselves look "less than perfect" for a few moments.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Cohen