

## "Wine and strong drink you shall not drink ... when you go into the Ohel Moed." (10:9)

This *halacha* similarly applies to any intoxicating drink which the *kohen* imbibes. The punishment of death is incurred, however, only in the event the *kohen* drinks an intoxicating quantity, which *Chazal* have determined is even a *reviis* of undiluted wine. There is obviously no question of the *kohen* actually being drunk, since this small amount would not cause intoxication. There is, however, a fear that his mind will not be totally clear and tranquil. To transmit Hashem's charge, one's mind must be sharp, his intelligence, clear. Only then can he maintain the proper focus in order to guide and inspire us in the correct manner of serving Hashem.

*Horav Eli Munk, z.l.*, cites the *Zohar* which adds a new dimension to interpreting this law. The *Zohar* explains that wine promotes a joyful spirit which is often expressed in ecstatic speech and song. Song, however, is the distinct province of the *Leviim*, who accompany the *korbanos* with their hymns. In contrast, the *avodah* service of the *kohanim* is to be performed in silence, for it requires total concentration. In addition, silence must be maintained with respect to the sinners who offer their sacrifices for penance.

As *Horav Munk* notes, the most appropriate drink for the *kohanim* is pure, clear water. The inspiration which stimulates the *kohanim* must not come from wine, but from *Torah* study whose "precepts gladden the heart." Artificial stimulation is not the correct approach to serving the Divine. We may add that at times we must make use of artificial "means" for "turning on" those who are either alienated or spiritually complacent, but this is only a vehicle for bringing them into the proximity of *Torah*. The rest must be performed without ostentation, reflecting sincerity and genuineness.