

TO DO AND DO AND DO AS COMMANDED

by Rabbi Label Lam

The sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire-pan, they put fire in the them and placed them. A fire came forth from before HASHEM an alien fire that He had not commanded them. A fire came forth from before HASHEM and consumed them, and they died before HASHEM. (Vayikra 10:1-2)

What was alien about it? That HASHEM had not Commanded them. (Ohr HaChaim)

The entire Jewish Nation was as the height of celebration! In the midst of the inauguration of the Tabernacle a terrible tragedy occurred. The two sons of Aaron were stricken by a heavenly fire. What terrible thing had Nadav and Avihu done that they were worthy of dying? They brought an offering to HASHEM! They wanted to draw close to HASHEM. King David himself had declared (Tehillim73:28), "What's good for me is being close to HASHEM." That's his personal definition of "goodness". Certainly there is nothing wrong with that! Rav Kook had written (Orot 135), "Closenes to G-d is the strongest natural desire in man...This desire drives man to seek to know and be..." What then had they done so wrong?

The Sefas Emes writes the following in the name of his grandfather the Chidushei Harim, "You can learn from this that the main part of the doing of a Mitzvah comes from power of the Commandment within it. Nadav and Avihu were spiritual giants of the world, and their intentions were based on the deepest secrets of unification. Even still, because they were not commanded to do so they were punished. How much more so can the positive be inferred that if one does a Mitzvah, fulfilling the Commandment of The Creator, even though he does not have such deep intentions is he worthy of life...The main thing is to do the Mitzvos of The Holy One Blessed is He and this comes to include even the simplest of people..."

This past week in the midst of the intermediate days of Pesach I received a call late in the evening to come and greet and give a tour of Yeshivas Ohr Somayach to a Jew that was visiting for the day from out of town. Within just a few minutes of the phone call I stood eye ball to eye ball with someone of whom I could say I was truly jealous. A simple middle aged Russia Jew who has been living in Tennessee for the past twenty years had an impulse to do what had not been done for him in his youth. He flew alone to New York and then trekked all the way up to Monsey to submit himself to a Bris Mila-circumcision and as a bonus he also had his "Pidyan HaBen".

That whole day he was the center-piece of celebration and welcoming by the Jewish community the likes of which he had never experienced. He was overwhelmed and was beaming with a deep

and sublime joy. He humbly expressed his gratitude and repeatedly testified at how different and special he felt. With reverence and wonderment he toyed with pronouncing his new Jewish name "Michoel" as a child would tinker with an authentic police badge. He hardly knew why he had done what he had done, which cost him the price of a plane flight and twenty-two stitches, but he did it. Now that it was done, I believe he understood that he possessed something that no one could ever take away from him.

There is an aphorism which helps me to justify why I do not do any electrical work around the house other than change the occasional light bulb, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!" Nadav and Avihu were no fools but they did rush into a place where angels fear to tread and were burnt. This simple fellow did as he was commanded, albeit without grandiose spiritual intentions, and tasted the taste of life. The Torah is that rich menu of opportunities and cautioning **to do and do and do as Commanded**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).