

IF YOU'RE NOT IN THE MOOD OF IT

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)

Why were Nadav and Avihu worthy of dying? Did they not have noble intentions of coming close to HASHEM? What can be better than that! King David had said, "As for me, being close to HASHEM is what's good!" (Tehillim: 73:28) That's the deepest and strongest desire within a person. What then did they do so wrong? The answer is easy. It is stated in the verse openly, "that He had not commanded them". They did what they were not commanded to do!

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 is what is meant by the statement we make when performing a Mitzvah, "Who has sanctified us with His Mitzvos..."

One of the things that we ask for every evening is that HASHEM should remove the opposing force from in front of us and from behind us. It is easy to understand why we want it removed from in front.

When the impediment or resistance is broken down then we can more easily do what has to done. However, what's the meaning or value of removing it from behind us. The answer is that that there are at least two types of Yetzer Horas. One is a secular materialistic force that blocks us and stalls us and thwarts our spiritual ambitions. That's the one in front. Then there is another type. It is a "Frum Yetzer Hora". Once we break through the first line of resistance, it begins to push us from behind. It makes us stay up too late learning, so we don't make Davening in the morning. It seduces us with a thirst for spiritual feelings and inspirational experiences. It pushes us to run into the Holy of Holies without permission. After all, who says doing a Mitzvah has to feel spiritually uplifting?!

This point really hit home one Shabbos morning when I was yet an unmarried Yeshiva student. I was

in an old Monsey Shul packed with fiery Neshamos. The walls were shaking from the thunderous clamor of voices. Everyone was rocking a swaying with sincerity. The plain wooden floors and wobbly old benches were saturated with the echo of decades of devoted learning and prayer in this landmark building. It was a scene to behold. At one point I just decided, maybe out of laziness or maybe curiosity, to sit back and observe like a spectator, disassociated like an anthropologist.

My posture caught the attention of a little boy from a family full of great- super children, real Tzadikim. This boy on the bench, on the other side of the table was maybe seven years old. He asked me point blank, "You don't know how to Daven?!" I told him just as bluntly, "I do but I'm just not in the mood of it right now." Then he responded to me in an almost sagely tone, "Who says that HASHEM likes it better when you Daven when you're in the mood of it!? Maybe HASHEM likes it better if you Daven **if you're not in the mood of it!**" DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.