

## He shall not enter at all times into the sanctuary. (16:2)

The only time that the *Kohen Gadol* was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies was on *Yom Kippur* – the holiest day of the year – the day set aside for spiritual atonement. Our *parsha* begins with the mention of the deaths of the two righteous sons of Aharon *HaKohen* and follows with the laws concerning the *Yom Kippur* service in the Temple. *Chazal* derive from this juxtaposition that the deaths of the righteous have an atoning effect similar to that of *Yom Kippur*. Likewise, we find a similar statement made by *Chazal*, noting that the mention of the death of Miriam *HaNeviyah* is juxtaposed upon the laws of *Parah Adumah*. This teaches that *missas tzaddikim*, the deaths of the righteous, have an atoning effect similar to the *Parah Adumah*. We can understand the relationship between the deaths of the righteous and *Yom Kippur*. *Parah Adumah*, however, is not a *korban*, ritual sacrifice. Why not compare *missas tzaddikim* to *korbanos*, all sacrifices? They serve as an atonement – unlike *Parah Adumah*, whose sanctity only maintains *kedushas damim*, monetary value.

**Horav Yitzchak Yaakov Rabinowitz, zl**, *Rav* of Ponevez, quotes the *Mishnah* in *Mesechas Parah* 3:11 that teaches that the *eifar Parah*, ash of the *Parah Adumah*, was divided into three parts: one part was placed in the *chail*; a second portion was placed on *Har HaMishchah*; the third portion was divided up between the *mishmaros*, watches, of the *Kohanim*. The part that went to the *chail* was set aside to purify the *Kohen* who prepared the *Parah Adumah*. The part that was placed upon the mountain was used for the *Kohanim*. The third portion was used for the people when it was necessary to purify them from spiritual defilement.

This process provides a strong similarity between the *Parah Adumah* and the deaths of *tzaddikim*. When a righteous person takes leave of his earthly abode, his spiritual persona is, likewise, divided into three parts. His holy *neshamah*, which retained its pristine purity throughout the *tzaddik's* earthly sojourn, returns to its rightful place beneath the *Kisei HaKavod*, Holy Throne. The second part is reserved for the *Kohanim*, which is a metaphor for the *chiddushei Torah*, novellae, which the scholar innovated. These writings are reserved for the scholars who will delve through them, thereby increasing their knowledge and allowing for the “lips” of the *tzaddik* to speak from the grave. The third portion is reserved for *Klal Yisrael*, the Jewish community, who should derive important life-altering lessons from the life of a *tzaddik*. The way he lived should illuminate for us the path we should follow and the manner in which we should live.

This is why *missas tzaddikim* is compared solely to the *Parah Adumah* – not to the general family of *korbanos*. The various sacrifices do not demand the owner's participation. The *Kohanim* perform the service, and the owner receives atonement. The *Parah Adumah*, however, demands owner participation, whereby the subject of the purification must take some of the ashes in order to purify himself. Likewise, when a *tzaddik* dies, the community must actually participate in “taking” a lesson from his life. Otherwise, the positive effect dissipates. It does not “just happen”. The person makes it happen.

A great *tzaddik* leaves this world. We read the obituary and biography – even the book which soon appears. The stories are inspirational; the anecdotes are meaningful. Sadly, the inspiration and meaning dissipate with time – unless we make the effort to study the life of the *tzaddik*, to take from his life and incorporate it in ours – just like the ashes of the *Parah Adumah*.