

Any (korban) Chatas from which some blood has been brought to the Ohel Moed, to effect atonement within the Holy shall not be eaten; it shall be burned in fire. (6:23)

Horav Raphael Katz, zl, the author of the *Marpé Lashon*, infers a profound lesson in *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty from this *pasuk*. There are instances during a man's spiritual growth when, with all good intention, he attempts to "jump the gun" and ascend to a higher spiritual plane for which he is not yet ready. A man must build upon a solid foundation of spiritual development. Otherwise, everything he has done--even his previous accomplishments--will lose its integrity. He proves his thesis from the fact that if a *Korban Chatas* is offered inside the *Heichal*, the blood is invalid and will not atone. Furthermore, the laws concerning blood which is sprinkled inside the *Azarah* are more stringent than those concerning blood which is sprinkled outside the *Azarah*. If one were to accept the blood in two cups and one was inadvertently sprinkled outside of the *Azarah*, the remaining cup remains acceptable for use. If, however, one of these cups was sprinkled inside the *Heichal*, the second cup is rendered invalid. Entering into an area where the sanctity is greater is worse than entering outside to a place of decreased sanctity.

The same idea applies to people. If a person "wanders" outside of the perimeter of *kedushah* and commits an *aveirah*, sin, he does not forfeit all of the *Torah* and *mitzvos* that he has accumulated. The good that he has done remains his just like the two cups of the blood of a Sin-offering; if one is sprinkled outside the perimeter, the remaining one maintains its holiness. If a person, on the other hand, attempts to go where he does not belong, he risks losing everything.

Who is a greater example than Ben Azzai, who was one of the four *tannaim* that entered the *Pardes* and lost his mind? He went to a place not accessible to everyone, and he paid dearly for it. This can be compared to one who stuffs himself with food to the point that he regurgitates everything he had eaten earlier.

How important is this lesson in contemporary times when everyone seeks to outdo his friend in the area of spirituality! One's spiritual growth should be systematic, building upon a strong foundation of commitment and observance. One should not attempt to ask questions in those areas from which he is adjured to stay away. Likewise, one should not philosophize in areas which are beyond his realm of understanding. Then, he will grow *me'chayil el chayil*, from strength to strength, increasing his spirituality at a pace commensurate with his personal level of achievement.