

Who will slaughter it outside the camp. And he has not brought it to the entrance of the Ohel Moed... it shall be considered as bloodshed for that man, he has shed blood. (17:3,4)

At one time, murder was an egregious sin, while hunting animals, taking the life of an animal for no other reason other than it suits one's fancy, was not considered sinful. The Torah teaches us otherwise. *Horav Simchah Wasserman, zl*, observes the text of the *pasuk* concerning *shechutei chutz*, slaughtering consecrated animals outside of the environs of the *Ohel Moed: Dam yeichashev...dam shafach*, "It shall be considered bloodshed... he has shed blood." When a person kills an animal in a manner upon which the Torah frowns or prohibits, it is considered *shefichas damim*, bloodshed. The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains how the perverse moral compass of contemporary society has affected man's outlook on the heinous act of taking a human life, and, by extension, the life of an animal. The reason man acquiesces to the prohibition of murder is because he is a human being. If killing a fellow human would be permissible, his own life would be in danger. An animal is of no significance, however, since it does not represent a threat to his own life.

In other words, the prohibition against murder is for the purpose of self-preservation. It is not because a human being has any intrinsic significance as a creation of Hashem, a *tzelem Elokim*, in the image of G-d. The Torah's perspective is quite different. Murder is prohibited because each and every person has immeasurable value. Otherwise, Hashem would not have created and sustained him. An animal has intrinsic value for material and spiritual purposes. To kill an animal arbitrarily, for no other reason than to satisfy one's desire for fun, is bloodshed. A consecrated animal is sanctified to Hashem for a higher purpose. Thus, it must be slaughtered in the hallowed environs of the *Ohel Moed*. Anywhere else is just plain bloodshed.

Gadlus ha'adam, the greatness of man, was the catch phrase describing the way of life which the *Alter, zl, m'Slabodka, Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel*, promoted. This term refers to the dignity, worth and potential of a human being. His *yeshivah* emphasized not only the intellectual aspects of Torah, but also the ethical and moral development of its students. The goal was to produce a *talmid chacham* who exemplified every nuance of the term *ben Torah*: vast knowledge of all Jewish texts, coupled with exemplary ethical behavior, kindness and a strong sense of responsibility for others.

While this is certainly the ideal, the primary focus of *gadlus ha'adam* was each and every person's inherent potential. The concept of *gadlus ha'adam* empowers one to look toward horizons that, on the surface, due to his talent and abilities, may appear beyond him. He must realize the sky is the limit. If one applies himself and works hard, he can cultivate his virtues and compassion in order to establish a strong sense of purpose. Furthermore, he has no limit to the positive impact he can

potentially have on others. Character and integrity are two qualities which, in today's society, are at a premium. One who develops these attributes and incorporates them into his interface – both with Hashem and his fellow man – will impact others in a manner that will bear fruit, beyond his expectations.