

“And you shall make known to them the path in which they should go.” (18:20)

In the *Talmud Bava Kama* 100a, *Chazal* indicate that the word *bah*, “in which,” is a reference to *kevurah*, burial of the dead. *Gedolei Yisrael* were extremely meticulous in attending to the needs of the deceased.

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, writes about *Horav Chaim Sofer, z.l.*, one of the preeminent Torah leaders in Hungary, who made it a point to involve himself with those deceased who either did not have a *minyán*, quorum, by their bedside when they passed from this world or did not have anyone to recite *Kaddish* for them.

In the preface to his *sefer, Kol Sofer*, on *Mishnayos*, *Rav Chaim* writes that at first he attempted to join the ranks of the *Chevrah Kadisha*, those who washed and prepared the body of the deceased for burial. However, his delicate nature prevented him from participating in this task. He then decided to care for the needs of those individuals who had no family, or were incarcerated in government prisons. He arranged to be with them during those last fearful moments when their only request and need is not to be alone.

Rav Chaim also accepted upon himself that, immediately following the *brachah, Ha'machazir neshamos l'figarim meisim*, “He Who returns souls to dead bodies,” he would study *Mishnayos* and recite *Kaddish D'Rabbanan* for those souls.

Rav Chaim would conclude his study with the following poignant entreaty: “*Ribbono Shel Olam*, Master of all creatures, Creator of all souls, gaze down from Heaven and see how I, a simple creature of flesh and blood, have acted compassionately on behalf of the soul of a person whom I neither knew nor sensed his pain. Yet, I cared about him. Hashem, Who is so infinitely great and merciful, take pity upon the holy and pure soul of the deceased which You created and You fashioned. You are well aware of, and understand, the terrible pain which he underwent. Take pity upon him and forgive his sins and indiscretions. In the merit of each letter and word of *Mishnayos* that I recite and think about, may all of those *neshamos* for whom I study find eternal repose in Your Presence.”