

He buried him in the depression, in the land of Moav, opposite Bais-Peor, and no one knows his burial place to this day. (34:6)

Chazal teach that Moshe *Rabbeinu's* grave had been ready for him since the six days of creation. Furthermore, his burial place has never been revealed. The fact that his burial place is one of the ten miraculous phenomena created during twilight on *Erev Shabbos* of the sixth day of creation endows it with a supernatural makeup. Thus, it has never been discovered. *Rashi* explains that Moshe was buried opposite Peor in order to atone for the incident of mass immorality which took place there. The sin committed with the pagan women of Moav undermines the very underpinnings of our faith. Morality is a foundation of the spiritual makeup of *Am Yisrael*. An incursion into the fiber of our morality is a breach in our essence as Jews. Thus, Moshe was buried there to atone for a sin in which we descended to the nadir of depravity.

We wonder whether the sin at Peor was the gravest transgression committed by the Jewish People during their wilderness journey? Did it supersede the sin of the *meraglim*, spies, or the Golden Calf? Why did this sin, more so than any other, require Moshe's burial place to be in its proximity in order to effect atonement? Furthermore, it seems that a component of that atonement was the fact that Moshe's burial place eludes discovery. Indeed, this is part of the nature of its miraculous creation. How is this to be understood?

Horav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, zl, explains that the sin of Peor was unlike any other transgression committed by the people. This sin created a taint in the very backbone of *Klal Yisrael*. This time it was the very core of the Nation. Moreover, this time, Moshe was with them in the camp – and they still sinned! This time, Moshe did not immediately respond to the outrageous and flagrant desecration of Hashem's Name. It was Pinchas who reacted, and when he pointed it out to Moshe, our leader deferred to Pinchas. This was no ordinary sin and, certainly, no ordinary circumstances.

Rav Weinberg distinguishes between this sin and the earlier ones. *Klal Yisrael* was standing at the end of the nation's forty-year sojourn from the Egyptian bondage to the entrance into the Holy Land. Moshe has been with them the entire time, absorbing the brunt of their inappropriate behavior, taking their side, supporting them, looking for any opportunity to present their infraction in a positive light. Moshe, however, knew that one day it would all come to an end. He could not always be there for them. One day – very shortly – they would have to fend for themselves. They were going to have to become accustomed to the fact that their quintessential leader, who had always been there to defend them, was soon leaving. Why not send them the message now, by not intervening? If they could not surmount the challenge, what would they do in later years?

Miraculously, *Klal Yisrael* held their ground. Many Jews succumbed and died, but the majority, under the daring and courageous leadership and example set forth by Pinchas, were able to

triumph over the adversity. Pinchas came from within the people, which proves that within Klal Yisrael there exists a source of life capable of overcoming spiritual adversity. We are inherently a holy people in our own right. When a challenge arises, when an infraction occurs, we know how to deal with it.

With this in mind, Rav Weinberg explains the above *pasuk*. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was *Rabban Shel Kol Yisrael*, Our Nation's quintessential *Rebbe*. His merit stands on our behalf even after his passing. *Klal Yisrael* is inextricably bound with Moshe; thus, even after he is gone from the scene, his spiritual influence continues to inspire and support us: *Tzidkaso omedes l'ad*, His righteousness stands forever. This concept is revealed by the fact that he is buried opposite Peor, to teach that our nation's spiritual protection is in the dual merit of Moshe, and, after him, the various Princes of Torah of every ensuing generation. At Peor, Pinchas came forward from the midst of the people to take a stand and overcome the challenge. Our nation is inherently holy. This was the lesson imparted by the Peor incident. We have the support of the "Moshe *Rabbeinus*" of every generation; we are a holy nation because of our connection with Hashem. The leadership of "Moshe," coupled with *Klal Yisrael's* inherent *kedushah*, is our source of strength.

The uniqueness of the Peor incident was the lesson it imparted for the ages. Yes, we can make it – even when Moshe *Rabbeinu* has "disappeared." His memory, legacy and especially his inspiration live on and continue to provide merit for his flock. Furthermore, we have learned that we are unlike any other nation. Our national spiritual DNA is *kedushah*, sanctity, which is connected to Hashem. Whatever the challenge, despite the obstacles that stand in our way, we will surmount them. We triumphed over Peor – we will likewise triumph over the "Peors" of every generation.