

And no one knows his burial place to this day. (34:6)

Rashi quotes *Chazal* (*Sotah* 14a) who say that Hashem buried Moshe *Rabbeinu*. Rabbi Yishmael contends that Moshe buried himself, since the Torah writes, “No one knows Moshe’s burial place.” If this is the case, another person could not have buried him, indicating either that he was either buried by Hashem or that he buried himself. The *Zohar HaKadosh* adds that Moshe’s “burial place” is not only a reference to his physical burial place in this world, but also to his exalted place of repose in *Olam Habba*, the World to Come. No one/no other soul is permitted access into his *heichal*, spiritual edifice/chamber, except for (the soul of) one woman. This holy soul is that of Bisyah *bas* Pharaoh. She merited this singular reward because she saved Moshe initially and then raised him in the palace of the king. It was her devotion and self-sacrifice that catalyzed his rise to greatness and distinction.

At first glance, this is an extraordinary reward to be bestowed upon a woman who saved a child and saw to his physical needs. *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, underscores her work as also seeing to his spiritual welfare. It was Bisyah who sought out Yocheved (Moshe’s mother) to serve as a nursemaid to the Jewish infant. Certainly, Yocheved did much more than attend to the infant Moshe’s physical/nourishment needs, she addressed his spiritual development as well.

With this in mind, can we begin to imagine the *z’chus*, merit, of he who is able to rescue a Jewish child destined for a secular education – especially if that child excels in the field of spiritual development and becomes a noted Torah scholar. It all belongs to him. All of the *mitzvos* and *z’chusim* achieve by this child – turned man will serve as a wellspring of reward for the individual who had saved this child.

Enabling one to study Torah: empowering one who has been studying to continue; encouraging a husband to attend a *shiur*, study with a *chavrusa*, study partner: all go under this rubric. One who rescues a fellow Jew from the grasp of secularism, apathy, the allure of modernity, self-delusion and the various ills that plague and prevent us from realizing our Jewish destiny, earns the most incredible reward – similar to that of Bisyah. While we will probably not save a Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the potential exists. Veritably, we do not know who we will save, how much of an impact we will make, and how far-reaching it will be. *V’heishiv lev avos al banim, v’lev banim al avosam*.

It is probably more common for children to return to their parents’ heritage; the other way around, however, in which parents and even grandparents -- who have either long forgotten the meaning of observant Judaism or never knew, turn to their children’s heritage -- is a less common occurrence – but it does happen.

Shuvu is an organization in *Eretz Yisrael*, founded by *Horav Yaakov Pam, zl*, whose purpose is to reach out to Russian *olim*, immigrants, through schools and educational outreach programs. Following is one of their many success stories.

Nina was a young girl growing up in communist Russia. She remembered when her elderly *zaide*, with his long flowing white beard and sunken eyes, told her, “Nina, never forget these words!” Indeed, he had a pleading look in his eyes.

“*Zaidy*,” Nina said, “you have no reason to worry. I will never forget them.” Nina went over to her grandmother, who was sitting on an old cushioned chair reciting *Tehillim*, and gave her a big hug. Her grandmother put down the *Tehillim*, held her tightly and said, “Nina, remember those words as long as you live!”

“Of course, *Bubby*,” Nina reassured her. “How could I ever forget them?”

Easier said than done. Many decades had passed since that interchange between Nina and her grandparents. The blissful days of Nina’s youth in Russia had disappeared. Her grandparents were long gone. With their demise went Nina’s Jewish lifestyle and values. Yet, Nina kept her promise. For years, she remembered those special words. Living in Communist Russia, however, a country in which anything Jewish was considered an unwelcome intruder, Nina slowly forgot the words. She tried very hard to remember those words – to no avail. They were embedded deep in the recesses of her mind, and, try as she might, she could not access them. For years, the memories of her grandparents and their last request continued to haunt her. Countless sleepless nights were spent tossing in bed as she tried in vain to recollect those words. As is common, as time goes on, our memories fade, and so did hers – until 2004.

The *Shuvu* office in Kfar Saba is a busy place. It serves in many ways as a spiritual hub for the students and parents whom they mentor. One day, an elderly woman entered the office gesticulating wildly, speaking in incomprehensible Russian, trying to get someone’s attention. This entire time, tears were streaming down her face. This woman was not a stranger to the *Shuvu* office, since she brought her granddaughter Katya to school every morning. Clearly, something was on her mind today. She was usually very closed-mouth when she came with Katya. Something must have occurred to precipitate this outburst.

The office staff was used to “unique” happenings. Russians are very emotional and especially so in a new land and strange environment. None of these immigrants had previously been exposed to Judaism. All of this was new to them. They gave the woman a drink and, after a while, she was calm enough to speak to. They asked her how they could help her.

The woman, who answered to the name of Nina, explained, “My grandparents were very religious, and I loved them very much. I still remember how they would repeat words to me over and over again. Though I promised that I would never forget the words they had instructed me to remember – I forgot them. Sadly, no one remained who could remind me.

“Last night, as I was putting my Katya to bed, she told me she had forgotten to do something. Suddenly, she sat up in bed, put her hand over her eyes and began to say, ‘*Shema Yisrael*.’

‘Suddenly, I remembered. Those were the words I had promised not to forget.” With tears streaming down her face, she said, “I have come here because I want to thank you for enabling me to keep my promise and to thank *Shuvu* for giving me back my heritage.”