

And He buried him in the depression. (34:6)

Moshe Rabbeinu received the ultimate reward of having Hashem attend to his death and burial. Our leader led an extraordinary life, one that established a standard for how a Jew should live. He confronted challenges, overcame personal loss, dealt with a mutiny and overcame his own physical speech impediment. He reached the epitome of service to Hashem and to his people. On Simchas Torah, we read of his mortal passing, as we conclude the annual cycle of reading the Torah. On what should be the happiest day of the year, celebrating another year of Torah study, we record the death of Moshe. The message is simple: No one, not even Moshe, our quintessential leader, lives forever. Everyone has his designated time when he will be called home. It is how we live up until that final moment that determines the true quality of our lives. Moshe led a perfect life, which we celebrate on this auspicious day. We also derive from here that Hashem addresses the needs of all Jews. Living alone does not mean that one dies alone. Hashem accompanies him as he goes on his final journey.

An avreich, kollel fellow, had occasion to visit a secular Jewish cemetery near one of the Holy Land's larger cities. He had a relative who had passed away. Although the family member was not yet observant, the avreich felt that it was incumbent upon him to go to his grave to recite Tehillim on behalf of his neshamah. As he was leaving the cemetery, he noticed that the monument over a nearby grave had toppled over. A wood board with the name of the deceased was put in its place. He attempted to right it, to no avail. It was just too heavy for one person without any assistance to raise it up. He left the cemetery feeling bad that he had been unsuccessful in raising the monument. A week later, he visited Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl, and casually related the incident about the fallen monument. Rav Aharon Leib asked him what he was doing about it. He replied that he really was not in a position to erect a monument over the grave of someone with whom he had never interacted. Additionally, being that it was a chiloni, secular Jewish section, the niftar, deceased, had probably not been observant. Why should he bother?

Rav Shteinman told him that, if he had happened upon the grave, it was a sign that it was not by "chance." Everything occurs for a reason and by Heavenly design. The avreich countered that, after inquiring, he was informed that righting the monument would run in the vicinity of a few thousand dollars, money which he did not have. The gaon replied that he should raise the money. It was his mitzvah. The fellow listened and began raising funds from his family members. It was sorely deficient. If he were to raise the needed funds, he would have to commit himself to serious fundraising. He soon forgot about it, as he went on with his business as usual.

On Succos of that year, as he slept in the succah, he dreamt that a voice was calling out to him, "Why do you refuse to repair my monument?" This went on a number of times, with the voice of the deceased becoming louder and louder. Immediately after Succos, he turned to the Chevra Kaddisha of that city and related to them the entire incident. He discovered that they had a special fund dedicated to repairing graves and monuments. He asked them to repair that monument. He gave the money that he already had raised to tzedakah in memory of the deceased.

Afterwards, he researched the background of the deceased to confirm if he had ever been observant, and, if so, why was he buried in this cemetery? It was discovered that he had never married and that he had hailed from a distinguished and devout family. He had died in a car

accident in that area and, since he did not leave over any biological descendants, he was buried in the closest cemetery. It was Heavenly decreed that the deceased have, not only a proper burial, but also, a proper monument in tribute to his short life. No one should die alone. Hashem sees to it that a person will receive his due.