

## And Moshe, the servant of Hashem, died there...and He (Hashem) buried him." (34:5,6)

In His glory, Hashem buried Moshe *Rabbeinu*. The *Midrash* relates how it happened that Moshe merited for Hashem to personally take charge of his burial. During the final days prior to the exodus from Egypt, while everyone was occupying themselves with "relieving" the Egyptians of their money, Moshe sought to fulfill the promise made many years earlier to Yosef: that his bones would be taken out of Egypt. Moshe spent three days and nights searching throughout the country, looking everywhere in the hope that he would locate Yosef's coffin. According to one tradition, Serach bas Asher approached Moshe to ask him why he was so fatigued. Moshe explained that he had been searching for Yosef's coffin for three days. She said, "Come with me, and I will show you where he is buried." She took him to the Nile, whereupon Yosef's coffin rose from the depths. Moshe took it and personally carried it. When Hashem saw Moshe's devotion to the *middah* of *chesed*, He declared, "Moshe! You might think that you performed a simple act. By your life, the kindness that you performed was very significant. You carried Yosef's coffin while the rest of *Klal Yisrael* were occupied with carrying their gold and silver. For this, you will merit that I will be personally involved in your burial."

If we note the text of the *Midrash*, we infer that *Chazal* question the reason for Moshe's unique merit. Is it any wonder that Moshe was worthy of this distinction? Perhaps he did not do enough. Does not *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, on behalf of *Klal Yisrael* for forty years carry its own merit? His willingness to have his name erased from the *Torah*, if Hashem would not forgive *Klal Yisrael* for their participation in the Golden Calf, should be significant. He rose to become *Adon ha'Neviim*, Master of All Prophets, the quintessential leader of *Klal Yisrael*. He became the vehicle through whom Hashem gave the *Torah*. This fact alone should warrant a unique relationship with, and reward from, the Almighty.

**Horav Chaim Elazary, zl**, feels the *Midrash* is emphasizing another aspect of Moshe's character and *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty. Had Moshe turned to any of the *Zekeinim*, Elders, or Yehoshua, Nadav, Avihu or Aharon *Ha'Kohen* to take care of Yosef's bones, that individual certainly would have fulfilled his request. Moshe did not delegate this *mitzvah* to anyone else. Moshe personally undertook to perform this final *chesed* for Yosef. While an agent might have performed the same task, it was a "*mitzvah bo yoser m'bishlucho*," a greater *mitzvah* if one acts personally, rather than delegate the deed to an agent. "Emptying out" Egypt was also a *mitzvah*. Yet, Moshe chose the *mitzvah* that did not accord him additional benefits. He personally searched, he alone carried the coffin, a task for which he received no benefit other than the pure *mitzvah* itself. This was *chesed shel emes*, pristine kindness of the highest order. It was pure altruism. This G-d - like activity, behaving in a manner in which only Hashem acts, earned him the reward *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure. Thus, when the time would come for Moshe to pass from this world, the Almighty would personally attend to his needs.