

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

According to one exposition of *Rashi*, the Torah alludes to the idea that Moshe *Rabbenu* buried himself.

Nothing is above Hashem and His relationship with Moshe. Indeed, we have no manner of fathoming our leader's greatness. Thus, burying himself, although certainly possible, is a concept that eludes us. Perhaps, the following story might shed some light on this idea.

While no mortal can possibly bury himself, he could perform acts of kindness that earn him a place of burial which, for all intents and purposes, would have otherwise probably not have occurred, as was the case in the following story.

One morning, a middle-aged Jewish fellow of Russian extraction called the Telshe Yeshivah asking for guidance on how to deal "Jewishly" with his father's body. He wanted to have *Kaddish* recited, but he did not know how. Neither he nor his father had any religious ties to the community. When asked where the funeral was to be held, he replied that he had not planned a funeral, since his father had prepaid for a cremation service. When the *kollel* fellow heard this, he immediately called the Rabbi in Canton, Ohio, an activist who, through *Chevra Kaddisha*, the Jewish Burial Society, had been involved in a number of such cases, to see if he could do something to prevent a Jew from being cremated. The son had no qualms either way. In other words, if the *Chevra* could halt the proceedings, he was fine with it. If they could not, he was also amenable to that. Rabbi A.J. Kushner, the Rabbi in Canton, immediately went to work. He called another like-minded rabbi, and they went down to the cremation center which was manned by one individual. Obviously, this is not the type of profession that appeals to most people. Thus, the person in charge was sort of "different." They appeared at his place of "work" in the middle of the night and asked for the body of Mr. Vainshtok. He looked at the bearded rabbis as if they were some form of apparition. A man who earns his living from cremating corpses lives on a very different mental plane than most people. His immediate response was, "No." They were taking away his business. After it was ascertained that he earned \$150.00 per body, they immediately paid him, and even threw in a tip. The next morning, Mr. Vainshtok reached *Kever Yisrael*, after having had a *taharah* and dressed in *tachrichim* as befits any *Yid*. He was buried in the presence of a minyan in the *Chesed Shel Emes* cemetery.

End of story? No. Someone who has lived a totally secular life, to the point that he was prepared to be cremated, must have a special *z'chus*, merit, to have his body plucked from the furnace and buried like a Jew. Rabbi Kushner did his due diligence and learned that Mr.

Vainshtok had been a male aide to a Holocaust survivor who had spent the last months of his life in a nursing home. Mr. Vainshtok would take a bus every day from his apartment in a housing complex and travel to the home where he spent his day ministering to the needs of his patient. Among his various tasks was to put on *tefillin* with this man and recite the *b'rachah* (from a

transliterated copy of the blessings). He had never missed a day. He took his responsibility seriously. Quite possibly, it was his devotion to his patient and his respect for putting on his *tefillin* in accordance with *halachah* that earned him the special merit he needed to be buried as a Jew. Perhaps this is what is meant by burying oneself. Mr. Vaynshtok's actions during his lifetime ensured his burial in *Kever Yisrael*. I think that might be viewed as burying himself.