

seen my father, Harav Chaim Walkin, *shlita*, the Mashgiach of Yeshivas Ateres Yisrael, now that I had received an entry permit, I was planning to arrive in Eretz Yisrael on Erev Lag BaOmer. First I would go to Yerushalayim to visit my father, and then later that night, we would go to Meron. The plan was to return to Yerushalayim for Shabbos.

When my son heard this plan, he told me that even though he'd gotten a ticket for the *hadlakah* at Toldos Aharon, and had made up with his friends that they would go together, and had even rented an apartment in Tzefas for Shabbos, because of the mitzvah of *kibbud av* he would forego all those plans. He'd wait for me and join me wherever I went.

Indeed, I arrived in Eretz Yisrael on Erev Lag BaOmer in the afternoon. Moshe waited for me, and we went first to visit my father, *shlita*. We spent a few hours there, and we also heard a *vaad* that my father gave to the *bochurim* of his *yeshivah*. We then set out for Meron late that night.

As we neared Har Meron, we were stopped by police and told that we had to turn around and go home, because a tragedy had occurred and they had shut down the entire mountain to visitors. No one could get there.

I was disappointed, because I was finally in Eretz Yisrael, and almost at Meron, yet I couldn't even go in and say a *kapittel Tehillim* or write a *kvittel*. Yet, my son Moshe was much more distraught. He'd had a ticket to pour the oil at the *hadlakah*; he'd missed that, and the entire *hadlakah* and the experience with his friends. Not only that, but now he wouldn't even be able to say *Tehillim* at the *tziyun* of Rashbi. But we had no choice, turned around and drove back to Yerushalayim, hoping that all this was for the best.



On Friday morning, when the magnitude of what had happened became clear, my son Moshe was stricken. He was trembling at the news that two of his closest friends, whom he was supposed to be standing next to, Dov Steinmentz, *z"l*, and Yosef Yitzchak Kohn, *z"l*, had perished in the tragedy.

We were in absolute shock at how clearly the double mitzvah of *kibbud av v'eim* – mine for my father, and Moshe for his father – as he had given up his plans to perform the mitzvah, had saved his life, *bechasdei Hashem*.

Reb Aharon concluded:

I thought I was going for my father, but actually, I had traveled for my son Moshe, to save his life...

Now, all we can do is look clearly at what the Torah promised (*Shemos* 20:12): "*Kabeid es avicha v'es imecha lema'an ya'arichun yamecha*, honor your father and your mother in order that your days be lengthened..."