

A Break in the Action

The Upholstery Maker

Y. Ish-Yisroel, MD

Modiin-ilit, Israel

I stood respectfully a few paces behind her as she stood at his graveside. It was an autumn day when the winds whirled up the fallen leaves. She cried silently while saying Tehilim.

Abe Kaplan fell in the street in 1975 at about this time of year. He had always been healthy, but these were the years before AEDs and CPR and he slipped away. I often imagined the loss to this woman - then a 14 year old whose father left without warning, without a chance to say goodbye. She was lost, bewildered - the man she had patterned her life around was gone.

I never met Abe Kaplan, but I know a lot about him. He rarely lost his temper and was one of those people who seemed to know everyone. When people were uptight or nervous he was always the calm in the storm. He was a kind man, whose work to help others - by design, never by chance - went unnoticed. I think he never met a man he didn't respect enough to be friendly to.

It was getting dark. Night always follows day, but day always returns. Again, not by chance but by design. I escorted her silently away from my father-in-law's final resting place. I couldn't say it then and perhaps still would find it difficult, but I miss this man I never met. You see, often we live our lives as reflections of those we so believe in.

