



## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OU ISRAEL  
ABERMAN@OUISSRAEL.ORG

When my family made *aliyah* to Israel over 40 years ago, the first thing my parents did was take us to some of the holiest places in Israel. The first was to the Kotel. The second was to *Kever Rachel*. And the third was to Chevron, to the *Maarat Hamachpelah*. We went to these places because my parents wanted us to understand why we were in Israel, and how important these places were to us not only in the past but in the present as well.

My parents are master educators, and I assume they knew what kind of effect this would have on their children. I can speak for all my siblings when I say that day is seared in our memories and in our hearts. The statement they made then couldn't be clearer. We are here in Israel, and we are connected to this Land in such a close way - to every single stone and piece of earth in this country. We understood in our bones that this is where Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, Leah, Yosef, and all the rest of the *shevatim*, walked and lived and acted. My

parents showed us that day why these places are so holy to us.

As a child, I was so excited to go to *Maarat Hamachpela* and to see our forefathers. These people we grow up hearing about and studying their stories but always as a far away tale, both in time and in space. I remember thinking about how impressive the building looked from the outside (and both the outside and inside have not changed much today from then). I remember going with my father and mother to look at all the signs pointing to the areas of each of the *Avot* and *Imahot*. As we stood and looked, my parents talked about each one.

Ever since that visit, the parsha of Chayei Sara has come to life for me. This was the place that Avraham Avinu himself chose when looking for a burial site for his beloved wife Sarah, buying it from Ephron Hachiti for 400 shekalim. From that day, I have the location, the scenery, ingrained in my memory. In my mind's eye, I can imagine what Avraham saw when he approached Ephron to buy it.

That is why it is so important to visit these sites. *Baruch Hashem*, Chevron this Shabbat, of Parshat Chayei Sara, is packed with tens of thousands of Jews that come from all over the world. Last week, in Toronto, I was fascinated to see many Jews preparing to get on a plane to Israel the following week to go to Shabbat Chayei Sara in Chevron, and then fly back afterward to Toronto. This is clearly an event that people really connect to.

My wife and I are proud of our children

ברוך ד"ר האמת

**Chaim Avraham Fischer z"l**

Passed away on  
שבת ח' אב תשפ"ה (2025)

Missed by his wife Peshi,  
5 children,  
22 grandchildren,  
23 great grandchildren,  
and the community  
of Mitzpe Yericho

learning in institutions all over the country. Our sixth son is learning in Kiryat Arba and goes down to *Maarat HaMachpela* every week, and the whole atmosphere of build-up for Shabbat Chayei Sara is coming into our house even more this year. To be honest, I have not been to Chevron for Shabbat Chayei Sara since I got married. But I look forward to hearing the stories and the excitement from my children, my friends and my relatives, who go there every year.

When so many people go to Chevron for Shabbat, it sends a message. Just like many of those who make *aliyah* have to get their documents apostilled to verify them before coming, so too these visits are our national apostille that verify that this land is ours and belongs to Avraham Avinu who purchased it. We are showing both *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and the nations of the world that we stand behind this purchase and know it is ours. That we take it so seriously because it is our history, our origins.

A nice custom started in Elon Moreh a number of years ago to have over many families on Shabbat Lech Lecha. This is the Shabbat that we read about Avraham Avinu coming to the Land of Israel and going first to Elon Moreh. The goal of the custom is to help others relive this connection and be part of the story of Avraham.

Both in Elon Moreh and Chevron, going there is being part of our history. It's not just a story of the past, but it impacts and greatly influences who we are today, our connection to this beautiful land. And it is ingrained in the education that we are giving our children.

The first Rashi in the Torah asks why the Torah starts with Bereshit, the creation of heaven and earth, instead of starting with the



first law of the Torah? He answers, “*Sheyomru umot ha’olam listim atem*” - that people will one day say that this land isn’t ours, that we stole it. Therefore, Rashi says, we see that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* created everything, “*et ha’shamayim v’et ha’aretz,*” and that He decided to give this land to us. The best way to represent this notion and send this message to ourselves, to the nations, and to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, is by living and visiting these places and showing how important they are to us.

Allow me to add to what Rashi is saying. The Torah could have been a very clear book of mitzvot. Do this, don’t do that. It could have been the stats section you can find in Torah

**In loving memory of**  
**Yaakov Fogelman ז"ל**  
**יעקב בן אלחנן דוד ז"ל**  
on his 10<sup>th</sup> Yahrtzeit  
כ"ב במרחשוון  
*Missed by his children,  
grandchildren, family, friends  
and students whose lives he touched*

Tidbits. Yet the whole book of Bereshit has very few mitzvot in it, but it is still important. Why? Because we learn so much about *why* the mitzvot are important, about who we are as a people, and the laws underneath laws such as *derech eretz* and *middot* learned from our forefathers and foremothers. We learn why the Land in which we do so many mitzvot is valuable and crucial to our identity. If the Torah was just a book of rules, we would lose all of that. And we need that to live our lives as Jews and to tell the world who we are and what is important to us. Understanding this and teaching it to our children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, will create the change we need to see in Israel.

I want to give a tremendous *yashar koach* to the people of Chevron who put up tens of thousands of people every year. And, a tremendous *yashar koach* to the security forces that make sure that it happens every year and Baruch Hashem happens in the most organized fashion possible.

There's something special about the people of Chevron. On some of the many missions that we brought to Israel over the last two years, we made sure to meet up with Eliyahu Liebman, the father of Elyakim Shlomo Liebman hy"d, as well as Tzvika Mor, the father of

Eitan Mor, who, *Baruch Hashem*, just returned from captivity in Gaza. And whenever speaking to them and their incredible wives, you were able to see the passion, the love, the connection, and how being so close to *Maarat HaMachpelah* is impacting their entire being. It is with thanks to Jews living in these places that we are able to come visit in a safe way.

I make sure to go to *Maarat HaMachpelah* on a regular basis but a number of years ago, my family went back to *Maarat HaMachpelah*. We had two siblings who were born in Israel after we made *aliyah*. But we took a picture of our parents and the six of us at *Maarat HaMachpelah* to revisit that, to relive that experience of going to Chevron on the first day that we were in Israel. And *b'ezrat Hashem*, our children and grandchildren will be able to see our connection to this Land, which will pass on to the next generations who will see a built and thriving Jewish presence throughout our entire historic land, our homeland, and with the return of many Jews from around the exile, from around the world to the land of Israel. *Bimhera b'yameinu*, very soon with a rebuilt Yerushalayim and the ingathering of the exiles.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
aberman@ouisrael.org

לע"נ  
ר' אפרים בן שמואל יעקב ז"ל  
**Fredrick Wartski ז"ל**

On his *yahrzeit*  
25<sup>th</sup> MarCheshvan 5778  
by his son, grandchildren  
and great grandchildren

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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