



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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Many families have the beautiful *minhag* of holding a Tu Bishvat seder, where they gather as many different types of fruits as possible, sing songs, and take the opportunity to give thanks to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for the great bounty we see in Eretz Yisrael. It is incredible to walk into the Machane Yehuda shuk and see the array of fruits that are growing in our Land that HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave us. It makes you wonder whether perhaps there are more fruits and trees growing in the Land of Israel now than has ever grown here in history.

Just about two weeks ago, as we have done for many years, my family and I sat down for our Tu Bishvat seder. As we thanked

HaKadosh Baruch Hu for all these different species of fruits and nuts that grow in the Land of Israel, it brought me back to a recent trip my wife and I took up north. Between Covid-19, and the war, and so much going on, it had been a long time since we were able to get away. So we took the opportunity.

The north is so breathtaking, so beautiful and stunning, but especially during those two days we were there. After several days of rain, the sun was shining through, and everything was so green. We were able to hike the Arbel and Nachal Tavor, and enjoy some of the Mehadrin Kosher cuisine up north. It was really spectacular. On the way home, I said to my wife that we couldn't pass by Moshav Sde Ilan in the Galil without going in and visiting my cousin.

Let me tell you about my cousin, Ira. Growing up, he was always the cousin we saw only a few times - usually at big family get-togethers - because he was in Florida and we were in New York. His family was not religious and ours was, so it meant seeing each other was not so common. However, several years after my family made aliyah, we found out that Ira was coming to learn in a yeshiva in Israel. I was pretty surprised. But as it turns out, he and his father had attended a couple of shiurim down in Florida, saw the beauty of Torah, and decided to reconnect. Ira joined the religious community and that is where he has been ever since.

He met a wonderful Beis Yaakov girl named Tamar, and they got married. When we heard that they had decided to make aliyah and live

**May the Torah Tidbits learned
in the month of Adar
be in memory of and לעילוי נשמות**

Our sister, mother and grandmother

Judy Aronson a"h
יהודית בת יצחק ע"ה
ר"ח אדר

**Our grandfather
and great grandfather**

Harry Messnick ז"ל
צבי בן אברהם משה ז"ל
ז' אדר

Our father and grandfather

Irving Posen ז"ל
יצחק בן שמואל אליהו ז"ל
כח' אדר

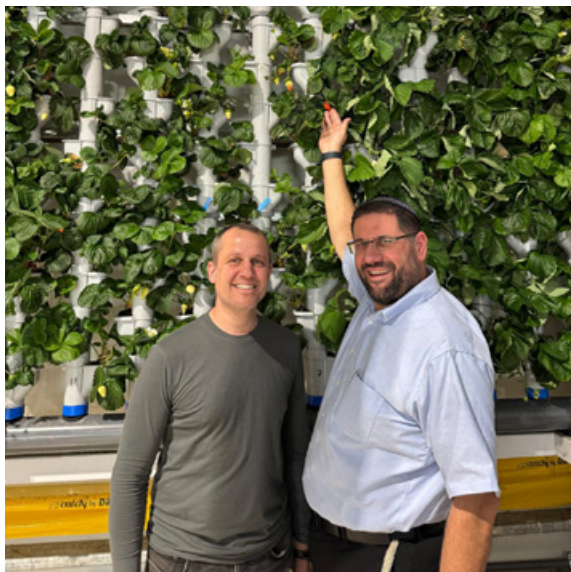
***The Posen, Grafstein,
Slonim and Riback families***

in Israel, it was a cause for celebration for my family and I. To have family join you in Israel is such a special and exciting thing. The even greater news was that Ira and Tamar decided to live in Maaleh Adumim in Mitzpe Nevo, which was amazing because it was so close to Yerushalayim. We would be able to see them often and make up for lost time.

Several years after this, Ira called me to tell me he had exciting news. They were selling their house, and buying a farm in Moshav Sde Ilan, not far from Tzomet Golani in the beautiful Galil. As many of you know, I'm not a man who holds back his words; I usually say what's on my mind. I said, "Are you nuts? You've got a beautiful place in Ma'ale Adumim. Why would you leave to go all the way up north? It's so far! It's a great place to go on vacation, but to live there?" Ira respectfully responded, "One day you'll come and see what we hope to build, and maybe you'll change your mind."

A couple of weeks later, I happened to be up north and called Ira. He said the house they bought wasn't quite ready yet, but I could see how it was going. So I drove over and he gave me the grand tour. His house was the last house in Sde Ilan, with incredible views. The scenery was stunning. But it was summer, and everything was dry, with a lot of weeds. The house was all shattered and the windows were broken. I wasn't yet convinced but I saw the potential.

About two years later, we went to celebrate the Bat Mitzvah of one of his daughters. And let me tell you, we saw the amazing house that he and Tamar built together. There's the famous saying about making the desert bloom.



Well, they made the Galil bloom. They put so much hard work into their home and their community, and it was truly remarkable to see their impact and influence, and the celebration of the community with them in their simcha.

This past time up north, when my wife and I decided to stop in for just a minute to give Ira and Tamar a hug, Ira said, "Come look what we're doing!" He first showed us their vacation rental properties (*tzimmers*) that they

**In loving memory of our husband,
father, grandfather
and great-grandfather**

Moshe Loshinsky ז"ל

משה בן פרץ ז"ל

נלב"ע בכ"ז שבט תשפ"ה

On his first yahrzeit

**We continue his legacy of love for
עם ישראל, תורת ישראל, וארץ ישראל**

***The Loshinsky Family
Israel and the U.S.A.***

built. I've only seen pictures of the properties, since he advertises in Torah Tidbits (and we make sure the small English-speaking community there gets Torah Tidbits every week).

What we saw was absolutely amazing. We saw a huge greenhouse that Ira and his family built, which is full of crops they're growing now - strawberries, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, cucumbers, and cherry tomatoes of all different sorts. They're also raising fish. They built a system called Aquaponics where fish and plants live symbiotically sharing the same water: the fish waste becomes fertilizer for the plants and the plants clean the water for the fish. It's really such a remarkable place.

The *tzimmers* are stunning and beautiful. They rent out their luxurious accommodations and give tours to seminaries, yeshivot, and many different types of group tours - all about how important it is to build up the areas of Israel which need more Jews to move there, like the Galil. The Galil has so much to offer, with such a great climate and location, that it is a pity that people don't even think of it as a place for them. Ira is changing minds, one by one.

Another thing Ira and Tamar do is sell their produce at the local market on Thursdays. At first, they started their farming as something of a hobby. A few olive trees, some turkeys, chicken, and sheep, have grown into a real farm, which they take very seriously. These are people who take the time to learn Torah on a regular basis, and Ira did a course in kosher slaughter (*shechita*) so that he could provide kosher meat for his family. He learned all about the laws of *Shemitta* and *tithes*, and he makes sure everything is done properly and according to halacha.

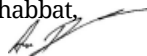
When I was there, a father and son from Carmei Katif were visiting - real *moshavnikim*,

longtime Israelis who have worked the land their whole lives. They couldn't believe that somebody who came from Florida was building such incredible things. All I can say is that what Ira and Tamar have built is a testament to what is possible when Jews dedicate themselves to building up the Land of Israel, connecting to HaKadosh Baruch Hu through the mitzvot tied to the Land, and raising the next generation with love for Torah and for Eretz Yisrael.

This is real Tziyonut. This is understanding that we have to bring up our families to feel connected to the earth, to get in touch with this Holy Land, and to help build the bedrock of the agricultural economy of Israel. I encourage all you, dear readers, to take your connection to the Land to the next level. Try to go up north if you can, perhaps to volunteer, to participate in the local economy, to hike the beautiful land and see what HaKadosh Baruch Hu created for us. Tu Bishvat was the beginning of connection to the Land - let's keep going.

May we all be inspired by the incredible growth happening in our Land - both the physical trees and produce, and the spiritual growth of families like Ira and Tamar's who are planting themselves firmly in the soil of Eretz Yisrael and making the Galil bloom.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

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