



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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One of the basic rules at OU Israel's teen centers across the country is that the advisors who work with the teens must live in the city where they serve. A staff member working with teenagers in Dimona, Sderot, or Kiryat Shmona cannot be parachuted in every evening from somewhere else. The reason is simple. If you don't live in a certain place, if you don't breathe it and walk its streets and *daven* in its *shuls* and shop in its supermarkets and see the signs plastered on its walls, you can never truly integrate into the community or feel that you are fully part of it. Teens will see through you in a second.

There's no doubt that we carry a special bond with the places where we grew up. I myself moved around a lot, and set roots in many places. I was born in Brooklyn, then my family moved to Staten Island, and then back to Brooklyn. We made *aliyah* to Kedumim, then we moved to Ma'ale Adumim, Kochav Ya'akov, and Har Nof. I got married and moved to Shilo, then to Vancouver for NCSY, and then back to Israel, settling in Givat Ze'ev, where, *Baruch Hashem*, I have lived with my family for the last twenty years.

All of those places contributed to who I am

לעילוי נשמות

Rabbi Dr. Aaron Baer ז"ל
on his eighteenth *yahrzeit*- 2 Iyar

and

Rebbetzin Hannah Baer א"ה
on her fifth *yahrzeit* - 29 Iyar

אשרי תמימי דרך ההולכים בתורת ה'

today. I am able to relate to North America, to Canada, to Israel, to Yehuda v'Shomron, to Yerushalayim. One place that shaped my family in a tremendous way was the community of Har Nof.

When my grandparents, *aleiheim hashalom*, my *Bubby* and *Zaidy*, made *aliyah* in 1989, they arrived on the very same day that my youngest sister Elana was born. They had purchased a place in Har Nof back in the late 1980s, bought it on paper, and eventually moved in. Har Nof became their home, where they had the *zechut* of davening in Rabbi Sholom Gold zt"l's *shul*, Zichron Yosef, established in memory of Joe Silver from Toronto, *alav hashalom*. That was one of the main reasons my family ended up moving to Har Nof, to be close to my grandparents.

After living in Israel for years without extended family nearby, without grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins, it was so nice to know that suddenly we had a *Bubby* and *Zaidy* that we could go to every Friday night for the Shabbos meal. It created an incredible bond between us, and I have such wonderful memories of it. Growing up in Har Nof was a wonderful time, and I am sure that many of the Anglos who moved to Har Nof and raised their families there know exactly what I am talking about.

I met some amazing friends in Har Nof. But more than that, I met my best friend, my wife, there. Her family had moved from France and eventually settled there. My wife grew up in Har Nof and was my sister's friend, and I met her at my sister's wedding. *Baruch Hashem*, it has been 29 wonderful years since, and

be'ezrat Hashem ad me'ah ve'esrim together. We continue sending our children to school in Har Nof, which brings us back there every single day.

About a month ago, I received a phone call from a wonderful woman in Har Nof named Diane. She asked if I would be willing to come and speak at the 30th *yahrzeit* of Dovid Boim, *hy"d*. Dovid grew up davening together with us in Rabbi Yaakov Warhaftig's *shul* Naveh Nof, in Har Nof. In May of 1996, at the age of seventeen, Dovid was tragically killed by terrorists near Beit El, where he was studying in yeshiva. He was a real sweet, sweet person, even volunteering with Magen David Adom. It was a tragic loss to his family and *Klal Yisrael*.

I couldn't believe it's been 30 years since that day. Diane invited me, telling me that a group of women were having a *siyum Tanakh* in Dovid's memory, together with his mother Joyce, Ad Meah Veestrin. I knew I had to be there.

I did not know exactly what to expect, but I walked into a room filled with about forty-five women, many of whose children I grew up with. The *siyum* they were having for completing the Tanakh was not their first time. In fact, they have been doing this *siyum* for 30 years, without interruption, together in memory of Dovid Boim! I stood there looking at this incredible group and thinking about the amazing symbolism in that act. They were studying the very *sefer* that promised them, through its prophecies, exactly what we are witnessing today. Every prophecy about *Kibbutz Galuyot*, the ingathering of the exiles. Every prophecy about the agriculture and the fruit trees flourishing in the Land of Israel. The growth of the Jewish population, the roads, the train tracks, the medicine. All of it unfolding before our eyes.



I decided that my speech would be to tell Dovid Boim in *shamayim* what has happened in the 30 years since he was taken from us. Together with the help of my team, I prepared a presentation of about forty-five slides going through the incredible things that have happened to the Jewish people in the last three decades.

It is Dovid, and many others who gave their lives for the State of Israel, who ultimately enable us to live here today. I wanted to be able to say to him: Dovid, you gave your life. You are missed at every Shabbat table, you are missed

**May the Torah learning
in this issue
be in loving memory of
my dear brother**

Joshua M. Neumann ז"ל
ישעי' מאיר בן
הרב קלמן גרשון הכהן ז"ל

On his 31st yearzeit
כ"ט אייר תשנ"ה

Nina & Serge
Neumann Muller
& family

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

at every *Yom Tov* table. But I want you to know that we are continuing on. What you gave your life for was a *yishuv* called Beit El, because you felt that the Torah you were going to learn there was the right Torah for you. You felt that every Jew should be able to travel wherever they need to in the Land of Israel. And I want you to know that *Klal Yisrael* is continuing to do exactly that. I showed how many new *yishuvim* have been built and how many Jews lived in the Land of Israel in 1996 compared to how many live here today. It demonstrates so well the tremendous growth of our nation, growth made possible because of countless soldiers and civilians who gave their lives for the Jewish people, for the Land of Israel, and for the Torah of Israel.

It was my opportunity to express gratitude to a boy who davened in *shul* with me, who was in my brother's class, who traveled on the same roads that I traveled. I was going to Shilo; he was going to Beit El. But I got to see firsthand what it means for his mother and father and siblings to lose a child, and yet to continue on with strength, to keep building themselves up, to persevere and build a family in the Land of Israel while missing Dovid deeply, yet understanding that the future is being built because of Dovid.

I told all the women sitting in that room, almost all of whom had made *aliyah* themselves from North America and other English-speaking countries, that they are part of the *geula*. The fact that they left their comforts, left their houses and families in America, and decided to move home to Israel to build a future here, & that they get to see their children & grandchildren building up this country in the most beautiful way possible, is truly remarkable. It was a *zechut* to speak to such incredible women.

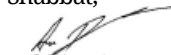
I shared with this incredible group of women that while it would be natural to expect friends to return to their busy routines after the shiva of a friend's son, seeing these women learning together to honor Dovid's memory for over 30 years is extraordinary and beyond impressive.

Something that really warmed my heart that evening was the number of women that thanked me publicly and profusely for Torah Tidbits. I told them that I really appreciate them coming over to thank me because I work hard on my article every single week but even more so, there is an incredible team that works tirelessly to make sure that Torah Tidbits is published every single week and they deserve that appreciation and they deserve those thanks.

My own parents also lived in Har Nof and knew pretty much everyone in that room. They made the right move to come to Israel, and ultimately I am here because of them. I thank them every day. And I am sure that the children of all those wonderful women who listened to my talk on Sunday evening know that their parents did not have an easy time making *aliyah*. But when they look back, they are so grateful that they made the right move for the Jewish people and for themselves.

May we continue for many, many more years in good health, in their name, moving *Klal Yisrael* forward. *B'ezrat Hashem*, may we merit to see all Jews coming and living in the Land of Israel and may we see the building of the *Beit HaMikdash*, hopefully very, very soon.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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