



## HOLY SITES IN ISRAEL

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**Torah Tidbits is proud to present a new series of articles about the magnificent and holy sites of Israel. This new addition to Torah Tidbits seeks to connect each of us even more deeply to the profound meaning of our people's return to the Land of Israel and bring us even closer to experiencing the *kedushat ha'aretz* in our daily lives.**

## Amuka: Finding Hope in the Depths

It was 9:30pm and I was walking down the stairs of my seminary in Tsfat. The Rosh Midrasha walked out of his office, saw me, and asked if I would be willing to accompany an American woman to Amuka that night. She had come to Israel for the express purpose of visiting this holy site but needed

some company to avoid being alone with a taxi driver that late at night. Since I was 25 and single, I too was interested in going to Amuka and immediately responded that I would be happy to accompany her.

Amuka, meaning “deep,” is the name of the gravesite of the Tanna, R' Yonatan ben Uziel, the greatest student of Hillel HaZakein and the translator of the books of Nevi'im into Aramaic.

Located in a valley outside of Tzfatz, Amuka is a tefillah destination, especially for singles. According to tradition, Yonatan ben Uzziel either married late in life and he and his wife were unable to fulfil the mitzvah of פרו ורבו or never married since he was so immersed in his Torah study. It is told that before his death he regretted missing out on this element of life which provides tremendous potential for personal growth and, to encourage others to get married, he blessed anyone who would daven at his gravesite to meet their soulmate within a year of the visit.

Marriage is a crucible. It is the relationship that holds a mirror to the soul, forcing a person to face and work on their deepest issues and fears. It is also the relationship that can forge the deepest bonds, paralleling the marriage between Am Yisrael and Hashem and potentially drawing tremendous energy of connection and peace into the world.

We left Tsfat at 11PM and the roads were pitch black. It was exhilarating, driving through the forest, the air permeated by the scent of pine trees, all my senses heightened with the anticipation of reaching our destination. I felt myself carried to a place of calm, a place of profound introspection and possibility, an opening.

I remember the intensity of my davening that night. The physical starkness and the powerful spiritual energy of the place combining to create a heady experience. I felt like I was beseeching Hashem from the depth of my being.

In Masechet Brachot, R' Eliezer ben Ya'akov, is quoted as saying that a person should not stand in a high place to daven but rather in a low place, as it says in Tehilim (130:1): "I called to You, L-rd, from the depths (ממעימקים)." The Gemara is hinting at the middah of humility which is essential for true davening and essential in a marriage. Humility requires that we admit we are lacking, that we don't know everything, that we need each other.

Amuka is the physical embodiment of this middah. A place of depth and yearning that breaks our hearts wide open so we can turn to Hashem in surrender. And in that surrender, with Hashem's help we can have hope for new beginnings. ■



## Be'er Tziporah a"h - Bottled Water Gemach



Walking down King George St. in Jerusalem and want a cold bottle of water?

Come help yourself to a bottle at  
52 King George.

In loving memory of Yoni's wife  
**Tziporah a"h**, a true Eishes Chayil, always full of chessed, kindness and laughter, and brought life and strength to so many people, that she touched! She was like Aron, who loved peace and pursued peace.



Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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