



## Chayei Sarah: Transfer of Title

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Avraham purchased the lot and then buried his beloved life-partner, Sarah. But this was no ordinary field in the city of Hebron, this was the *Me'aras HaMachpeyla*, the cave in which our patriarchs and matriarchs would be laid to rest alongside Adam and Chava.

*“And so, the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, facing Mamre, was established (as Abraham’s possession). [This included] the field and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within its entire border around (Bereishis 23:17).”*

The phrase “*was established*” is the translation of the Hebrew word, *va’yakam*. This word can also be translated as “stood up” or “was elevated.” Rashi explains: ***the field of Ephron...was established:*** *Heb. דָּקָוּ, lit. it arose. It experienced an elevation, for it left the possession of a simple person [and went] into the possession of a king (Gen. Rabbah 48:8).*

The Lubavitcher Rebbe (1902-1994) explains that as soon as the land’s ownership was transferred to Avraham it experienced an elevation, even before Sarah was buried there. The mere fact that the land was owned by a holy person, endowed the land with elevated holiness. The Rebbe explains that the same is true for every individual. When a person comes to a particular place and he wants to make that location an “*Eretz Yisroel*,” a land of holiness and spiritual accomplishment, the intention to accomplish something great infuses holiness into the new location.

I believe that Rashi and the Rebbe are teaching us two dramatic, inter-connected lessons. Who we are impacts what we have. I often assume that my personal holiness really only impacts me, or perhaps, those closest to me. But I learn from the statement of Rashi that my personalistic holiness impacts everything from my family to my possessions. Who we are leaves an imprint on everything within our life. Who I am has an impact on my children and community and on some level leaves a mark on my field as well. The field of Ephron was elevated because it had a new saintly owner. But there is an additional dimension as well. We have the ability to infuse holiness and sanctity even into the earth we walk on if we have intent to accomplish great things. The moment I desire to do a mitzvah, the instant I decide I want to accomplish something of significance, the minute I am resolute to fix something that is broken (either in myself or the world), I infuse holiness into land under my feet. That very land upon which I stand is transformed into something holy and sacred. In that moment of holy cognition, it is transferred from Ephron to Avraham.

The meaningful and holy actions we engage in and even the beautiful and spiritual thoughts we have, impact the world around us in more profound ways than we will ever know.