

DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



Rabbi Avi Berman Executive Director, OU Israel

Writing this column is now an ingrained habit in my weekly schedule. It's very meaningful for me to reflect on the events of the past week or something coming up and formulate my thoughts in a way that I can share a glimpse of the incredible accomplishments of the OU Israel staff or convey an idea I feel would be meaningful to you, the members of the OU Israel family.

Looking back, the impetus for this column was the pandemic. Pre-corona, I would share these types of thoughts with those of you whom I would run into at the OU Israel Center. Since Covid-19 prevented me from meeting people here in our building, I wasn't able to utilize my natural instinct to share what's happening here. I am grateful for the fact that I am now able to share these ideas and happenings at OU Israel with a wider audience. It is particularly touching to me that so many of you have taken the time to email, call or whatsapp feedback and share your insights.

In addition, I felt that it was important to

An advertisement for Efrat.org.il. It features a close-up photo of a smiling baby's face on the left. To the right, there is a blue and white graphic with the text: "Save a Life - Gain yours", "1 of 78,542", "EFRAT" in large yellow letters, and "www.efrat.org.il 02-5454500" at the bottom.

create a more personal relationship at a time when we were closed up in our homes. We were unable to share Shabbat meals with friends, catch up with neighbors after Shul, or attend in-person Shiurim. Even if we did bump into someone we knew on the street, social distancing prevented us from sharing a usual handshake or hug. We could not even see each other's faces due to the masks we wore to safeguard our health and the health of those around us.

Let's take advantage of the fact that we can once again see each others' faces

As a parent, I learned very fast that all I need to do when my kids walk in the door after school is to look at their faces to know what occurred that day - whether they had a good day or a bad one. Our facial expressions tell us so much about ourselves and others. Having our faces covered for over a year robbed us from being able to reach out, cheer up, and bring comfort to those in need. Seeing people in masks

The OU Israel Family extends heartfelt condolences to the family of

Isi Leibler z"l

on his passing

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

wasn't just seeing half their faces, it was not seeing the half of the face that shows whether a person is smiling or frowning.

There is a famous idea that there is a precious gift you can give to others without it costing you anything - a smile.

During the pandemic we were unable to share this gift with others. This past Sunday, the Ministry of Health removed the requirement to wear a mask outside. The way I see it, they added a requirement that each of us now pay extra attention to those around us and to make up for a year during which we were unable to do this. Let's take advantage of the fact that we can once again see each others' faces and delve a little deeper into the hearts of those around us and be there for each other in a much more meaningful way.

And in case you were wondering, I plan on continuing this column even though we are now blessed with the ability to see each other once again as we resume in-person shiurim and other programming. I look forward to B'ezrat Hashem seeing your smiling faces here at the OU Israel Center on a regular basis.



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Condolences to Lenny Davidman and Carol Hirshberg and family on the passing of their mother/sister
Phyllis Davidman ע"ה
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