

DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



The OU started in North America in 1898 in order to service the needs of the growing Orthodox community there. (Don't worry, this isn't a boring history lesson.) Established as the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of North America, the OU provided resources and programming for shuls. As needs arose, the OU started numerous programs and gained expertise in teen programming through NCSY as well as its reputation as the gold standard of Kashrut.

True to its directive of providing much needed resources for the Jewish community, 41 years ago the leadership of the OU decided that it needed a presence in Israel. From a Hashkafic perspective, Israel is the future of the Jewish people and strong Jewish organizations need a presence here. From a perspective of filling needs within the community, there was a need to service and inspire the English-speaking community in Israel.

After establishing a presence in Israel and serving the adult population, the OU leadership decided to build upon its success working with youth and teenagers through NCSY in North America. 21 years ago they started NCSY-style programming for youth here in Israel. This included our OU Israel Youth Centers, the Pearl & Harold Jacobs Zula Outreach Center, and NESTO (which

has undergone changes and is now operating as our very popular NCSY Israel).

As a child, I remember OU Israel's expanding presence - hearing about adult programming, Torah Tidbits, NESTO, the Zula opening, and more. When I joined the OU 20 years ago (I started in the month of Av), I recall feeling incredibly privileged to join an organization with such impact and reach. My first position was with Vancouver NCSY. After two years of serving as Vancouver City Director I was appointed to be the Northwest Regional Director of NCSY servicing Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Alberta, and even a few kids from Alaska. When my family finished our Shlichut there, I was blessed to have been offered the job of running OU Israel, where I have had the tremendous zechut of working for the past 15 years.

One of the greatest assets of the OU is its leadership - both lay and professional. In Israel, Zvi Sand (President, OU Israel) and Esther Williams (OU Israel Chair) provide me with constant passion, support, and ideas. When sitting and meeting with Zvi and Esther, we are constantly brainstorming and thinking creatively about how to better serve the spiritual needs of the English population in Israel. (As always, I would love to hear your ideas and feedback as well). Every week, I also have multiple Zoom/phone meetings with OU NY, and

their guidance and support enable my incredible team to accomplish all that they do.

Yet, we all know that phone and even Zoom are no replacement for in-person interactions. Last week, Rabbi Moshe Hauer (Executive Vice President, OU), Moish Bane (President, OU) and a small delegation of others from the OU leadership team came to Israel. We were B"H busy with meetings from early morning until late at night. We met with the Ministry of Diaspora, Chief Rabbis, Members of Knesset, and other government officers and Israeli leaders with the goal of enhancing collaboration and increasing the OU's reach and impact in Israel. It is always incredible to see the love and passion that the OU leadership has for Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael.

Whenever I am asked to choose restaurants in Israel, I recommend and take people to the OU Kosher restaurants we have in Yerushalayim - Skyline Restaurant at the Jerusalem Gardens Hotel and Papagaio. So of course these are the places that I took the OU leadership to eat. I must give them both a shout-out. Not only do I believe in supporting OU establishments, but the food and service at both were 5-star. Whether you are looking for a delicious meal or recommendation for a special occasion, I highly recommend you enjoy their food and ambiance.



Avi,
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OU Israel is proud and excited to announce that

Kinamon Caterers

are now under the OU Kashrut Supervision
and are the exclusive in-house caterers of the
OU Israel Center

Kinamon Caterers join OU Israel with a reputation
as a high-quality and creative food service provider

To book an event please contact **Ita Rochel**
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To discuss menus contact **Kinamon Caterers**
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