

DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



So often in life we have the opportunity to make someone else feel welcome and succeed just by smiling at them and befriending them.

To this day, one of my closest friends is Yaakov who had a direct influence on my successful aliyah simply by being friendly when I was assigned the seat next to him in fourth grade. Making Aliyah at the age of 9 to Kedumim meant that I was fresh off the boat not knowing Hebrew and in a class where nobody spoke any English at all.

As you can imagine and I am sure many of you have experienced, this was a challenging moment – walking into a place where I had no friends, a new culture, and not even a common language. While excited to be starting my life in Israel, I started fourth grade with many uncertainties. Yaakov's welcoming personality embraced me and made sure I was welcomed into the class, and ultimately into Israel society. He helped me every step along the way.

This is an experience that we all face at different points in our lives. Whether moving to a new country (or community within the same country), going to a new school, enlisting in the army or Sherut Leumi, starting a new job, etc., we all have new stages.

My wife and I experienced this feeling very clearly when we went on Shlichut to Vancouver. We felt incredibly blessed to be representatives of Israel and the OU, working with teens and others in the Vancouver

community. Yet, it was the warm community members who enabled us to meet new people and be welcomed into the community. Their caring opened the door to what Baruch Hashem became five years of inspiring teens and impacting the broader community, with close relationships that we are blessed to maintain to this day.

My predecessors who ran OU Israel, Rabbi Dovid Cohen z"l and Menachem Persoff, did incredible work moving OU Israel forward. As the new man in town, I felt everyone was looking towards me, and I looked for mentors to guide me as I navigated my new role. It is thanks to very special people who had decades of experience at OU Israel that I was able to start my role at OU Israel with the information and tools that I needed to help grow OU Israel.

One of the people I relied on for genuine and caring advice was Mrs. Lori Levmore z"l who unfortunately recently passed away. As I am sure many of you remember, Lori was part of the foundation of the OU Israel Center. She was in the building almost every day and made a point to come to my office, knock on the door, and share insightful advice as to what additional activities were necessary, what types of shiurim people are enjoying more, and even ideas about improving the refreshments to make people's time at the OU Israel Center better. I recall many good conversations with Lori and her husband Bernard z"l, and I regret not making the time to play chess with her

despite her many invitations to do so. I mention her because she and many others were the reason I was Baruch Hashem able to start running OU Israel on the right foot.

I appreciate everyone who made sure to befriend me, just as Yaakov did in fourth grade and so many others did in the various new stages of my life. I will always be indebted to those who helped and continue to help me along the way.

This is a message to all of us. There's nobody who wants to be in a new place without friends. Sometimes it's starting a new job, sometimes it's making aliyah, sometimes it's moving to a new community. We can all decide to reach out, befriend, and help the new people around us. At times, this involves us leaving our comfort zones, but the impact is well worth it. When we create a culture in which people are there to help others and give them a feeling of belonging, especially when they are facing changes, we will positively impact each other's lives and experiences.

B'ezrat Hashem we will all feel more connected, included, and be more successful in all of our endeavors.

Wishing you an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Avi,
Executive Director, OU Israel
aberman@ouisrael.org

Condolences to
Dr. Steven Samuel and family
on the passing of his father
Gerry z"l



RABBI SHLOMO KATZ
CHANUKAH CONCERT

When: Motzei Shabbat, December 4th
Where: Shalva Center, Shalva Rd 1, Jerusalem •
Time: Doors Open 7:30PM | Concert Begins: 8:15PM
Ticket Link: <https://tickchak.co.il/Shlomokatz>

Sponsorship Available: Yisroel@theshlomokatzproject.com
Entrance: only with Tov Yarak