

DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



OU Israel is made up of remarkable people, each of whom feels a sense of responsibility toward Am Yisrael and dedicates themselves to a unified mission of inspiring the next generation of Klal Yisrael. Twice a year, before Rosh HaShanah and Pesach, I have the honor of gathering OU Israel staff from around the country for a Haramat Kosit, during which we leave our offices, posts and programs to gather at the OU Israel Center in Yerushalayim.

This past week the OU Israel Center was filled with employees who work across every program and operation we run. From Torah Tidbits, to JLIC couples from IDC, Herzliya, Bar Ilan and Givat Shmuel, to NCSY, to Birthright, to Yachad, to Mommy and Me, to shiurim and additional programming for Anlgo-Israelis. OU Israel's impact on Am Yisrael would not be possible without each and every one of our staff members who inspire people of all ages - from two to over 100 - with creative and engaging programs.

With such a breadth of impact I continue

to be inspired by the growing OU Israel team of 300 employees that I hope will continue to expand with additional funding and reach even greater heights. For this reason, each Haramat Kosit is a highlight for me because it's not often that we can all gather under one roof, and every time we do I feel a tremendous sense of gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for the incredible people powering OU Israel. I also feel a responsibility to find a unifying message that resonates with each and every one of our programs. I'd like to share that message with you, for I feel it is directly applicable to members of Klal Yisrael.

On Pesach, we sit down with our loved ones and read the Haggadah, during which we say,

"כִּנְגֵד אֲרֻבָּעָה בְּנִים דְּבָרָה תוֹרָה: אֶחָד חֹכֵם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאוֹל."

But this statement begs the question, why does "אֶחָד" need to be repeated before each son? The Ba'alei Haggadah could easily have written,

"כִּנְגֵד אֲרֻבָּעָה בְּנִים דְּבָרָה תוֹרָה: חֹכֵם, רָשָׁע, תָּם, וְשׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאוֹל."

The word, "אֶחָד" seems superfluous, but clearly, the Ba'alei Haggadah felt it important. There are many lessons we can learn from the inclusion of "אֶחָד", and I'd like to highlight three that stood out to me as I spoke to the staff of OU Israel:

"אֶחָד": We must remember that every Jew we interact with, regardless of how they behave, dress, talk, walk, speak, is "אֶחָד" of Am Yisrael. For those leading the Sedarim,

Condolences to
Simon Posner (OU Press) and to
Lenny Bessler (HR - OU NY)
and families on the passing of their
brother/father in law

Raphael Posner z"l

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

and those who find themselves giving over Torah ideas on Seder night, every single Jew is part of the incredible nation of Am Yisrael and, regardless of our differences, together we make up “אָדָם”.

“אָדָם”: Every person is capable of being a חֶזֶק, a תָּם, a שְׂאִינֵי יוֹדֵעַ לְשִׂאוֹל, and maybe even at times a שֶׁשׁ. And as a unified nation, we must help one another become a better version of ourselves. As Am Yisrael, our lives cannot stay stagnant and we need each other to help us be the Ovdei HaShem that Hakadosh Baruch Hu needs.

“אָדָם”: The Ba’alei Haggadah put an emphasis before each child to illustrate that as Banim of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, each of us is an individual who deserves to be seen as such. As parents, friends, educators, community members, neighbors, we have a responsibility to give others our undivided attention.

Personally, I find that the last idea “אָדָם” demonstrates to be the toughest lesson to implement, but I do believe that in today’s generation, it is easier than ever to show someone they matter. All it takes is putting our phones, tablets, computers, iPads and any other digital medium aside, and looking at the person sitting before us directly in the eye. Living in the digital age with our faces turned down all too often, we have lost the power of eye contact and subsequently, our connection to others. When I come home, I make a concerted effort to put my phone away. It’s not easy. I know at any given moment, I have more than 100 WhatsApp messages in need of my response.

But when I am around my family it is even more crucial that I show my wife and children that I am putting myself aside and making space for each and every one of them.

As members of Klal Yisrael, we each have a special place in HaKadosh Baruch Hu’s eyes, regardless of the חֶזֶק, תָּם, שְׂאִינֵי יוֹדֵעַ לְשִׂאוֹל category we fit into. The beauty of Pesach is that it offers us a time to reset, internalize these ideas, and embrace the Tefikid each of us has as Banim LaHaShem throughout the rest of the year. May we all be zoche to carry out the mission of “אָדָם” and succeed in our efforts.

I wish you all a חג כשר ושמח, and an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

aberman@ouisrael.org



The entire OU Israel Family,
remember our dedicated & loving volunteer
and dear friend

Mrs. Tziporah Pronman א"ח

on her 1st Yahrzeit

Yud Alef Nisan,

April 12, 2022. May her

memory continue to be a

blessing to all

who knew her.



Platinum Mortgages

Specializing in obtaining preferred loans for
English speaking clients in Israel and abroad.

At Platinum the client is the emphasis!

Email: shmuelbrochin@gmail.com

0509882183/ 0527169290