

DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



In last week's column I discussed the power of our tefillot, particularly the ones focused on *kibbutz galuyot* (ingathering of the exiles), and the *zechut* we have as *Am Yisrael* living in *Eretz Yisrael* of seeing miracles unfold before our eyes. In just a few days we will see the miracle of, "יִקְבֹּץ בְּדִחְיֵנוּ מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת, הָאֶרֶץ", "*gather us together from the four corners of the earth*," come true.

Teachers, parents and mentors can appreciate the importance of informal education, especially when shaping the lives of children, teens and young adults. Recognizing the impact that inspiring programs can have on helping the next generation of *Am Yisrael* stay connected and feel pride in their heritage, the OU has placed a dedicated emphasis on creating programs that provide meaningful experiences for Jewish youth of all backgrounds.

This time of year is one that I look forward to as OU summer programs finally begin, many of which take place here in Israel. Soon we will see the streets of *Eretz Yisrael* filled with North American teenagers

and young professionals who are given the opportunity to experience this Holy Land. With creative programming provided, OU participants can connect to their *Yiddishkeit* and take an active role in solidifying their future as members of *Klal Yisrael*.

I spent time this past week visiting a number of group leaders. Listening to the tailored approaches with which they have created their programs and their vision for reinforcing the foundations they plan to set for participants this summer, I couldn't help but marvel at the dedication of OU staff members. On one such visit, Rabbi Jonathan Shulman, Director of the **OU Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus (JLIC)** invited me to speak to 200 JLIC students here for the summer. JLIC helps Orthodox students navigate the college environment, and balance their Jewish commitments with their desire to engage the secular world. Placing rabbinic couples on over 20 college campuses across the US and Canada to serve as Torah educators and role models, I am proud of the work we've done to launch JLIC in Reichman University (IDC Herzliya) and Bar-Ilan University. Soon, we will open another program for students at Tel Aviv University.

Rabbi Shulman is leading a select group of JLIC students across a number of programs taking place this summer: **Summer in Jerusalem at Midreshet Torah v'Avodah**, **Summer in Jerusalem for Women at Midreshet Moriah** and **Ascend at Harova**. In

לעילוי נשמת

יעקב יוסף בן מרדכי הכהן ז"ל

Jacob Rottenberg z"l

on his 14th Yahrzeit - 10 Tamuz

Mark & Livia Rottenberg

Shopsy & Miriam Kanarek

addition to JLIC's summer program, other OU programs taking place in Israel this summer include:

Trips for girls looking for interactive learning, meaningful chessed trips and touring Israel such as **Michlelet, Michlelet Mechina, Girls Israel Volunteer Experience (GIVE)** and **Impact Girls**.

Trips for boys looking for interactive learning, meaningful chessed trips and touring Israel such as **Kollel, Kollel Mechina** and **Impact Boys**.

Trips for teens interested in Jewish advocacy, Jewish arts, traveling and experiencing different cultures such as **JOLT, Euro Israel, Next Step, NCSY Chai, The Senior Experience, The Israel Discovery Trip** and **Israel ID**.

Trips for teens looking to volunteer while touring Israel such as **Hatzalah Rescue** and **Yaldei Ohr**.

Inclusive trips for teens led by **Yad b'Yad**, for post-10th and 11th grade high schoolers and young adults with disabilities.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't also highlight another program that is near and dear to the hearts of OU Israel staffers - **Camp Dror**. Running for more than 25 years, Camp Dror is one of the few Orthodox sleep away camps in Israel for children in grade five through high school, giving *Olim* a transformative, inspirational, informal education summer experience

As you can clearly see, each of these programs caters to a different need in *Klal*

Yisrael and attracts teenagers who have a variety of interests and backgrounds. Led by people who dedicate their lives to creating memorable and formative experiences for teenagers and young adults, you can only begin to imagine the work that goes into planning these trips, the effort required to keep participants engaged during the summer, and the tireless efforts of staff members who maintain relationships after the summer concludes.

Joining these trip leaders and students, OU Israel will be welcoming members of the OU executive team including, Rabbi Moishe Bane, President, Rabbi Moshe Hauer, EVP, Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph, EVP and COO and Rabbi Micah Greenland, International Director - NCSY. We have an opportunity to show our *HaKarat HaTov* to this dynamic team that powers the OU and supports OU Israel in our efforts. If you see them over the next few weeks, please don't hesitate to stop and thank them for their impactful work.

This summer is set to be one of tremendous meaning for many of our brothers and sisters. May *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* open the hearts and minds of summer program participants to see the beauty of *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*. May each trip be successful in accomplishing its goals. And as Jews flood the streets of Eretz Yisrael over the coming weeks, may we merit to bring the Geulah Shelema together.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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In loving memory of
Rabbi Macy Gordon z"l
on his 5th yearzeit - 10 Tamuz