



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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Our third son, the fourth child in our family to join the IDF, enlisted just a few weeks ago to the combat engineering unit and it made me start thinking of my days in basic training so long ago. As we learned how to be soldiers, to be a team, and how to use our weapons well and responsibly, something that was drilled into us over and over again was how important a careful shot is, and that even being off by a millimeter when looking through a

scope can result in missing the target by a meter or much more. Ordinarily, being off by a millimeter doesn't matter very much, but in life-and-death situations, which in the army was almost always the case, it was the difference between protecting innocent civilians and stopping terrorism.

I was thinking of this important message as I attended the *levaya* of Rabbi Berel Wein zt"l. What Rabbi Berel Wein was able to accomplish in his 91 years, between being a *rav* in numerous different communities and through his many classes and the innovative use of new technology for education, through the Destiny Foundation and so many others, most people wouldn't be able to accomplish in 200 years. As I heard at the *levaya*, so many spoke beautifully about his focus, his drive. Even Shabbat was no day of rest for him, because he would regularly give seven to eight *shiurim* every single Shabbat. All to make sure that the message of Torah was getting out to the world.

In fact, this past Shavuot, we ran an OU Israel program in partnership with Rabbi Wein's *shul*, Beit Knesset HaNasi. Unfortunately, I could not be there, though I very much wanted to be. But Rabbi Sam Shor, our OU Israel Director of Torah Initiatives, told me afterward how incredible Rabbi Wein was. How he got up *leil Shavuot*, a 91-year-old man, and started off the evening without a note, yet spoke for almost an hour. Rabbi Shor and others who had attended told me how incredible his *shiur* was and how the

ברוך דיין האמת



The OU Israel Family
mourns the passing of

RABBI BEREL WEIN זצ"ל

*An extraordinary educator,
historian, and Rav who inspired
generations across Klal Yisrael.*

*His wisdom, warmth, and
timeless teachings will continue
to guide us for many years to come.*

*Among the many leadership
positions that Rabbi Wein occupied
in his long and distinguished career,
he served a number of years as
**Executive Vice President of the
Orthodox Union and Director of
OU Kosher.** In the years following
his aliya to Yerushalayim,
Rabbi Wein offered many **inspirational
shiurim on behalf of OU Israel.***

**We send heartfelt wishes
of condolence to his family
and to all of Klal Yisrael.**

יהי זכרו ברוך

entire place was riveted and at the edge of their seats.

Obviously, this Shavuot *shiur* was not recorded, but so many other *shiurim* of Rabbi Wein are recorded and can be found on the OU Israel Shiurim YouTube channel, if you want to discover what I am talking about.

So many incredible rabbis came to give *hespedim* at the *levaya*. The *rav* of the shul, Rabbi Kenigsberg, spoke beautifully, as did Rabbi Meir Goldwicht, Rabbi Don Siegel, several sons-in-law, and close *talmidim* as well. Rabbi Wein, in his tremendous humility and holiness, had instructed that the *hespedim* not be too long, but we all heard such incredible stories of his life and his true greatness.

There was one story that really stood out to me, told over by his son-in-law, Rabbi Yisrael Gettinger. It stood out because it reminded me how much I should be thanking Rabbi Berel Wein for helping to form what the OU is today, even beyond the simple fact that Rabbi Wein headed OU Kosher back in the 1970s. And the story goes as follows.

It is a common custom for those attending a wedding to give a wedding gift at the wedding itself. So when Rabbi Wein's daughter got married, several people had given Rabbi Wein envelopes of checks or cash over the course of the wedding. After the wedding, he brought these envelopes over to his son-in-law and daughter.

Later, as the newlyweds looked through the different gifts that they had received, they realized that there was one envelope that came from a business that they did not know. And when they opened it up, they saw



a check for \$400 (adjusting for inflation, that's something like \$3500 today).

It is certainly unusual to receive such a large gift from a person and a business they did not recognize. Curiosity got the best of them, and so they asked Rabbi Wein if he knew who this generous person was. Rabbi Wein looked at the check and shook his head. "This was not meant for you. I'll take care of it." And put the check in his pocket and went on his way.

Some time later, his son-in-law asked him what the story was with that check. And Rabbi Wein explained that the check was from a company that gets OU Kosher certification. He said that he was worried that this check might appear as a form of bribery from the company, so he called the company and returned the check, telling them that it wasn't appropriate to give gifts like this to the head of OU Kosher. And in fact, Rabbi Gettinger says that he noticed that after a few years this facility lost its OU Kosher certification. Clearly they had been cutting corners in different ways.

This is what I mean by the story of learning in basic training how to shoot and making sure your aim is precise down to the millimeter. Because that is what Rabbi Wein did,

both ethically and spiritually. The reason OU Kosher is so successful today, and is run in such a clean, transparent, honest way, is because Rabbi Berel Wein back in the 70s put his eye on the target in creating a *kashrut* agency that is pure, transparent, and that relies on halacha and the decisions of the *gedolim*, *poskei halacha* of the highest standard. That has enabled OU Kosher to be the gold standard of *kashrut* in the world today. Rabbi Wein's influence continues in every aspect. Today, every company visit is documented, photographed, and signed off by each field representative's supervisor, the rabbinical coordinator, and ultimately signed off by the heads of OU Kosher. This system builds fences upon fences of protection against corruption.

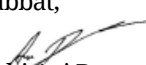
Rabbi Wein continued to be so close to us and gave us tremendous guidance at OU Israel. Of course, he would write his thoughts in Torah Tidbits for so many years, and used to give *shiurim* in the OU Israel Center on Keren HaYesod Street for many years. Additionally, just recently over the last year, we have partnered with his *shul*, the Beit Knesset HaNasi, as one of our locations in Yerushalayim since we moved our headquarters to Har Chotzvim. And I know for sure that our move could not have happened without the tremendous *bracha* and the *birkas ha'derech* from Rabbi Wein, *zecher tzaddik v'kadosh l'vracha*.

**In memory of
our beloved husband, father,
grandfather and great-grandfather
Rabbi I. Fred Hollander z"l
on his yahrzeit Rosh Chodesh Elul**

To hear at the *levaya* the values he infused into the OU early on was so impactful for me. And since the *levaya* was completely packed, without even standing room, I'm sure that each and every one of the participants walked out with a different understanding of the impact Rabbi Wein had on their lives.

May we continue in his footsteps and *bezrat Hashem* continue building the destiny of the Jewish people, through learning from our past, learning our Torah, and passing it on to the next generation in the most beautiful ways possible.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,


Rabbi Avi Berman
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