



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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Since Isru Chag Sukkot not an hour goes by without me mentioning, thinking about or discussing the former OU Executive Vice President, Rabbi Moshe Hauer Zt"l. After his shocking passing on Simchat Torah, we at the OU are constantly thinking hard about how to express his legacy and vision. How does one encapsulate in words someone who was larger than life? How does one memorialize an individual for whom every moment was about making a Kiddush Hashem, uniting Klal Yisrael more, and making us more passionate about our Judaism and our love for each other? Rav Hauer's passing was such a loss to not only his family, but to each and every Jew in the world.

The last email that Rabbi Hauer sent Rabbi Yaakov Glasser, the Managing Director for Community Engagement at the OU, was a list of institutions, communities and personalities in America. He wanted us to bring Roshei Yeshiva, dayanim and rabbanim from Israel, on a Torah mission of unity that he had worked on with us for the past 18 months.

When we got back to the office after chag, he was no longer with us. The email he sent Rabbi Glasser was kind of tzava'ah, a will, of something that we know was very important to him. He had been visiting Israel several times over the last few years, speaking to great leaders of the Dati Leumi world and elsewhere, and he began to realize over the course of this that there was very little awareness and connection between the Dati Leumi / Chardal worlds and the world of North

American Jewry. The Dati Leumi community at large in Israel is probably the closest to Modern Orthodoxy in America, and yet, there are still many divides. Rabbi Hauer started to think of ways that he could put these two groups together and help leaders from both sides of the Atlantic meet each other and start to understand each other. Given the OU's strong presence in both Israel and North America, and that OU staff have a deep understanding of both societies, we feel that we are well-positioned to lead this mission.

The idea was about getting the rabbanim here in Israel to understand Jewish life in America, including the many different facets that the OU is running in North America. This would not only give them a greater appreciation of what the OU is, but more so to get them to understand North American Jewry, their needs, their challenges, and their great contributions to Judaism, Israel, and Zionism. Obviously, we all daven three times a day, "Tekah b'shofar gadol l'cheiruteinu, v'sa neis l'kabeitz galuyoseinu" - our hope and prayers is for every Jew to be living in the Land of Israel. But until then the reality is that only a few thousand olim make aliyah every year. Millions aren't moving here right now. There is, therefore, a value to recognizing and understanding Diaspora Jewry for Jewish leaders in Israel.

So, over the last few months, Rabbi Hauer began talking about what was necessary to help this happen. A plan began to take form of bringing leaders to America to give them a

deeper understanding of the lifestyle of American Jews so that they, as the heads of Jewish dati leumi organizations, could be able open up their world to American Jews - to create programs in Israel within their institutions to accept more english speakers, to help their children get into schools that, maybe, until now they weren't as accepted, and to be more welcoming to olim and understand where they are coming from. Most importantly, we wanted to give them the insight necessary to help them ensure that the klitah of olim is done in a way that enables them to thrive here in Israel.

I consider myself part of many different worlds here in Israel. But the majority of my life has been spent in the Dati Leumi world. I went to Dati Leumi yeshivot. My children and grandchildren go to institutions like Merkaz HaRav and other Yeshiva high schools and Hesder yeshivot led by Merkaz HaRav graduates. And so, I understand the disconnect that can be felt between the world that I live in in Israel and the world that I visit when I go to America. This is true in many places. I've spent Shabbatot in many different communities in North America, the Five Towns, Teaneck, Bergenfield, Los Angeles, Florida, Toronto, Vancouver and many more; no matter where I am in North America, I have communities that Baruch Hashem I'm extremely connected to, with incredible friends that I love dearly. And yet, I can see that when I discuss the dati leumi nuances they don't fully "get" it. For that matter, the dati leumi community here in Israel don't fully understand what North American Jewry is all about. I am convinced that many of you who spend time in the respective communities know exactly what I am referring to.



Therefore, Rabbi Hauer and I began to discuss this idea of bringing a small but quality group of Rabbanim to America to give them more exposure to North American Jewry - a way of bridging these two worlds I find myself in. This can only lead to the growth of a bond and a connection between these two different worlds.

So, after Simchat Torah, we decided to fulfill

In Memory of our dear Mother
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Rachel Gutman ש"י

אשת חיל

On her 50th yahrtzeit

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*Her children, Grandchildren
and Great grandchildren*

Tzippy Grunstein and family

Eli Gutman and family

Tova Hoffman and family

Frieda Brodsky and family

this dream of Rabbi Hauer. Together with Rabbi Hauer, we had already approached an organization called Rabanei Eretz HaTovah and asked them to please help us arrange such a mission, which they did so beautifully, pulling together three other organizations (Geshet, Igud Rabbanei Kehilot and Sifra) and an incredible group of Rabbanim, Dayanim, and Roshei Yeshiva, who all came and gave eight days of their time and attention in order to understand North American Jewry. We took the Rabbanim on this mission led by the Rosh Yeshiva of Mercaz Harav Harav Yaakov Shapira Shlita to Shuls, Yeshivot, schools and chesed institutions in the Five Towns, Teaneck, Lakewood, Monsey, to the Syrian community in Flatbush, to the OU Eruv conference in Edison, the RCA Rabbanus conference, New Square, YU, Washington DC, AIPAC, meeting Nathan Diamant, the OU representative in Washington and his team, and hearing about the great work that they're doing to help support the Orthodox community in America. They met with the remarkable Israeli ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter. I saw the Rabbis' hearts grow so large after meeting and learning about their fellow Jews around the world.

This past Shabbat, we were hosted by



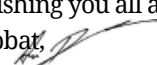
different wonderful families in Teaneck. During the week, we heard from the leaders and rabbis of the community, the different principals in the schools, the different Roshei Yeshiva, and we began to understand North America that much better. We also spent an entire day in the OU hearing about all the different OU programs. The Oneg Shabbat on Friday night in Teaneck was just amazingly uplifting. Everybody sat together singing and talking Torah. They especially spoke about the Torah of Rav Kook, and about Torat Eretz Yisrael. It was fascinating seeing all of the American Rabbanim agree about the thirst that North American Jewry has for such Torah. It was mesmerizing, uplifting, and truly exciting.

It is too early to tell what the effects of this mission will be but like I told the mission Rabbanim after Shabbat, the real mission starts now - coming back to Israel. I told the Rabbis that the real work is how we take these brand new relationships that were built in America to the next level. We spoke about the need to create real programs that will connect the two communities, the Zionist Modern Orthodox communities of North America and the Dati Leumi communities of Israel. B'ezerat Hashem, this connection will continue growing together and making Klal Yisrael a much better, more unified world.

October 7th and everything that happened afterward have taught us that we truly know how to unite as a Jewish people when we are under attack. But the beauty of what happened this past week was that we created a dialogue that brought together the connection of the hearts and the connection of leaders not as a defense but in peace and brotherhood. Instead of each leader releasing

statements to the media, we brought them together behind closed doors to discuss their differences and come a bit closer to understanding each other. Rabbi Hauer would always say that that is the best way to create understanding - bring everyone together face to face. Our conversations within the Chareidi world were also extremely fruitful. And while I can't go into full detail, I will tell you that it was beautiful seeing Rabbanim from Merkaz HaRav and other Dati Leumi Yeshivot sitting with Rabbanim from the Chareidi world in America, the Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood, Rav Malkiel Kotler, with the Skverer Rebbe, Rabbi David Twesky, along with the Rosh HaYeshiva of Ner Yisroel, Rabbi Aharon Feldman and Rav Elya Brudny Rosh Yeshiva of Mir - Brooklyn. I saw them interact with such a tremendous amount of respect. They might not have agreed on everything, but they listened to each other, with a calm and open demeanor. I know that Rabbi Hauer would be truly proud of this unique moment, of us sitting all together, talking in a respectful way, and bringing more and more unity to Klal Yisrael.

This week's Parsha is Vayeitzei. Rashi writes that yetziat tzaddik min hamakom osah roshem, that when a tzaddik leaves a city it makes a major impact. I find myself very apropos writing about Rabbi Hauer z"l who was without a doubt a tzaddik. His leaving of not only this city, but this world, leaves an impact on all of us. May we continue to walk in his footsteps and bring more unity and Torah to Klal Yisrael.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

 Rabbi Avi Berman
 Executive Director, OU Israel



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