



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OU ISRAEL
ABERMAN@OUISTRAEL.ORG

Our previous CFO, David Katz, who was with us for fifteen years until his retirement and was truly a partner of mine in so many ways, used to often include a John Wooden quote in his presentations at the OU. One of his favorites was the legendary UCLA basketball coach's famous line: "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail." It's a line that resonates with me deeply, because life gets busy, and it's all too easy to leave things to the last minute. I try my very best to come to every event and every meeting prepared, and for that I have to thank my incredible team at OU Israel, who work with me daily to make sure we're ready for whatever comes our way.

But we don't have to learn this lesson from John Wooden, because there is a clear *halacha* that teaches the very same principle. The Shulchan Aruch tells us that thirty days before the holiday of Pesach, one should begin learning its laws. The idea is that when you start reviewing the *halachot*

of Pesach a full month in advance, the holiday doesn't catch you off guard. It's on your mind and you can prepare calmly and joyfully, for the most part. And because Pesach comes only once a year and involves so many complex laws, that review is essential.

One of the most special moments in my week is sitting and learning with my ten-year-old daughter Moriah on Shabbat morning. After the first *minyán*, while I wait for some of my sons who attend the second *minyán*, Moriah and I sit down and learn *halacha* together. In addition to our regular learning on Shabbat in the *Avot ve'Yeladim* program at our shul, we have spent the last three weeks focusing on *Hilchot Pesach*. Sitting with her and studying these laws is such a beautiful experience.

Shabbat HaGadol, too, as the Shabbat that immediately precedes Pesach, is also an opportunity for review. In fact, many have the custom to review the *Haggadah* in its entirety over *Shabbat HaGadol*. By doing so, we can prepare for our *sedarim* in advance. It allows us to remind ourselves of the ideas we want to say and the melodies we want to teach, and just the flow of the evening. It gives an opportunity for our little ones to practice the *Mah Nishtanah*, or the young man or woman to review their *Divrei Torah* they learned in school or Zoom. It's also a wonderful reminder to review the Seder plate, and all the different foods and their meanings.

A Seder run well is so, so important,



The OU Israel family
sends heartfelt condolences
to the family and friends of

Shulamit Neaman a"h

Shulamit & her husband,
Yehoshua z"l volunteered for
the OU Israel Center for many,
many years taking people all over
the country on their special tiyulim
with lots of love and devotion.

because it can be something we carry with us for the rest of our lives. I am sure I am not the only one who thinks back to his younger years and remembers the Seder at our grandparents' homes, at an aunt and uncle's table, or wherever they may have been with family. Those memories of Pesach that truly stand out, that were deeply meaningful, stay with us forever. And so, preparing for this special evening or, for those in *chutz la'aretz* reading this article, for these two special evenings, is something truly significant.

I have no idea what our Seder tables will look like this year here in Israel. Many of us were expecting family and friends from overseas who unfortunately cannot make it, and some of our younger children who weren't supposed to be the youngest at the table now find themselves in that role. So let's focus on the power of preparation. Of a relaxed Seder experience. Let's think about it and try to prepare in advance rather than arriving exhausted at the last second. Maybe even prepare a Dvar Torah that would be appropriate in case we have to run to the Miklat or Mamad during the Seder. When you aren't sitting at the Seder tired out of your mind from all the running around, and prepared for any given situation, your Seder will be that much more uplifting.

But there is another dimension as well. When those around us, our family and friends, see us sitting and preparing for the Seder, they will understand that this is something truly important to us. The ability to sit with your children, to have your



family and friends see you reviewing the *Haggadah*, sends a message: this evening matters.

I don't know how many of us sat down in advance to prepare for the *halachot* of Purim or Chanukah. But the Seder night is a moment when we want to give over the message that this is an important evening. We are cleaning the house, scrubbing every corner, doing everything we can. And the bottom line is this: on this special evening, we want to be unified, to connect generations, to sing the same songs that we sang last year, the same songs our grandparents sang fifty and a hundred years ago.

So let one of the steps toward making our Seder truly meaningful be sitting down and preparing on *Shabbat HaGadol*.

May HaKadosh Baruch Hu give strength and comfort to all those communities that have been hit in recent days: to Arad, to Dimona, and to the *yishuv* of Elon Moreh,

**Condolences to Aytan Himelstein
and family on the passing of his**

FATHER ז"י

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

where one of their young men was tragically killed over this past Shabbat, the son of a very dear friend Yehoshua and Sima Sherman and the grandson of very loyal OU members Cooki and Howie Maisel. I had the painful privilege of going to the *levaya* in Elon Moreh, and it was both heartwarming and heartbreaking to see that in the midst of war and on *erev Pesach*, many thousands of people came to give this eighteen-year-old young man *kavod acharon*. So many came to honor Yehudah Shmuel Sherman Hy'd, a young man who loved this country with all his heart and gave everything for this country. It was a painful but powerful reminder of the depth of love that exists within Am Yisrael, and of the enormous price being paid by families and communities across our land. May HaKadosh Baruch Hu bring

nechama to all of the families.

At OU Israel, we are also working hard in the Dimona community. We are very active with our teen center in the Yosefstal neighborhood, which unfortunately suffered a direct hit this past Motza'ei Shabbat. Some of the young people in our teen center and some of our advisors were evacuated to hotels. Their Pesach is clearly going to look very different this year. So let us please keep everyone in mind. Whether it is visiting hotels where evacuees are staying and bringing them Haggadot and supplies for chag, or finding other ways to help, let us make sure that as we prepare for our own Pesach, we are thinking as well about those whose *Yom Tov* will not look the way they had hoped. B'ezrat Hashem, our care, our concern, and our sense of responsibility for one another should help bring light and strength to many this Pesach.

Wishing you all a very uplifting, inspiring, and safe *Shabbat HaGadol*, and a *Chag Kasher ve'Sameach*,



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



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