



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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It's important for every person to know what their strengths and their weaknesses are. I happen to know that one of my weaknesses is that I am horrible at remembering dates. Some people are excellent at preparing for birthdays, anniversaries, and so on. Not me. But since I know that I am not naturally gifted in this area, I use calendars and set reminders, or ask friends to remind me, so I don't miss an important date.

Parshat Emor hands us the master calendar of *Klal Yisrael*: Pesach, the counting of the *Omer* that begins on *Motzaei Shabbat* of the first day of Pesach and brings us to Shavuot, then Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Shemini Atzeret. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* Himself sets these dates into our year, and with these dates as our anchor, we have a beautiful Jewish calendar that our lives revolve around.

Yet since the Torah was given, many more dates have been added to that calendar. There are fast days that mark the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, as well as Chanukah and Purim, which commemorate miracles after

the destruction of the first *Beit HaMikdash*. And in our own generation, there are the days we have lived through together over these last weeks and the weeks ahead: Yom HaZikaron, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Lag BaOmer, which will be celebrated this week, and Yom Yerushalayim, which is coming the week after.

The excitement that many others and I have for Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim is just tremendous. These are days that shape who we are, what our State is all about, and where we are heading. Beyond the joy of OU Israel's annual Yom Ha'atzmaut Musical Tefila with Rabbi Shlomo Katz and beyond our Yom Yerushalayim *davening* on the *Tayelet* still to come *be'ezrat Hashem* - both events done in close coordination with the Jerusalem municipality - there is one more thing I look forward to every year as Yom Ha'atzmaut approaches: the release of the annual statistics by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

These numbers tell the story that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is writing in front of our eyes. As the State of Israel marks her 78th Yom Ha'atzmaut, our population stands at 10.244 million, an increase of about 146,000 over last year, growing at 1.4 percent. That is well above the global average of around 0.9 percent. Roughly 76 percent of our population is Jewish, and approximately 177,000 babies were born here this year. As I read these figures, I find myself thinking of the letter the Ramban wrote to his son after arriving in Yerushalayim in 1267, in which he describes a city in ruins where he could find only two Jews, brothers who worked as dyers, to make

In loving memory of
our dear mother, grandmother
and great grandmother
on her 16th Yartzheit
י"ח אייר - ל"ג בעומר - הוד שבהוד

Blossom Reutlinger (Nitza) a"h
מלכה בלומה בת דוד ופייגל ע"ה

*The Reutlinger
and Mayerfeld families*



a *minyán* with on Shabbat. I can only imagine what the Ramban would give to walk through Yerushalayim today, where on a single street, in a single traffic jam, you can find more Jews than he found in the entire city.

There is more. Life expectancy in Israel today is roughly 82 years for men and 85 for women, among the highest in the world and higher than nearly every Western country, even while in the midst of war and the painful loss of so many of our young soldiers in battle. When the *Madad HaOsher*, the global happiness index, was published this year by researchers who are not always looking to flatter Israel, the Jewish State once again came in eighth in the world, for the second year running. The Central Bureau of Statistics also found that 91 percent of Israelis describe themselves as *merutzim* or *merutzim me'od*, satisfied or very satisfied, with their lives in this country, even after more than two years of war. These are numbers that bring tremendous *simcha* and joy when we see that, *Baruch Hashem*, we really have a society that is happy, living long lives, in our homeland.

These numbers came alive for me this past

week, when I had the privilege of meeting two very special people who, between them, have witnessed the entire arc of modern Jewish history. People have asked me who came to our Yom Ha'atzmaut *davening*. Who, they wanted to know, made up the 2,000 people who filled the Ramada that night? The honest answer is everyone. Every kind of person was there. I saw infants in their parents' arms. I saw teenagers and yeshiva and seminary students. And I had the privilege of sitting next to Walter, a 102-year-old Holocaust survivor who came to be with us that evening. This is a man who not only survived the Nazis but went on to join the British army, fighting on the beaches of Normandy and working in counter-intelligence. Remarkably, he holds the Guinness World Record for being the oldest working journalist and radio show host in the world, and even went skydiving to celebrate his 100th birthday.

When the singing began and the crowd rose to dance, Walter was on his feet before most of the youngsters and teenagers. He told me the only reason he uses a cane is for going up and down stairs and hills. On flat ground, he said with a smile, the cane is just for decoration. He came with me into the dancing and kept urging the circle to move faster. To dance with a man who survived the Nazis and is now living in Israel at 102, with a big smile on his face that fills the room, was really so incredible.

May the Torah learned
from this Torah Tidbits be
לעילוי נשמת and in loving memory of

Herbert Scheer ז"ל
יהודה צבי בן בן ציון ז"ל
on his 10th yahrtzeit - ח' אייר

Steven Scheer and family

I had a similar privilege in Teaneck, New Jersey, this past Shabbat, where I spent quality time with dear friends and spoke at length with Mrs. Laub, who is also 102. She is the mother of close friends of mine, and on Shabbat afternoon I sat with her and her two daughters for over an hour. She was born in Austria, survived the Nazis, and built a beautiful family in the United States. *Baruch Hashem*, she has the joy of seeing many of those grandchildren now living in Israel, building families, getting married here this past year, with more grandchildren making *aliyah* this coming summer. Although she cannot fly to Israel anymore, she told me how proud she is to see photographs of her grandchildren in IDF uniforms, serving the Jewish people in the Jewish State.

Sitting with Walter and with Mrs. Laub, I understood the reason we have the generation we have today, a generation that is happy, that wants to live, that wants to bring more children into the world, a generation that is building and thriving. It is precisely because we have not forgotten where we came from. They survived so that we could be here, and they take genuine joy in seeing what we are building. The Jewish people have a State of our own. We have a country in which we are

growing, prospering, and living with endless *siyata di'shmaya*.

I told both Walter and Mrs. Laub how grateful I am for the endless miracles *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is doing for the Jewish people in our days, and how their generation's *mesirut nefesh*, together with the *mesirut nefesh* of the parents, soldiers, and families building *Klal Yisrael* today, is what carries us forward. *Be'ezrat Hashem*, may we continue to add good dates to our calendar, dates we can celebrate together, with many more Jews coming home, *ad me'ah ve'esrim* in good health, and may the OU continue, with *siyata di'shmaya*, to be a force in Israel that helps every Anglo who joins us here build a meaningful life in our homeland.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,


Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

**In loving memory of our father,
grandfather, great-grandfather
and great-great-grandfather**

**Grampy -
Dr. Bernard Friedson ז"ל**

דב בער בן שמשון אלטר ז"ל

on his 20th yearzeit - 6 Iyar

**Arlene Saslow
and the entire Friedson and families**

Dr Natan Silver

MBChB, FRCS, Dip Hand Surg

Hand Surgeon

Dual trained UK & Israel



Conservative and surgical care for
hand disorders and injuries in adults
and children of all ages

- Hand, wrist and thumb-base arthritis
- Joint replacement
- Hand and wrist trauma
- Injections for carpal tunnel, trigger finger, arthritis
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