



## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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

I was recently talking to one of my staff members who is deciding where to send his son for high school next year. He told me that there were just too many options to choose from. Should it be a dormitory or a day school? A program with a better kodesh department or a stronger chol program? One with more of an emphasis on volunteering, outdoor education, or something else? He is an oleh from a city in North America where they didn't have much of a choice for schools. "Look at the bright side," I said to him. "Back in America, you had maybe two options for schooling. Here in Israel, with so many choices, you have the ability to choose a program that suits your child best."

This reality touches on a principle I come

back to again and again. I've brought it up to my wife and children, to NCSYers, and to my colleagues. Chazal teach us, "Ein adam lomed ela bemakom shelibo chafetz," which means a person only truly learns in a place where his heart desires (Avodah Zarah 19a). When you pair that with the pasuk in Mishlei (22:6), "Chanoch lana'ar al pi darko," or educate a child according to his own way, we see something so powerful. Our goal is to guide each Jewish child along the path that is mat'im, or fitting, for them.

Having nine children and five grandchildren, baruch Hashem, I have a lot of personal experience in this area. We all know there are different kinds of children out there. Some are wired to sit and learn for hours on end. Others come alive through sports, volunteering, agriculture, hiking, or woodworking. Each child is profoundly different and no single framework can serve them all.

That same understanding shapes the work my team and I do here at OU Israel. People often ask me what programs we have for teenagers, college students, families, or retirees. I respond by telling them that no single program will work for everyone. We try to constantly develop programming that reaches the widest possible variety of participants by meeting people where they are.

I must say, I am continually amazed by what my team produces. We have programming for lone soldiers who might otherwise fall through the cracks. We have support networks for olim building their lives in Israel. NCSY runs diverse programming for

**May the Torah learned  
from this issue of TT  
be in loving memory of and לע"נ  
our dear parents  
whose 13th and 33rd yahrzeits  
are observed in Sivan**

**Udy Katz Cherrick ז"י**  
**אדי בת משה חיים הכהן וחווה ז"ל**  
**ט' סיון**

**William Cherrick ז"י**  
**חיים זאב בן שלמה משה וחיה ליבא ז"ל**  
**כ"א סיון**

**Deeply missed by  
their children, grandchildren  
and great grandchildren**

**The Cherrick & Saslow Families**

teenagers across the country, as well as teen centers around the country for those at risk. We serve families with special needs members. We offer adult learning in shuls nationwide, run Shabbatonim, and so much more.

Each program is designed to meet a specific need and a specific heart's desire.

All of this brings me to a deep connection with Shavuot. Consider the OU Semichat Chaver program run by Rav Elyada Goldwicht. It really created a new niche of halacha learning centers in well over 200 locations around the world. All these groups study the same halachot together and earn a Semichat Chaver certificate upon completion. I am looking forward to a special gathering they are holding in the coming weeks in Yerushalayim to celebrate the limud Torah taking place through this program.

Between the Semichat Chaver program and the special Semichat Chaver booklet being distributed with Torah Tidbits this week (which is also available by email) for parents to learn with their children using beautifully illustrated comics, we are striving to give every Jew an opportunity to connect with Torah in a way that speaks to them. Some of our programs lean more toward Torah study, others toward the social or the spiritual, and still others toward volunteering or tiyulim. The variety is intentional because every heart desires something different.

And that is exactly what Shavuot is all about. On the night of Shavuot, no matter what corner of the Jewish world a person comes from, there is a shared awareness that we try to add a little more Torah to our lives. Whether someone stays up the entire



night and davens at sunrise or attends a shiur before heading to bed, the concept is the same. We receive the Torah anew, each

**May the Torah learned  
from this issue of Torah Tidbits  
Be in loving memory of  
and לעלוי נשמת**

**Rabbi David Rebibo z"l**  
**הרב דוד יעיש בן יוסף ואסתר ז"ל**  
**On his second Yahrzeit - י' סיון '**

**Deeply missed by his wife,  
children, grandchildren,  
Great-grandchildren  
and great-great-grandchildren**

***The Rebibo Family***

person in his or her own unique way.

I want to be transparent with my readers about something. As the head of OU Israel, I am closely in touch with our supporters, friends, and communities across Israel and the Jewish world. I must share that it is getting harder and harder to sustain these programs. Whether it is our teen programs serving young people who truly have no one else looking out for them or initiatives helping olim build community, the financial pressure is real.

Many people assume the OU is a very wealthy organization, and in one sense that is true. Baruch Hashem, the OU earns revenue from its kashrut supervision of over 1.5 million products worldwide. However, the OU has grown into what I often describe as an octopus with about 25 different legs. The kashrut income can sustain about four or five of those legs. It covers salaries and overhead, but to actually run programs, we rely on generous Jews from Israel and around the world.

Right now, the declining dollar is hitting hard. As the dollar has dropped significantly against the shekel, the value of donations from our brothers and sisters in North America has decreased substantially. That means we must turn more and more to our friends right here in Israel. I know that many Israelis living on pensions or salaries originating in the United States are feeling the pinch as well. We are very aware of this reality.

Nevertheless, I am personally asking each and every one of my readers a favor. As you prepare for Shavuot, where we ask HaKadosh

Baruch Hu to help us receive the Torah in the purest and most beautiful way, please take a moment to consider how you might help us continue this work. Think about what it costs on a weekly basis to print Torah Tidbits, to distribute it to communities across the country, and to provide programming for all ages and types.

No donation is too small and none is too large. Every single contribution means the world to us. I personally see every donation that comes in and I am deeply grateful. Feel free to include a note telling us which program you would like to support or simply make a general donation to sustain all of our work.

For some of us, it is easier to sit and learn Torah all day. For others, it is easier to write a check. There is a beautiful concept of Yis-sachar and Zevulun, where those who learn Torah and those who support Torah work in an amazing partnership. Even if you are not someone who learns Torah yourself, this is your opportunity to be a part of it. If you have not yet made aliyah but want to support those who have, this is your chance. If you cannot attend shiurim yourself but want to ensure that others can, this is the moment.

I generally try to use this platform to share what is happening in our world rather than to solicit support. But the truth is, so much of what is happening in our world right now revolves around making sure we can keep our existing programs thriving and continue to expand them. We can only continue that with your support and friendship.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat and a Chag Sameach,

  
Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

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