



## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

**RABBI AVI BERMAN**  
Executive Director, OU Israel

A *Gemara* that always posed a challenge for me is "אין ארץ ישראל נקנית אלא ביסורים" ("The Land of Israel is acquired through challenges") (Brachot 5a). Is this a decree from Hashem that no matter what we do, the desire to live in *Eretz Yisrael* will always be challenging, and therefore we have to keep it that way? Is trying to make our lives in Israel easier going against the *Gemara*? Is it about personal or communal challenges? I think the answer is that Hashem wants us to develop an even deeper love for the Land of Israel. When a person has to work hard for something and toils and gives to it, his love is even deeper (as Rav Dessler explains in *Michtav M'Eliyahu*).

The beginning of the year is a time when we as individuals and organizations put thought into the goals we set for the coming year. It is with this sentiment that I turn to each of you.

Headquartered in the heart of Yerushalayim, OU Israel was established 44 years ago. While I remain grateful for the wonderful programs and location we are *zoche* to have, OU Israel's reach goes far beyond *Yerushalayim*, and we have been challenged to find ways to replicate the programs offered at the OU Israel Center in other cities throughout the country.

I am writing this article on a high from

Torah Yerushalayim and eagerly await the first-ever Torah Modiin, which is an initiative that we hope to expand to other cities throughout the country in the future. We launched this initiative following feedback we received from people who were unable to travel to join the Torah Yerushalayim program. I am grateful for those who shared their thoughts which allowed us to find a cre-



ative solution that I believe will prove meaningful to all those who can join the event.

It is with this feedback in mind that the OU Israel team set a goal for the first few months of the year. Natan Kandler (Chief Operation Officer, OU Israel) and Rabbi Ilan Haber (Chief Strategy Officer, OU) are in the process of meeting with Anglo representatives from cities throughout Israel to learn about the challenges they face and where OU Israel can be helpful. The input we have gotten thus far has been fascinating and we are eager to begin

developing solutions for English-speaking *olim* throughout Israel.

I have chosen to write about this initiative specifically for this issue, which will be the last until *Parshat Bereishit*. Knowing this issue of Torah Tidbits will remain in your homes through *Simchat Torah*, I hope readers will contemplate the needs of their community and how OU Israel can help. It is here that I address our dedicated Torah Tidbits readers with a request: **with a mission to support the evolving needs of Am Yisrael, we need your input.** If you identify areas of need within your community and where we can be helpful, please put together a group of representatives to meet with OU Israel and reach out to me at [aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org) with your information.

As we know, *aliyah* is a tremendous *bracha*, but it comes with challenges for which we can work with community representatives to create solutions. I know from personal experience how nuanced the *aliyah* experience can be - even within just one family. When I made *aliyah* with my family at 9 years old I needed to make new friends and adjust to a new school system. My parents, who were in their early 30s, had to find jobs and create a community for themselves. Baruch Hashem we were all successful and have been *zoche* to build beautiful lives here in Israel. I know we are not alone in our integration experience and at OU Israel we are eager to help.

Before I end my column I cannot do so without sharing my *HaKarat HaTov* for the OU Israel Torah Tidbits team who worked tirelessly throughout this past year to bring you a weekly publication filled with Torah inspiration. Torah Tidbits was founded by

Phil Chernofsky over 30 years ago. Over the decades, the publication has grown to include new contributors and I am excited for you all to enjoy the new columns we have planned for the coming year. With topics addressing *Parshat HaShavua*, *Eretz Yisrael*, *Tefilah*, and timely topics, I hope your Shabbatot this coming year will be enriched.

To give you an idea of what is involved, beyond the editing led by Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider, developing new layouts and coordinating ads led by Ita Rochel and beautiful graphic designs created by Yael Hautmann and Yael Kreiger, the team has to coordinate with all contributors to meet the weekly deadline. Moreover, once the weekly publication goes to print, the Torah Tidbits team uploads the digital copy to the [TorahTidbits.com](http://TorahTidbits.com) website and coordinates with Toni who oversees our incredible team of volunteers who package and bring

In memory of Debbie's father

**HAROLD KLAFF ז"ל**

**צבי הירש בן מנחם מנדל ז"ל**

**ד תשרי - on his 35th yahrzeit**

and in memory of Herby's mother

**LOLLY DAN א"ה**

**חנה בת צבי הירש ע"ה**

**ה תשרי - on her 19th yahrzeit**

and in memory of Herby's father

**AVROME DAN ז"ל**

**אברהם ישראל בן שלמה זלמן ז"ל**

**ט"ו תשרי - on his 36th yahrzeit**

**May their wonderful  
Neshamot have Aliyot  
Debbie & Herby Dan**

the publication to communities across the country. I can attest to the fact that the Torah Tidbits team does not rest until copies of the weekly publication are placed in hundreds of *shuls* across the country. This weekly endeavor can be stressful, and I remain grateful for their dedication each week. I can only imagine the *schar* (reward) everyone involved is going to receive for making sure such an endless amount of Torah is distributed.

That said, this issue was a feat of its own because it includes content for *Shabbat Shuva*, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot* and *Simchat Torah* all in one issue. The Torah Tidbits team had to coordinate with more contributors and vendors than usual and meet the deadline which fell on *motzei Rosh HaShana*. I thank all of our dedicated contributors for their time and commitment throughout the year. Thank you to all our readers who share their *HaKarat HaTov* for Torah Tidbits - it goes a long way.

I wish you all a meaningful *Shabbat Shuva*, a *Gmar Chatima Tova*, a *Pitka Tovah* and a *Chag Sameach* for the upcoming holidays.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel

**Condolences to David Zwebner  
and family on the passing of his  
SISTER a"h**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



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