



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel

Special Message of Chizuk

Despite the fact that last week introduced such pain and sorrow for the Jewish People, the outpouring of love, support, and action was unparalleled. The Jewish People and people all over the world have responded, as Jews often do, with a question: “How?” - “How can I help?” “How can I make a difference?” In Israel, the nation has come together in a way that has not been seen in decades. There is no doubt in my mind that if I asked any one of you to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard) and write a list of the opportunities of *chesed* and giving that you encountered this past week, you could easily list 20, 30, even 50 stories of volunteering and love. There seems to be no limit to the incredible and heartwarming stories of amazing acts of kindness and unity. I’d like to share three example of *chesed* that stand out in my mind from this week.

First, hundreds of Jews have come back to Israel to respond to the call for reservists or just to see how they can help their brothers and sisters. Within Israel, so many of those not called up to join the army have sought ways to aid in Israel’s defense in any way they can. I just read an amazing story posted by a commander in the IDF. He had been given permission to send some soldiers out for a short break to visit their families. He

went over to one of the men and said, “Go home to your wife and your kids. Take a break for a day, and come back tomorrow.” The *chayal* responded, “I’m fine, my wife is fine. We’re doing ok. Put me at the bottom of the list and let that guy over there get the break, not me.” The commander went to the one he pointed to and that soldier responded, “I don’t need to go. I’m a single guy, no wife, no kids waiting for me. Put me at the bottom of the list. That guy over there, he has a wife, he

has kids, ask him to go home.” Each soldier he approached responded in the same way. The commander writes in his post how much that reminds him of the *midrash* that describes two brothers who loved each other so much that they kept adding crops to the other one’s pile. As the *midrash* goes, the space between the brothers’ fields is where the *Beit HaMikdash* was built.

The second example features the incredible hospitality of the Jewish People. Entire communities are making dinners for the mothers home with children whose fathers have joined the reserves. So many companies have made it their business to get delicious food to the soldiers on the front lines. Several non-kosher restaurants went to the trouble of *kashering* their kitchen so



that they could make food to bring to both religious and non-religious soldiers. People have opened up their homes to take in those from the north and south. So many people living overseas have given their apartments to families who evacuated their homes. I've heard of contractors giving entire projects of almost-finished houses over to those in need of places to stay. People from surrounding cities have come to clean and prepare these places for them to stay. There have been organizations who have made sure that furniture and appliances are brought so that they can live there until stability returns to Israel.

The third example is volunteers that have tied thousands of pairs of camouflaged *tzitzit* for *chayalim*. Young and old from all walks of life, *chareidi* and *dati leumi*, have gathered in *yeshivot* and *shuls* all over Israel to tie thousands of *tzitzit* to meet the demand coming from our *chayalim*, some of whom likely never wore *tzitzit* before, or at least not in a long time, wearing *tzitzit* as part of their uniform.

There are so many more stories to tell; the *chesed* has truly been endless. On behalf of the OU worldwide, I drove all over the country this week. I attended ten funerals in three days. Some of these families lost two sons this week. I visited families of *chayalim bodedim* (lone soldiers) who came to Israel to sit *shiva*. I visited advisors from our OU Israel Youth Centers who lost loved ones. I've just tried to be there for so many of our brothers and sisters who need support now.

One of the most impactful acts of *chesed* that I witnessed was at Har Herzl. People set up booths to give out sandwiches, drinks and snacks. Nobody was selling food; they just stood there and gave out as much as they could. Thousands upon thousands of people were coming every single hour to attend and pay their respects, and these teenagers and adults stood there giving out food to make sure that everyone could have something to eat. Just giving and giving. It was truly beautiful.



Henry Orlinsky and I drove to Rosh HaAyin this week to be *menachem avel* for my friend Yair Gabay who lost his sister in Sderot last week, and they had only found her body Sunday night. Yair is

currently an advisor for the OU Israel Youth Center in Kiryat Gat, and he grew up in our Makom Balev Youth Center in Sderot since he was in seventh grade. He was telling me that they decided not to sit *shiva* in their house in Sderot because they knew that people wanted to come to be *menachem avel*, and they'd have to sit in the bomb

In loving memory
of our daughter and sister

JUDY YELLIN a"h
יהודית מאשה בת אליעזר ע"ה

on her 29th *yahrzeit*
9 Marcheshvan

The Yellin and Weingarten families

shelter room much of the time. So instead, they went to his aunt's house in Rosh HaAyin. He spoke about how the entire community, within hours, had a place for them, and anything they could possibly need was provided for them to ensure they would be as comfortable as possible even in such a horrible situation. The *chesed* meant so much to them.

Every time I hear these stories of such great *chesed* occurring now, I feel like looking up and saying, "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, look at *Am Yisrael*. Look at who we are. This is surely us at our best. Don't look at how divided we sometimes were in the past or how much we protested against each other. These *chesed* stories now represent our real selves. This is really us, together, united with *achdut*."

Besides showing our unity to *Hashem*, these displays of unity, of brotherhood, are providing the soldiers and the families of the victims unfathomable strength during these difficult times. I met with the youth

in the south this past week, providing support through the OU family in Israel and abroad, whether physically or emotionally. When I tell them that this is coming from their brothers and sisters from around the world, people whom they have never met before, and most probably will never meet, it warms their heart as well.

I hope we can hold on to this feeling and remember how much we care for one another. Unfortunately, it often takes our enemies to remind us of this fact. I pray that we keep these feelings, how amazing and incredible they are, even after we destroy our enemies. This past Shabbat, I led the *Mussaf* prayer in shul. When we reached the *Mi Sheberach* prayer for Hashem to protect Israel, and the soldiers, it probably took me five times as long as it normally would to get through it, and I completely broke down at the prayer for G-d to return those from captivity. *B'ezrat Hashem*, we will see them home, reunited with their families very soon. I pray that we keep this feeling of *achdut*. These stories of *chesed*, kindness, and charity, represent our true selves. This is who we are.

Am Yisrael Chai!

A gigantic hug to my brothers and sisters around the world.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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**May the Torah learned
from this issue of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of our dear friend**

**YEHUDA LEIB BERREN ז"ל
יהודה לייב בן אהרון יצחק ז"ל
on the third Yahrzeit of his passing.**

**Aliyah L'kever on
Monday 23 October, 12:30pm
ח' מרחשון**

**Har HaMenuchoth
Gush תט, Section 7, Row 2**

**Zoom 822 5794 7564
Password - Yehuda**

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.