



## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN  
Executive Director, OU Israel

Since the war broke out, I've been receiving countless calls from so many friends asking what needs to be done. It is especially heartwarming to hear from so many friends in North America whose hearts are with their brothers and sisters here in Israel. I have noticed a theme where I can almost predict what each person will focus on over the course of the discussion since most people tend to see the war and their ability to help based on the lenses of their own lives.

Since I have had the *zechut* to work with most of these friends on a variety of projects, in the vast majority of conversations I can predict what they think the needs are based on where they are coming from. For example: medical professionals will think about the medical needs here in Israel, mental health professionals focus on the mental health needs, and Holocaust survivors and children of Holocaust survivors are generally thinking about the trauma the refugees are going through. A toy store owner is obviously interested in getting toys to the children who are displaced from their homes. Parents of younger kids focus more on the needs of that age while parents of teens are interested in the teen scene and what resources they need.

It's not that people only want to take care of their own. Rather, our brains automatically take our thoughts to what our lives are focused on. Over and over again, when I share other needs we are identifying here, they understand them and have donated

generously towards them as well. These conversations and the love for our fellow Jews that comes across warms my heart. Many are very practical, during which we find solutions to provide for the many needs the war has brought to the forefront.

Just as my friends relate to the needs based on the lenses of their life experiences, our focus here at OU Israel since the start of the war also corresponds to our areas of expertise during normal, quieter times. As you know, our programs focus on two key demographics in Israeli society – youth/youth at-risk and English-speaking *olim* and visitors. When I take a birds eye view of the many wonderful initiatives the OU has taken upon itself during the war, they relate to expanding our services for these populations.

First, when it comes to our work with youth/youth at-risk, we take pride in our ability to partner with so many communities in our OU Israel network that have unfortunately been evacuated from their homes. In addition to our regular work through our Youth Centers and the Pearl & Harold Jacobs Zula Outreach Center, we have become the resource for our participants, staff and their families now living in refugee hotels in Yerushalayim.

The OU Israel team has strong and meaningful relationships with the mayors, municipal staff, and other community leaders in so many cities up north and down south, mainly due to our ongoing work in these cities for over twenty years. Whether



it's from working on a daily basis with teens at-risk, programming we run for English speakers through NCSY Israel and Yachad Israel, and the thousands of North American teens we bring to their communities with NCSY Summer Programs, they know OU is synonymous with positive teen programming. They have seen first-hand the work we do in their communities and the way we care about their cities. Therefore, when they need assistance they turn to the OU for help and reinforcement for educational, emotional, spiritual and social needs.

The OU is not just there during times of crisis. We have and will continue to be with them on an ongoing basis. Take our Makom Balev Youth Center in Sderot. We are not just there when rockets are falling. Once we enter a city we are there in good times and challenging times. Since we have multi-year relationships with the youth and their families, we have become the address over the years. That's why the municipalities and families in Sderot and other cities trust us and are relying on us to help their refugee families, and especially the youth.

To assess and address the ongoing needs that these displaced families have, we assigned a representative in each refugee hotel. We are running carnivals and story times for the kids who have been without school for over a month. We are running

*chizuk* concerts for the women, many of whose husbands are called up to reserve duty, to provide them with the strength to continue to be the backbone of their families during this time of chaos. We hired more staff for the Zula to meet the ever growing crowds of an expanding teen population on the streets of Yerushalayim. Our usual Zula teens are relying on us more than ever during these trying times. Unfortunately, many lost friends who were at the music festival and have others friends who have been kidnapped. In addition, so many teens evacuated from their homes are flocking to the night scene and in need of the Zula's warmth and the care of our counselors.

The other area we are naturally focusing on is how can we be here for you, our English-speaking OU Israel family here in Israel. Right away, Rabbi Sam Shor and his team began offering twice daily Zoom *chizuk* classes given by the Rabbis, Rebbetzins and educators you enjoy learning from. These *chizuk* sessions are being recorded, and thousands have watched them at their convenience on our OU Israel YouTube channel.

We are providing virtual programs as well as in-person programs. We are in discussions with the department of homeland security to assess when we can once again open our building for programming since we do not have a *mamad* and the majority


of our security guards have been called to *milluim*. We are pushing to open as soon as possible. This week, we started Tuesday morning in-person *shuirim* at Beit Knesset Nitzanim where everyone can feel secure learning in the *Beit Midrash* which is also the shul's *mamad*. JCHAT young professionals, Keshet senior singles, and so many other demographics had activities geared towards their needs and interests.

This past Thursday night, Rebbetzin Zemira Ozarowski and Daniella Hellerstein (OU Israel board member) ran an evening of *chizuk* for Anglo mothers of our brave IDF soldiers. These women, like the mothers of all of our *chayalim*, are heroes. They chose to move here knowing that their children may one day be on the battlefield fighting for our Homeland. Despite the immense pride and endless amount of prayers, we know these women need support, and that's what this evening was about. I encourage all mothers of *chayalim* to watch the recordings of the speakers on our YouTube channel as well and share with other women you know who would benefit from such a program.

If you're reading this message, you are connected to OU Israel and the work that we do. Whether you read Torah Tidbits every week or sporadically or whether you join our programs in person, virtually, or send your kids to them – thank you. Knowing how many people are taking advantage of what we offer, especially in difficult times when we all need the extra *chizuk* and sense of community, means a lot to me and our team. Continue volunteering – whether it be with the OU or with other causes that speak to your heart and your

unique life circumstances and skills. Continue *davening*. Continue giving because we rely on your donations in order to run these vital programs. *B'ezrat Hashem*, we will merit *besorat tovot* and the *geulah sheleima* speedily in our days.

Wishing you an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

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





**WOLGEL LAW**  
U.S. IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION

American Immigration  
& Naturalization Law

**Michele Coven Wolgel**

US Citizenship for Children & Grandchildren

**Quick appointments available  
for special circumstances.**

www.wolgelaw.co.il  
lawyer@wolgelaw.co.il  
Tel: 02 590 3444  
facebook.com/uscitizenshipinfo




**LIFE SETTLEMENTS**

Do you have a life insurance policy you:

- No longer want?
- No longer need?
- Can no longer afford the premium?
- Could you use extra money instead of keeping your policy?

**I can guarantee that if you qualify with the underwriting process I can get you more money than if you cash it in with the company.**

Please contact Moshe Russell at:  
Buymypolicy32@gmail.com