



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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I've remarked in these pages about the incredible feeling of *achdut* and togetherness that *Klal Yisrael* is experiencing right now in Israel. Jews of all types are helping each other, supporting each other, loving each other. Our brothers and sisters have come by the planeload to Israel on mission after mission (many through the OU). Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, rabbis and *shul* members, you name it, everyone wants to be here because they are experiencing this feeling as well. (Let me take a moment to give a shout-out to all my colleagues at the OU in North America who are working so hard to bring missions to Israel and showing support - from volunteering to donating to barbecuing for soldiers on army bases!)

There is one area of Israeli society that I feel has generally taken a different approach, and it is disheartening to see. I have avoided it for a long time, since it often seems to be so disconnected from the feeling of the nation. I'm talking about the Israeli media. I find that when I glance at a newspaper, turn on the radio, or pass by a TV on the news stations and talk shows, I walk away with the feeling that they live in a totally different universe than me and everyone around me. They live in a place where that unity is broken, disunity has been sown, and every possible point of criticism can and should be stated and reviewed.

I understand that journalists have their job to do. Sometimes, criticism is necessary, but there is a time and a place for

everything. I just can't shake the feeling that in times like these, when war rages on, this kind of journalism can serve our enemies much more than us. Our enemies want us splintered and broken, unable to hold each other's hands and help each other. I just want to tell the media (and I mean many of the people in the media, not everyone, of course), how can you turn your back on this incredible unity that is clear to me is necessary for us to win and to survive this war?

I saw a picture this week that really moved me to the core. A store owner put a sign up on his store window saying, "*Hachanut segurah, ani bemiluim,*" "The store is closed, I am in the reserves." On that sign, people began

In memory of

GAVRIEL BLOOM HY"D
beloved son of Jennifer & David

**Gavriel fell in battle
in Gaza protecting Am Yisrael
and Eretz Yisrael.**

**During the war, Gavriel went
above and beyond the call of duty,
volunteering for many dangerous
missions, and dedicating his unique
personality and talents to make his
unit the most outstanding in its field.**

**We honor and salute
his courage and heroism.**

זכותו יגן עלינו

**Our love and support
are with the entire Bloom family
during this difficult period**

בית כנסת אור שלום ברמה

to write notes. “*Kol hakavod*, thank you for your service!” “We love you.” “Come back home soon!” You see that and your heart swells. What an incredible nation we have.

In Torah Tidbits, I have written about many of the initiatives that people have taken upon themselves to express their feeling of unity and show how much we are there for each other. People who have

come en masse to funerals to pay their respects; *shiva* houses that are filled with hundreds of people in show of support; restaurant owners that tell the uniformed soldier that his money is no good there and to order whatever he wants.

It’s a special feeling. I carry it with me always, and that’s why I made a decision a long time ago to stay away from the media as much as possible. Many of my friends know that when they come across an article or read an interview that has to do with Jewish unity they should send it to me. There is no lack of articles and news stories like that, and I read them voraciously. But the negative ones? Keep them away from me.

I had a very painful experience this last *Motzei Shabbat*. A neighbor of mine is in the IDF. It was his second time out of Gaza since October 7, and he is currently fighting in Khan Yunis. He came home for *Shabbat* and on *Motzei Shabbat* he came over to my house to talk for a bit and get a hug. We spoke about what’s happening, how he’s doing, and how I could help him if at all possible. He said, “Avi, we have everything we need.” I said, “Are you sure? There’s nothing I can help with?”

He said, “Listen, I’m a single guy. My mother and father are worried at home, but there’s not much you can do about that.” I insisted, “There must be something I could do!”

He answered me, “If you have any ability to influence, any pull at all, get the TV stations to emphasize the positive more than the negative.” He explained that he was just at home

with his mother, when she turned on the TV to watch the news. He sat down with her for a few minutes, mother and son, and watched a news channel speak about the war. After two minutes, he stood up. “Mom, I just can’t

stand this. I can’t listen to it anymore.” And that’s when he came to me, for a bit of positivity, a bit of optimism and warmth that was so lacking from the news he was watching. He came because he needed *chizuk*. He asked me, “Is this how the nation is feeling?” I told him no. I don’t think that in any way, shape or form, what he is hearing on TV is what *Klal Yisrael* is feeling right now. We are embracing. We are together.

I don’t think I have that much influence on journalists. I know a few, and I’ve made sure to speak to them from my heart on this issue. I’ve tried to pass on this soldier’s message. I think it’s important we all do our part in this. Emphasize the good. The positive. We need to explain to our media people that while their job is to report the truth, it is how that news is reported and what is emphasized, and when it is published, that can make all the difference. We are at a



time of war. We need to maintain our unified feeling to win against our enemy. There are signs everywhere, “*Beyachad nenetzach*,” “together we will win.” The only way is if we emphasize the unity we all hold.

We have brothers and sisters in this country who have put their entire lives aside - their personal businesses, their jobs, their families, their children, their parents and their spouses for the sake of defeating Hamas and getting back our hostages. Many of us who aren't fighting have had to experience the “inconvenience” of our local repair guy or painter or store owner being out on *miluim*. I believe that if we can push off that repair or buying that item until they return, we should do that. This shows the support they need at this time.

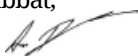
Let me give you an example from my own life. I have a gardener who comes once a month to fix up the yard and make it beautiful. He's on *miluim* now, and he told me he'll find me a replacement, and I can pay him instead. I said, “Absolutely not. My garden can wait. I'll wait until you come back from *miluim*.” I told him this October 8th. Since then, my boys and I have worked to keep the garden looking as nice as possible, but I did not hire a different gardener in his place. I want him to know that he won't have to worry about at least one client when he returns.

Our soldiers need to see this positivity and support. So if you can talk to any journalists you know about keeping positive, do it. And if you can show support for our soldiers, if you can show them that what they see on TV is not the feeling of the people on the ground, they will fight for us that much better and we will win. Our journalists, politicians, and other leaders should learn from our *chayalim*, and they

should see that *Am Yisrael* is one unified nation.

When we look at this week's parsha, we learn from Yitro that there is no such thing as one person doing it all. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was trying every case and judging every fight, but Yitro told him, “Look at what you're doing and how tired it is making you. You can't do it alone. Appoint lower judges and higher judges, and together you will be successful.” This is always true. We cannot and should not think that we'll do it alone. We all have our part to do to encourage this feeling. Together with our friends, families, and the entire *Am Yisrael*, we will win.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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In Loving Memory



Jenny Weil

חיה גיטל בת מרדכי ושרה

whose 5th yahrzeit falls on **שבת** כ' שבט

She is very much missed by her children,
grandchildren, great grandchildren,
nieces, nephews, and friends