



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel

This Purim marks 15 years that Rav Shmuel Eliyahu and I have hosted a radio show on *Radio Galei Yisrael*. It all started when a few friends in my neighborhood told me, “Avi, they’re opening a radio station here in Givat Ze’ev - you should be on the radio!” I responded, “Me? What do I have to do with radio? I don’t think it’s my thing.” They said, “You can talk about all the important topics you are interested in such as education, Diaspora Jewry, love for *Eretz Yisrael*, *kiruv*, education and more.” It was tempting, as I cared for all these topics deeply, but I dismissed it and went on with my life.

A few weeks later, I received a call from Rav Shmuel Eliyahu who said, “Listen, Avi, I’ve been asked by the radio station to do a show tomorrow. I don’t want to do it alone.

Can you join me?” Now that it was coming from Rav Shmuel Eliyahu, it was a lot harder to say no, and I decided to give it a shot.

It’s been almost 15 years of broadcasting a show called “*Actualia Yehudit*” - “Jewish Current Events,” every week on Hebrew radio. I make sure to take ideas from my work at the OU and from Rav Shmuel Eliyahu and incorporate them into the discussion on the radio show. We talk about all sorts of topics with the goal of inspiring the Jewish People.

If anyone would have asked me before that phone call from Rav Eliyahu if there was a chance I would be an Israeli broadcaster, I would have rejected the possibility completely. Public speaking is always an intimidating prospect, but I learned to do it over the years in my role in NCSY and for the past 17 years as Executive Director of OU Israel. However, to put myself in a position every week to speak publicly to hundreds and thousands of people, I sometimes wonder why would I want to do that. It still sometimes surprises me that I chose to do this so long ago.

From our first show, I began to receive feedback from people all over the country. People shared, “I listened to your radio show and enjoyed it. Thank you so much!” That *chizuk* was the motivation which gave me the drive to continue. Doing a weekly show, rain or shine, is no easy task. Not just for me, but also my family who enables me to have time to prepare for and record the show. Getting such positive responses from listeners gave me the energy to continue week after week.

May the Torah learning in this issue
be in the merit of and לעילוי נשמות
our dear parents

MURRAY FISHER z”l
משה בן יהודה לב ז”ל
on his 37th yahrzeit

and

LILLIAN FISHER a”h
לאה בת שמשון ע”ה
on her 2nd yahrzeit

Deeply missed and loved
by their family and all those
who were blessed to know them

*Susan Gopstein, Joel Fisher,
Karen Weiss, their children,
grandchildren and great grandchildren*

This was on my mind three and a half years ago when the Director of Marketing, Laya Bejell, as well as our Office Manager and Torah Tidbits Advertising Coordinator, Ita Rochel, came over to me and said, “Phil Chernofsky has retired as founder and editor of Torah Tidbits, after decades of work. Maybe you should start writing in Torah Tidbits yourself.” Once again, I found myself protesting the spotlight. “I hate writing,” I told them. “I can’t do it.” They pushed. “We’ll work with you. We’ll make sure it doesn’t take up too much of your time.” As you can see and read, they prevailed and once again, I talk to hundreds and thousands of people throughout Israel in this weekly column. Writing each week takes endless *siyata dishmaya*, and the positive feedback you, my dear readers, share encourages me to continue writing each week.

My children are bilingual, but since they grew up in Israel, they certainly prefer to read in Hebrew than in English. In fact, many times, they’ll ask me to read my column to them so they can listen. I love reading it to them since it shares perspectives and activities I want them to know about. They enjoy listening, which is something so many of us as well as the younger generation do throughout the week. Podcasts are very popular today, and I see my children regularly listening to

or watching podcasts from Jewish channels - whether in the background while doing their chores, walking around the house, or sitting at the table. I myself was inspired by what I could hear, and thought to myself how amazing these new platforms are.

Then, two and a half months ago, during the war, I was working hard getting mes-

sages out through Facebook and Instagram to our brothers and sisters both here and abroad. I shared what the incredible OU Israel staff were doing during the war. Nina Broder, our Director of Social Media, approached me and recommended I start an OU Israel podcast. My initial thought was I’m too busy, but I was immediately sold when she told me that it is a great way to get out positive messaging

today, in a fun and entertaining way. (By the way, if you want to keep up with the OU in Israel, Nina has been doing a fantastic job with all the social media platforms. Follow



לעילוי נשמת

Rabbi Yaakov I. Homnick z"l
 on his 2nd yahrzeit - מוצ"ש ק"ב אדר א'

A Rav
 A Talmid Chacham
 מקבל כל אדם בסבר פנים יפות

His presence is greatly missed

*The Homnick and Bulman families
 grandchildren and great-grandchildren*

@theouisrael on Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and even TikTok!)

Thanks to Nina's professionalism and encouragement, we have released four episodes of the OU Israel podcast. Through the podcast I am meeting amazing Jewish leaders, people who have dedicated themselves to the cause of the Jewish People. Getting to sit down with them and talk to them about what they are doing to help move the Jewish People forward, has really been such a delightful experience. Our podcast guests include President of the OU, Mitch Aeder, EVP and COO of the OU Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph, Rabbi Shlomo Katz, Rabbi Joshua Gerstein, and most recently, Aleeza Ben Shalom, professional matchmaker. The podcast showcases their passion, how they think and what moves them to help the Jewish People. It's really been amazing.

As I meet these great and important people, I keep thinking that this is another way of showing the Jewish People how every single one of us can make a tremendous difference in the Jewish People. Aleeza Ben Shalom remarked to me that OU Israel Program Director Rabbi Sam Shor was one of the few people who really believed in her when she started working as a matchmaker. Now it's amazing to see how packed the OU Israel Center gets with singles who

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participate in her courses. When Rabbi Shlomo Katz gets up to be the *chazzan* on Yom HaAtzmaut at Gan Hapaamon, where I hope to see you all this year, I'm inspired. When Rabbi Yehoshua Gerstein goes to the IDF base and gets smiles from soldiers religious and secular alike, it lifts me up.

Every one of these great people made a difference by doing what they do best. We all have this potential. Watch or listen to the OU Israel podcast on our YouTube channel, and please share your feedback. I would love to hear what you think as well as your suggestions for future podcasts.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring *Shabbat*,



Rabbi Avi Berman

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