



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
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I'm writing this message from Montreal, Canada where I am finishing a wonderful Shabbat weekend being the scholar-in-residence at Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem (TBDJ). While I have been in Canada for Shabbat hundreds of times, this was my first Shabbat in Montreal, so it was really a new and special experience. I got to know the community and their amazing Rabbi, Rabbi Zolly Claman, and his family who welcomed me with such open arms. I got to see how they are all yearning to learn more and more about what their brothers and sisters are going through in Israel. I found out that they have marches here every single Sunday to support Israel. They're having an event while I am still here focusing on all the hostages and praying for their return. This is really a passionate and Zionist community.

They were also eager to understand what the OU does in Israel, with all of our events and *chesed* opportunities to help those affected by the war and to create unity in *Klal Yisrael* at this time. They were also particularly interested in our work with teens in

the North and South and our youth programming in general. You could see that while they are physically in Montreal, their hearts and minds are in Israel. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the community, and specifically the families that hosted me, for all they did over this weekend to ensure a successful and inspiring Shabbat for me and everyone else in the community.

The most meaningful part was walking into the shul and seeing, at the very entrance of the shul, a gigantic *yizkor* sign of all of those who have been killed in this war, with a name and picture of each one. Rabbi Claman told me that within hours of hearing the announcement of soldiers who had been killed that day, they put up their pictures on the wall. Unfortunately, while here we heard the news of four more soldiers who were killed in Gaza. By the time I walked into the shul for *shacharit*, their pictures were already printed and added. The wall is a reminder of how much *Klal Yisrael* cares about each other and that we feel each other's pain. It makes no difference if we know the soldier or not. He is our brother, he is our son, and we are all together.

There is something in the *Pesach Haggadah* that I have been thinking about a lot since the war started. The seder night is a time of Jewish education. "*Vehigadeta levincha*" - the Torah tells us to teach the *Pesach* story to our children, and the story of our history. Last year, when we recited "*She-bechol dor va'dor omdim aleinu lechaloteinu*," that in every

**The OU Israel Family
sends heartfelt condolences to
Rabbi Glenn Black and family
(NCSY Canada)
on the passing of his father**
נחמיה בן יעקב ז"ל
Hyman Black ז"ל
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

generation our enemies have tried to destroy us, we might not have truly understood it, or felt it, fully. But this year, every Jew in the world will say this line with a clear understanding of what our enemies want to do to us. They truly wish *lechaloteinu*, to wipe us out and destroy us completely.

I have been contemplating how to make this idea practical. What can I do at the *seder*, what can we do, to not just let the line be stated and then move on? If it's felt differently this year, we should surely act differently!

The answer came to me last week. Rabbi Ezra Friedman took me, as well as Laya Bejell and Nina Broder, to the Matzot Birkat HaPesach hand matzah factory in Sderot, which is under the *hashgacha* of the OU. We filmed a behind the scenes video of how matzah is made which we will be releasing next week on our social media channels. While there, I thought about how they had a bomb shelter in the factory. Rockets continue to fall on Sderot, and yet the matzah bakers are here every day to ensure that people will have matzah for *Pesach*. I said to myself, "Here they stand, many of them having just come back from *miluim*, and they are devoting themselves to this mitzvah, in Sderot, under rocket fire."

I made a decision right then that I simply had to have this hand matzah at my *Pesach seder*. This matzah truly symbolizes how "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu matzileinu meydama*." They tried to destroy, but with G-d's help, we are saved from their hands and are rebuilding stronger.

We administer another matzah factory in Netivot called Emunah VeBriut. The three



owners were all called to *miluim* and they hadn't come back until recently. Because they were fighting to defend *Am Yisrael*, they produced a lot less matzah this year. Every sale they make will matter to them this year.

The Psagot winery, under OU supervision, will also stand out at my *seder*. Last week, I wrote about my Purim experience up north with families of evacuees, where we hosted a special *Purim seudah* for these families. In our planning stages, we knew we needed wine, and my first call was to the Psagot winery, where my good friend Yaakov immediately prepared boxes of wine so we could bring joy and happiness to *Klal Yisrael*. When I drink this wine at my *seder*, I will be thinking about how united *Klal Yisrael* really is, how we care about each other, how we love each other. *Ke'ish echad be'lev echad*, like one body and one heart, we will overcome any challenges together.

I suggest that anyone who wants to make

May the Torah learned
in this issue of Torah Tidbits
be for our mother

לאה בת אברהם ע"ה
ג ניסן

On her 36th Yahrzeit
Avraham and Yoseph Polak

this *Pesach* more meaningful seek out food products from companies that symbolize, for you, a meaningful unity, togetherness, and care. Let us show ourselves, and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, how much we are thinking about our soldiers, hostages, and displaced families and how much we are praying for them to come home safely.

We will be talking about the four sons at the *Pesach seder*. People sometimes mention the fifth son who is not there because he is unaffiliated and estranged from his Judaism. This year, we should think about a sixth son, the one who cannot come home because he is on his base, or in Gaza, or defending a border, or taken hostage. We want so much, as do they, for them to come home and be at their family *seders*. With Hashem's help, we should see a *seder* with the sixth son home and at the table, and we should see peace in *Klal Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*.

With that, I want to wish everyone a *chag kasher ve'sameach*. Let me take the opportunity to remind you of our annual OU Israel Guide to Pesach, with tremendous thanks to Rabbi Ezra Friedman and Rabbi Yissachar Dov Krakowski for working hard to put together this years' guide. As you can see there, there is a list of the 36 wineries that have the *hashgacha* of the OU here in Israel. Please make sure to support OU wineries and matzah factories this year, which goes a long way to support the OU in Israel as well.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

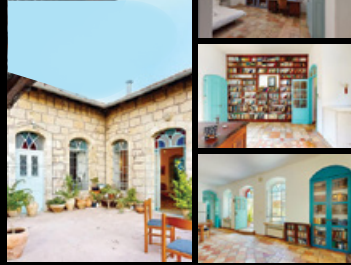


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**OU Israel
Pesach Guide**



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