



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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There is a well-known idea regarding the *Parshiyot* we read following Pesach. What is the source that one should only say good things about a person after they pass away? *Acharei-Mot*, *Kedoshim Emor* (After the death, speak holiness.) Personally, I take this principle very seriously. After a person passes away, only positive and holy things should be said about their life, how they lived it, and how we could learn from them.

Next week, when we hear of the word “*Kedoshim*,” it will have a very different feeling than many other years. We’re going to stand on Yom HaZikaron this Sunday night and Monday and talk about the *kedoshim*, the holy Jews who were killed for the act of being Jewish and living in the Holy Land, our brothers and sisters who gave their lives for the State of Israel for the last 76 years. While this is a difficult day any year, I am sure it will be so much more complex, difficult, and meaningful this year. There are so many fresh graves on Har Herzl and cemeteries throughout Israel this year. The *kevarim* are still fresh. There will be so many programs with soldiers who fought in Gaza speaking

and sharing their recent experiences fighting to defend *Am Yisrael*. This year, Yom HaZikaron will hit even closer to home for so many of us.

We will, of course, be thinking and talking about the wars and *kedoshim* of past years - the first Lebanon War, the second Lebanon War, the Six Day War, the War for Independence, and so on. We’ll be remembering and discussing those who died in terror attacks throughout Israel’s history. But the sheer amount of *kedoshim* this year will be so much more heart wrenching. The soldiers and police who bravely fought in the morning hours to keep the terrorists near the borders so they could not advance further. The *chayalot tzdikaniyot* who monitored the borders and gave their lives. Combat soldiers who fought Hamas deep in Gaza. And all the civilians, young and old, who were slaughtered.

If there was ever a year that *Am Yisrael* would be collectively standing at the cemeteries of fallen soldiers, whether physically or emotionally, it’s this year. I’m very moved that so many of our brothers and sisters from North America are coming to join us on an OU mission we are running this Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut. We are seeing that Jews around the world want to connect, and they want to be together.

I want to quote Miriam Peretz, who unfortunately lost two of her sons, Uriel HY”D, who I went to high school with, and Eliraz HY”D, who grew up in my neighborhood

Mazal Tov to **Joshua Muhlrud**
and his proud parents
Ashleigh & Mark on the occasion
of his special **Bar Mitzvah**
here in Yerushalayim
Rabbi Avi & Pnina Berman
& the OU Israel Family

here in Givat Zeev. She told me, “ Hamas and Hezbollah may have killed the physical bodies of my sons, but they did not kill the spirit of *Klal Yisrael*.”

I was thinking about our brothers and sisters overseas who very much want to be here this Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut, but cannot. I ask myself how we can connect them to what’s going on here on Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut.

This year, on Yom HaAtzmaut, we’re going to have thousands of people joining us at Gan HaPaamon, which OU Israel runs every year. This year, we will also be joined by Jen Airley, who will be giving the opening remarks for the event. She will talk about her son Binyamin, HY”D, and what it means to go from Yom HaZikaron into Yom HaAtzmaut. Following that, there will be an amazing and heartfelt musical *Tefila* with Rabbi Shlomo Katz, to thank Hashem for this incredible Land, this incredible people, and this incredible State of Israel. How can our brothers and sisters overseas join us and connect with us in this? How can we help them achieve the same feeling we will have after the military cemeteries and after the speeches and after the *Tefilot* we will be saying?

This week, I recorded a podcast episode with the Meaningful People podcast, who hosted Miriam Peretz and myself. They asked us to talk about the insights that we have into Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut this year. Mainly, we talked



about the *emunah* that *Klal Yisrael* has maintained to continue on, how to take that spirit and bring it to all of the Jewish people around the world.

Miriam Peretz taught me so much in this conversation. We both live in Givat Zeev, but we have also traveled to North America and I’ve seen her inspire NCSY groups all over North America with her speeches and talks. I’ve seen her inspire so many teens that we work with within Israel. She understands what it means to experience




OU Israel
wishes Mazal Tov to
Elad & Avishag Levy and family
on the Bar Mitzvah
of their son **Nadav**



incredibly painful challenges in life, but how from within those challenges we can pick ourselves up and get to work helping *Klal Yisrael*. There is an incredibly positive attitude that Miriam is able to give over to those she speaks to. This year, we all need that. We all need a feeling that life continues on and that everyone has something to contribute.

It's not going to be easy for any of us to have a "normal" Yom HaAtzmaut this year. But it's precisely because of this fact that we have to dance and sing even more. Our enemies are looking to see whether we will be happy or despair this Yom HaAtzmaut. Therefore, our job is to show them (and ourselves) how happy we really are. Yes, we have many challenges. But those challenges won't change our attitudes and mindsets away from the big picture. That is of the Jewish people returning home, building our Land, and enjoying the prophecies of old come to fruition before our eyes. Around the world, our brothers and sisters can show our enemies that we rise out of our challenges and we are still joyful and faithful. This is how they can connect, to feel, what it means to be part of this day.

Our *kedoshim* did not give their lives for us to be sad. They gave their lives to enable us to continue on with the spirit and the smile of *Klal Yisrael*. So, let us do just that.

Overcome our challenges, put on a smile, and go into a very happy and meaningful Yom HaAtzmaut.

I look forward to seeing you all at Gan HaPaamon Monday night (see ad on opposite page)!

I also want to thank a good friend of the OU and inspirational individual Rena Quint who shared her Holocaust story on the OU Israel podcast in honor of Yom HaShoah. You can watch my interview with Rena on OU Israel's YouTube channel or scan the QR code here.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat, a meaningful Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut Sameach,



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SCAN to View:
Rena Quint
Podcast



May the Torah learning be
לעילוי נשמת

Avraham Lifshutz ז"ל
אביגדור חי אברהם ז"ל

on his 3rd Yartzeit - ז' אייר

Greatly missed by
his Parents, Siblings and Grandparents

Martin & Rhonda Lifshutz and Family

In loving memory of

Ernest Kamins ז"ל
אשר אליעזר בן אברהם לייב ז"ל
on his ninth yearzeit

*From his Wife, Children, Grandchildren
and Great Grandchildren*



מאפלה לאורה ומשיעבוד לגאולה

LEIL YOM HAATZMAUT TEFILA

MON | MAY 13 | 6:45 PM

GAN HAPAAMON

Corner of King David St. & Jabotinsky St. Yerushalayim

Special Tekes Maavar for Yom HaZikaron



Inspirational Speaker
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Mother of Sgt. Binyamin HY"D

Followed by an Uplifting Musical Tefila with

Rabbi Shlomo Katz

Mara D'Atra of Kehilat Shirat David, Efrat



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This free event is open to all and is presented by OU Israel and the Jerusalem Municipality Department of Jewish Tradition



Photo: Joani Pollock