



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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Twenty-eight years ago, my wife and I were blessed with our first child. He was born, Baruch Hashem, with all four grandparents and six great-grandparents still living. Sadly, though, he never had the chance to meet his two great-grandfathers on my wife's side. Still, we had the privilege of naming him Meir, after one of those grandfathers. Honestly, at the time, I had never really thought about how significant the name Meir is. It was only when I sat down to prepare the Torah thought for his brit milah that I came across the Talmud passage (Eruvin 13b) that teaches that the great Sage we know as Rabbi Meir was in fact named Rabbi Nehorai. He came to be called Rabbi Meir because he illuminated (meir) the eyes of the Sages in halacha. Both names share the same root of "light," Meir in Hebrew and Nehorai in Aramaic, and at its core, it is a name about giving light to others.

Years later, after my wife and I had spent five years running NCSY in Vancouver and had returned home to Givat Ze'ev, it was time for our dear Meir's bar mitzvah. The rabbi of the community at the time was Rav Lior Engelman, today a rabbi in Kfar Saba. He spoke beautifully about Meir, and then shared something I have never forgotten. He admitted that when he thinks about his own name, Lior, which means "I have light," he sometimes feels it points inward, toward himself. He told all those sitting in the synagogue that when he sees the name "Meir," he gets strangely jealous. "Meir," he said, "is entirely about shining onto others, about giving light to others." Those words have stayed with me ever since, especially as I have watched Meir grow, Baruch Hashem, into an incredible father who genuinely tries to shine his light onto others and to help people in so many ways.

That same idea returned to me a few years ago, when Rabbi Yosef Zeev Ginsberg and Rabbi Moshe Zev (Michael) Kahn told me they wanted to create a new program, an annual evening event called YAIR*. I wondered what it would add; we already have the Orthodox Union, we have OU Israel, and within that we have NCSY Israel, the Pearl & Harold Jacobs Zula Outreach Center (the Zula), our teen centers, our Frontline support and our Women's Division. Why introduce yet another name? Why not simply call it another NCSY evening and stay focused?

They explained that the entire essence of the evening is to help our NCSYers think

In memory of

הרב חיים אליעזר
בן משה שערץ ז"ל
ב' תמוז

**Rabbi Dr. Chaim
Eliezer Schertz ז"ל**

**Beloved husband,
father, grandfather**

We miss you

**Reva Schertz,
Sara & Ronen Kory
and family**

seriously about the decisions that will shape the course of their lives. That is precisely why they wanted to call it YAIR, from that same root: to shine, to spread light, and to illuminate a path forward.

The program has now been running for several years, and this past Thursday night, just five days after our NCSY Israel Spring Shabbaton at Masada, we held another beautiful YAIR evening at the Nefesh B'Nefesh offices. It was deeply moving to see the panels assembled there for the sole purpose of inspiring teenagers to think about life's challenges, with speakers Beatie Deutsch, Debbie Hirsch, Rabbi Ephraim Rimel, Rabbi Leo Dee, Orit Mark-Ettinger, and Rabbi Uri Pilichowski. This was alongside a delicious dinner and uplifting music led by Rav Noam Koenigsberg, the beloved chazan and musician for our Yom Yerushalayim celebration at the Tayelet and a rabbi at Yeshivat Shaalvim.

The keynote that evening was delivered by Zvika Mor, the father of Eitan Mor. Eitan was abducted from the Nova music festival on October 7th and held captive in Gaza for 738 days, until his release this past Tishrei. Zvika had been scheduled to come together with Eitan; in the end Eitan was unable to join, but Zvika came and spoke. He described what it means to fight for your son without knowing whether he is alive or dead, to hold fast to what you believe is right through the most challenging chapter imaginable, and at the same time to keep a household of seven children, a wife and an extended family moving forward, and to be carried by their entire community of Kiryat Arba. It was so powerful to watch our teenagers listen and then ask real, searching questions of the panelists and of Zvika, questions that showed they were really there to understand and to grow.



All of this brought me back to the weight of a name. When you tell a child for

May the Torah learned from
this issue of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of and לע"נ

Bernard Ansel ז"ל

דב בן יהושע ז"ל

on his 30th Yahrzeit - ד' תמוז

Dearly missed
and always in the thoughts
of his children, grandchildren
and great-grandchildren

twenty-eight, thirty, even a hundred and twenty years that he is Meir, that he is meant to enlighten, to shine onto others, or when you name a child after any great person, you are not only setting expectations. You are giving that child a place to dream and to grow. The goal is never to raise the bar so impossibly high that a child feels he or she has let you down, but rather to plant within him or her a deep and lasting desire to become something meaningful.

That very same feeling came to me again only two days earlier, when I took my son Mordechai Tzemach, who is named after Rav Mordechai Eliyahu zt"l, to Rav Eliyahu's memorial service. It was already late at night, but it was important to me that our 13 year old Mordechai Tzemach be there alongside me, among the many thousands who came to pray and to share in some of The former Chief Rabbi, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu's Torah at Har HaMenuchot on the twenty-fifth of Sivan, his yahrzeit. Standing at his gravesite, I thought of what Rav Eliyahu, the *Rishon Letzion*, told me personally just two days before his final illness: that more than anything, what the Jewish people need is unity, that we must learn to love one another and to bring Klal Yisrael

together.

Sixteen years after his passing, I stood with my son at his tombstone and prayed that HaKadosh Baruch Hu grant us the strength to heed Rav Eliyahu's words and to overcome the painful divisions in our midst. We all know how to come together in times of war, and the war, sadly, is still ongoing. But surely we can also unite around the values we hold most precious. We may care deeply about some issues and less about others going on in the Jewish world today. Yet we must still be able to sit down together, around one table, and hold honest, respectful conversations, rather than allowing our disagreements to descend into negative speech and worse. That, in the end, is the true unity of Klal Yisrael.

May we be privileged to see in all of our youth—our children, our neighbors' children, our nieces and nephews—the very highest aspirations to which they have been named. That is what we all hope for: to watch the next generation grow, thrive, and walk in the ways of the Torah. And it is a message not only for a simcha, but for every single day, that we look at one another with that same hope and that same vision.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

* YAIR is sponsored in loving memory of Phil Konigsberg: יצחק פישל בן יעקב ז"ל




**The OU Israel Family
sends heartfelt condolences to
Gloria Kestenbaum and family
on the passing of her husband**

SANDY z"l

**Sandy served as an
OU Board Member
for close to 3 decades**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



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