



111 John St. Suite 1720, **New York**, NY 10038, USA
Shlomo Halevi 5, Har Hotzvim, **Jerusalem**, Israel
info@olami.org

נר ראשון של חנוכה תשע"ז
December 13, 2017

Dear Roshei Yeshiva, Rabbeim, Teachers, Alumni, Donors, and Friends,

It is an indescribable honor for me to extend my warm wishes to the Shapell's and Midreshet Rachel community on this important anniversary. Just two years ago, I would have been on the other end of this letter, celebrating together with you. While the letterhead has changed, nothing else has. For the last 14 years, Miriam and I have had the pleasure and honor of being part of the Shapell's *mishpacha*, and I am so happy that the *kesher* continues.

Shapell's is a significant bedrock within the *baal teshuva* educational community. The two pillars of its educational philosophy – laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning and growth through outstanding textual education, and the passionate and compassionate recognition that young Jews will grow in various ways, cultivating respect and love for the different ways of being a Torah Jew – explain why so many beautiful Torah families emerge from its halls. In my work at Ner Le'Elef and Olami, I have seen the remarkable contributions that so many Shapell's and MRC-trained educators have made. Through my travels in cities around North America (and even more so in my hometown of Ramat Bet Shemesh), I have seen the beautiful Torah homes that our lay graduates have created, and the high esteem in which rabbis the world over hold our precious institutions.

At this moment, I take special joy in honoring Rabbi Hirshfeld שליט"א, a towering and sagely leader, from whom I personally have learned so much. Rabbi Hirshfeld's compassion for his students and his broad-minded counsel have touched the lives of thousands of young people. Rabbi Hirshfeld's passion for Torah has inspired those same students and many more to reach higher to understand and receive Hashem's כלי המדה. I pray that Hashem provide Rabbi Hirshfeld and his dear Rebbetzin שתהי' continued strength to educate and inspire many more students for years to come, and that the ongoing successes of Shapell's/Darche Noam and Midreshet Rachel serve as a source of nachas and an everlasting tribute to the first forty years of their lofty achievements.

With love and abiding respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "גידון שושן" (Gidon Shoshan).

Rabbi Gidon Shoshan
Senior Manager
Olami, North American Region