



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel

In the Berman household we uphold a custom at the start of every summer requiring simple sheets of paper and pencils. Sitting individually with each of our children, my wife and I ask them to put together two lists - one which details what they plan to do every day during summer break, and the other detailing what they want to accomplish before the school year begins.

On the first list my kids typically jot down daily activities like davening, learning for a set period of time, catching up with friends, barbequing, hiking, among other ideas. The other list tends to be more creative, including activities such as painting a new area in the house, finishing projects they started during the year, teaching themselves a new skill, and so on.

My wife and I started this tradition in recognition of how important it is for our kids to feel purposeful and accomplished - especially in the summer - when too many children

enter the school year wondering how summer vacation flew by without much to show for it. Of course, relaxation, playing with friends at camp, and enjoying downtime is important, but nothing builds self-esteem

quite like a sense of accomplishment.

It is with this mindset that I marvel at an amazing effort that has been led by teens over this summer in our OU Israel Youth Center in Kiryat Gat. It is a project that goes far beyond utilizing free time for something purposeful, and has come to symbolize *ahavat Yisrael*, *hachnasat orchim* and *kibbutz galuyot*.

Torah Tidbits readers who have had the *zechut* to make *aliyah* know the difficulties involved in leaving a world of familiarity and comfort to build a

home in *Eretz Yisrael*. However, the fact that schools across the country teach children above the age of fourth grade English, eases the experience for many Anglo *olim*. On the other hand, *olim* from Ethiopia, Spain, Russia and even France may have a more difficult time adjusting to the



language barrier as it is not as commonly taught or easily understood.

The language barrier between Ethiopian Jews and Israelis has kept many communities insulated, preserving their customs and culture over the years. As a result, many Israelis have yet to experience the richness and beauty of Ethiopian culture. Following a recent project led by teenagers this summer, all of that is about to change.

There is an established Ethiopian community in Kiryat Gat and many of its teens participate in and are members of our OU Israel Youth Center there. Following the conclusion of the school year, our advisors and teens in the city took upon themselves the building of Beit Gojo.

The newly established Beit Gojo offers an opportunity for visitors to learn about the Ethiopian community, led by a guide, with four activity stations:

1. Build Gojo huts in mud as they once did in Ethiopia
2. Participate in experiential trivia and learn about the journey of Ethiopian Jews to Israel
3. Prepare pita bread from scratch - from grinding the wheat and forming the dough, to baking and eating fresh bread
4. Participate in the traditional Bunna

Maflat coffee ritual and enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee

Groups of teens and families have visited Beit Gojo over recent weeks and the feedback we have received since the start of the project has been overwhelmingly positive. What is perhaps most meaningful is that Beit Gojo is an ongoing building project in which

visitors can take an active role in *kibbutz galuyot* and help build more huts for the campus. I expect Kiryat Gat's Beit Gojo will be the first of many throughout the country.

As the school year begins I can only begin to imagine how proud our Kiryat Gat teens are with what they accomplished over their summer break. Not only did they apply themselves to a project and brought their vision to life, but they created a meaningful experience for others to partake in, while bridging gaps between cultures.

I wish a tremendous *yasher koach* to these teens and encourage Torah Tidbits readers to visit Beit Gojo and learn about Ethiopian

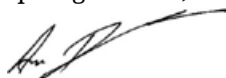
Jewry in a family-friendly (and delicious!) setting. You can find videos of the Beit Gojo experience on OU Israel's Facebook page. To learn more contact Guy Ephraim 054-3115982 or email: beitgojo@gmail.com.

As we begin preparing for the *yamim noraim*, I encourage you to save the date(s)



for Torah Yerushalayim and Torah Modiin. After B"H receiving so much positive feedback about how this event transformed and uplifted people's *yamim noraim* and provided the opportunity to immerse themselves in Torah and inspiration, we are running this program in two locations. Our aim is to enable people in those cities and surrounding communities to become inspired as part of our efforts to help *Anlo olim* throughout Israel thrive spiritually and socially. Please refer to our Torah Tidbits ad for more information.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman
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מזל טוב

To the recently married couple
**Yael Libson &
Yona Seiferas**

May they build a
בית נאמן בישראל

With all our love
and best wishes,
Grandma and Grandpa

**BRING YOUR CHILDREN
AND/OR GRANDCHILDREN
FOR A FUN AND EXCITING
HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE
CREATING YOUR OWN PIECES
OF JUDAICA (that you'll enjoy
as much as them)!**

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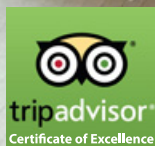


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