

DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



RABBI AVI BERMAN

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Chag Matan Torah has two elements that make up the special day: receiving the *Torah* and giving *bikkurim*.

In place of giving *korbanot* in the *Beit HaMikdash*, we use our mouths to sing praises to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for giving us the sweetness of *Torah* to guide and enrich our lives. I therefore will take this opportunity to share my gratitude to the *Borei Olam* for the wonderful gifts I experienced during *Shavuot* in which I feel I was able to maximize both elements of the *chag*.

Shavuot gives parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends the perfect opportunity to fulfill our obligation of learning *Torah* and teaching our children. Over the last 21 years in my various roles in the OU and within my own community in *Giv'at Ze'ev*, my *Shavuot* experiences consisted of teaching *Torah* to kids, teens and adults of all ages, usually pulling me away from my own learning and learning with my children.

When I worked for NCSY in Vancouver, British Columbia, I would fly in Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum from Toronto to give shiurim at Schara Tzedek for the 90 or so NCSY teens who came to celebrate *Matan Torah*.

Since moving back to Eretz Yisrael, my family spent the last 15 years creating programs for our community in *Giv'at Ze'ev*. Giving shiurim to Anglos in the area at

the homes of Harvey and Rivka Woolf and Michael and Joyce Vogel and hosting Bnei Akiva and Bnei Akiva Bogrim for various learning programs throughout the night in our home. For the most part, my wife and I were able to create programming that aligned with the ages of each of our kids, so that we wouldn't lose the opportunity to learn with our children during the course of *Shavuot*.

This past *Shavuot* was therefore a unique experience for my family. With a *Bat Mitzvah* and a wedding coming up and the fact that my in laws often ask us to come to them, we thought now would be the perfect opportunity to do *Kibbud Av V'Em* and spend the *chag* with them in *Har Nof*. Since I am not usually in Yerushalayim for *Shavuot*, I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to be at the OU Israel Center for our *leil Shavuot* program generously sponsored by Rabbi Nachman and Feiga Kahana.

Recognizing the importance of maximizing the opportunities that *leil Shavuot* offers, I had to find a way to adapt my *Shavuot* plans so I would have time to learn with my kids. Luckily, my nine year old son Mordechai was a trooper and agreed to join me late *Shabbat* afternoon on the long walk

משפחת או יו ישראל משתתפת
בצערה של יעל האופטמן ומשפחתה במות
אביה ז"ל
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

from Har Nof to the OU Israel Center, after which we planned to learn with his brothers, Tzvi Yehudah and Yechezkel, in their respective *yeshivot*, *Merkaz HaRav* and *Yashlatz*.

After a wonderful JCHAT (Jerusalem Community Hub for Anglos and Torah) dinner during which attendees had the opportunity to meet one another and form meaningful connections, I opened up the evening's *shiurim*, followed by Rabbi Moshe Hauer (EVP of the OU), and a line-up of great speakers. While I wasn't able to stay for the full program, I can assure you that the OU Israel team worked tirelessly throughout the evening to provide attendees with a powerful night of learning. The main hall was packed from wall to wall, and our team was busy providing and replenishing refreshments and guiding new visitors.

Before Mordechai and I left for *Kiryat Moshe*, I took a moment to appreciate how full the OU Israel Center was. It's hard to believe how empty the halls were during Covid-19, and I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for the miracle that was unfolding before our eyes. As Mordechai and I made our way back to *Kiryat Moshe*, we found ourselves walking beside *Am Yisrael* as our fellow Jews flooded every street we walked, many on their way to the Kotel, to celebrate the gift of *Torah*.

Once we arrived at *Merkaz HaRav*, my night of learning with my boys took me to new heights. The *beit midrash* was roaring with the sounds of hundreds of people learning *Torah*. The passion around us was palpable, and we were able to join in

the chorus of voices as we delved into the beauty of *Torah*. While I was concerned at first that the noise would prove too distracting for Mordechai, our learning was the most intense it ever was.

This *Shavuot*, I was not only given the opportunity to teach *Torah* at the OU Israel Center to Anglos looking for a meaningful night of learning, but I was also able to fulfill the mitzvah of *chinuch ha'banim* and reach new depths of *Torah* learning with my sons. May this summer be filled with joyful *Torah* learning, health and happiness for all of *Am Yisrael*. Be'ezrat HaShem, may we celebrate *Shavuot* next year united with all members of *Am Yisrael*, and walk beside one another as we head towards the *Beit HaMikdash HaShlishi*, bringing *bikkurim* and *korbanot* of our own.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

P.S. - For obvious reasons there are no pictures to add this week.



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