



DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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This past Shabbat, along with my wife and three of our children, I had the honor of spending Shabbat at Camp Dror up north in Chispin. Our Chispin campus has multiple different OU Israel summer programs going on. Not only the boys and girls Camp Dror programs, but also boys and girls programs of Manhigut, which is for 10th-12th graders, NCSY Chai Girls, NCSY Chai Boys, and Yachad Nofesh, Yachad's summer camp. All seven camps are running in Chispin this summer, and all are having an incredible time.

Meanwhile, a tremendous amount of NCSY and Yachad programs from the United States are joining us here in Israel. For example, there is Yad B'Yad, a beautiful program for

Yachad participants that come in with buddies from North America, and they spent the past week in Chispin. That's just a taste of the interconnectedness and unity we are promoting this summer in the many OU camps in Israel.

A very instructive story happened to me right before Shabbat. After the drive up to Chispin with my family, we came to the front desk at the youth hostel there. I asked the receptionist, "Do you know if there are any other groups here besides OU groups?" As I asked the question, somebody came up behind me and gave me a hug. It was Rabbi Aryeh Wielgus, who is running JOLT, one of the incredible NCSY Summer programs that is in Israel now. Apparently JOLT was in Chispin for Shabbat as well. The receptionist asked, "Wait, is JOLT an OU program?" When I confirmed, she said, "So I guess we have an OU group here." I said, "No, you have many OU groups here!" After I ran through the list who were all in Chispin for Shabbat, she was shocked. "Camp Dror, NSCY Chai, and Yachad... All those are OU?", she asked? I told her it was true.

Then she said something that shocked me. She declared, "Then I'm also in the OU." I thought that she was joking; maybe that she was going to tell me that she eats OU-certified food or something like that. Instead, she told me that she lives in Katzrin, her mother is our OU Israel Teen Center branch director in Katzrin, and that she also volunteers, working with the teenagers in our Teen Center. What

ANNUAL YAHRZEIT SHIUR

לע"נ ר' צבי בן אפרים הכהן ז"ל
Mr. Harry Reiss ז"ל

**Who is Obligated to Serve
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By Rabbi Yona Reiss שליט"א
Sunday, July 27th - ב' מנחם אב
Chicago 9:30am | Israel 5:30pm

On ZOOM:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84786263664?pwd=nqWacCM-STu3kWUs7nPOIRT71cVXnPT.1>

**Meeting ID: 847 8626 3664
Passcode: 278905**

a small world that the receptionist in Chispin is connected to the OU as well. All of these amazing camps and programs are under the OU umbrella, and it should be common knowledge that what the OU and OU Israel are doing is at the forefront of the next generation of Jewish youth.

Shabbat was extremely inspiring. I got to spend time with the Camp Dror girls on Friday night, which was together with the Yachad Nofesh program. They asked me to speak in shul, and then I also spoke to the Chai and Manhigut girls after the Friday night meal late into the night. It was so uplifting to see how deeply these girls connected to messages about their *tafkid* not only as Jews, but particularly as Jewish women. I spoke to them about the incredible and miraculous times that we're living in, but also the challenges that we have ahead of us. To see all these young women together, connecting and lifting each other up, should give their parents tremendous *nachat*.

The same is true for the boys. On Shabbat morning, I was with the Camp Dror boys. I spoke in shul before *Musaf* and then gave a *shiur* to the older boys before lunch. On Shabbat afternoon, I also gave a short talk to the Yachad Nofesh group, and then afterwards did ebbing together with the incredible Camp Dror team that is doing a remarkable job. I got to see all these kids working together, growing together, hearing what they're enjoying most about camp, how they're helping clean off the tables, watching them give out the *benchers* and sing *zemirot* together, doing skits and acting out *Mishnayot*, and listening in the *shiurim*. It's just really amazing to see the amount of camaraderie that they have, and the amount of fun that they have. It was a very busy Shabbat, but such an inspiring



and uplifting one.

On *Motzei Shabbat*, the boys played Capture the Flag and had a great time together. I stopped them in the middle to take a picture of them. Their excitement and determination to capture their flag is clear on their faces.

I was especially touched to see a number of advisors from previous years there for Shabbat. Many of them are currently in the

army or in *sherut leumi*, and they came to camp to spend time and to bond.

As always, over Shabbat, I asked the campers how they felt about camp, and what they felt could be improved. I told them that the last time I was here was two years ago, and the main request I got, from both the boys and the girls, was to make Camp Dror longer, from two weeks to three weeks. Happily, we were able to accomplish that request this year. Since we really do listen, I told them, we want to hear what they have to say. I got a few requests to continue to extend camp even longer, to four weeks, but otherwise, everyone seemed really happy and felt that the camp is doing a great job.

One of the best things that we do in camp is not allow phones, except for an hour on Friday to wish their parents and grandparents a Shabbat Shalom. The fact that there are no phones in camp, no pressure of social media and all the nonsense it entails for the social lives of the youth, means they have the opportunity to appreciate every moment to the fullest. The fact that they're able to do that for three weeks straight, and only use their phones to connect to their parents and grandparents before Shabbat, but then to put it away again after and continue to have fun with their friends and connect with their advisors and to the Torah, has a real impact all by itself.

I really want to give a tremendous, tremendous *yashar koach* to Esti Moskowitz (OU Director of Anglo Engagement and Programming in Israel), and Rabbi Ari Cutler and his wife Adina, who were there with their beautiful newborn daughter (*mazal tov* to them!), Rav Eitan and Rabbanit Rachel Aviner, Cindy Weisel, and the entire Camp

Dror staff. As well as the Yachad Nofesh and NCSY Chai staff. Not only are these amazing educators doing such holy work, really taking upon themselves to inspire the next generation, but to have so much fun doing it, is really incredible.

I cannot truly describe in words the excitement in the air when Yitzy Shmidman from Yachad walked in with a bag of Torah Tidbits. Everyone wanted to get one for themselves, and soon there were none left. *Baruch Hashem*, I brought a stack of my own and was able to distribute them on the boys' campus on Shabbat morning when I went to daven there. On Motzei Shabbat, I announced that I was going to be writing about Camp Dror this Shabbat in Torah Tidbits, and whoever wants to be in a picture for Torah Tidbits is welcome to come and join. So many campers came from all three camps to be in the picture, happy and excited to be able to tell their parents, grandparents, and loved ones that they were going to be in Torah Tidbits!

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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