



CAMP LEADERS' TORAH MESSH* NOTES 2022

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*MESSH stands for mental, emotional, spiritual, and social health

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INTRODUCTION:

Rabbi Simcha Bunam of Peshischa, 19th Century Polish Hasidic Master, famously taught:

Every person should have two pockets. In one, [there should be a note that says] *bishvili nivra ha'olam*, 'for my sake was the world created.' In the second, [there should be a note that says] *anokhi afar va'efer*, 'I am dust and ashes.'

This represents a dynamic and creative tension between hubris and humility that represents our ongoing struggle to take the right amount of space in the world. But, sadly this does not ring true given the state of the world these days and the ever changing and depressing newscycle. These days it feels that our pockets are either overflowing with the dirt of devastation and cruelty or barren and devoid of hope and possibility. It is easy to oscillate between feeling completely overwhelmed and empty. At times we even make ourselves feel important by mistreating others.

As a Camp Leader you have the opportunity to speak to your staff members and to your campers all the time. What will you say? How might you authentically support your community? What strengths might you draw upon to do this holy work? How can you elevate their strengths, so that they are using their superpowers, rather than focusing on deficits?

Our intention with this packet is to create a space of overlap between our two fields: Judaism and psychology. How does psychological thought intersect with Jewish ideas? How might we use Judaism to support personal growth? What does the wisdom of our tradition have to teach us about the very real struggles we face today?

This resource provides examples from our tradition, meaningful quotes, and questions for reflection. With this small packet we offer you, the leaders in your Jewish camp community, something to put in your pockets. We hope these Torah Notes support you in your leadership. Judaism matters and holds us, and our wisdom tradition has a map to our strengths. The Jewish content was intentionally designed to be accessible. We encourage you to look up sources for placing text in its context, and exploring the nuances expressed in the original language. We hope that you reach into either of your "two pockets" throughout the summer to use this packet to create/illuminate all of your community's individual and collective strengths.

HOW TO USE

We make meaning by drawing our attention to the meeting of the timely and the timeless. In Jewish tradition we stay attuned to the liturgical reading of the Torah and the calendar of holidays. In camp we are also sensitive to beginnings, endings, and other liminal moments. These ideas and texts serve as a timeless frame to discuss a myriad of inter/intra-personal issues that are very timely.

In its simplest form, use these texts and ideas to frame your Shabbat teaching or introduction to an event at camp. For example, you might use *Parshat Bamidbar* to help counselors think about the intersection between their work and Torah, elevating care for campers to a Mitzvah. We hope that these brief writings will create easily accessible ways to frame camp through the lens of Torah -- for you, for your staff, and campers. You might even use them for emails to parents!

Below you will find tables to show you how we merged Jewish and psychological themes. Following that you will find ideas culled from the summer *Parshiot*, Torah portions, and the larger summer calendar. We offer some discussion questions. After that some longer form essays that play with ideas that are timely and timeless regarding our ongoing experience with COVID. Finally you will find a legend of modalities. We offer this as a supplement to the Torah notes to inspire you to play with and mash up the content with various ways of presenting and remixing the material to meet your leadership needs.

Ultimately Torah learning is a means to an end of getting to discuss what is most important. It is a Trojan Horse that gets past people's guards to have deep engagement with things that matter. Our deeper emotional connections can also bring us back to Torah. The camp setting allows this cycle of human connection, personal growth, Torah and Judaism.

This is a draft. We recognize that it is far from complete. It is part of an interactive process to provide deep, accessible, and relevant resources for the field. Please give us your feedback and other content you would like to see us put into these notes for next year. Be in touch avi@jewishcamp.org

LIST OF SUMMER PARSHIOT (Torah Portions)

DATE	TORAH PORTION	KEY THEMES	Page #
May 28- June 4, 2022	<i>Bamidbar</i>	Accepting Responsibility; Work Ethic	4
June 4- June 11, 2022	<i>Nasso</i>	Seeking Truth; Empowering Others; Cultivating Gratitude	4
June 11- June 18, 2022	<i>Beha'alotcha</i>	Second Chances; Including Others	5
June 18- June 25, 2022	<i>Shlach</i>	Positivity; Forgiveness	6
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July 2 - July 9, 2022	<i>Chukat</i>	Understanding Shared Goals; Developing Perspective; Processing Grief	8
July 9 -July 16, 2022	<i>Balak</i>	Heightening Awareness; Emotional Regulation	9
July 16-July 23, 2022	<i>Pinchas</i>	Accepting Feedback; Developing Leadership	10
July 23-July 30, 2022	<i>Matot-Masei</i>	Upholding Commitments; Determining What is Fair and Equitable; Learning from Mistakes	11
July 30- August 6, 2022	<i>Devarim</i>	Writing History	12
August 6- August 13, 2022	<i>Va'etchana</i>	Envisioning the Future; Reflect & Remember; Faith; Adapting to Change	12
August 13- August 20, 2022	<i>Ekev</i>	Supporting Others' Boundaries; Building Intentional Culture; Delegation	13
August 20- August 27, 2022	<i>Re'eh</i>	Spirituality	14

LIST OF SUMMER EVENT²

DATE (Your Camp's)	TORAH PORTION	KEY THEMES	Page #
	Staff Week		
May 31, 2022	Rosh Chodesh Sivan		
June 5- June 6, 2022	Shavuot		
	Opening Day of Camp		
June 21, 2022	Summer Begins		
June 29- June 30, 2022	<i>Rosh Chodesh Tamuz</i>		
July 4, 2022	Independence Day		
	Visitors' Day		
July 29-July 30, 2022	<i>Rosh Chodesh Av</i>		
	6th Week Slump		
August 7, 2014	<i>Tisha B'Av</i>		
August 12, 2022	<i>Tu B'Av</i>		
	Last Week of Camp		
	Last Day of Camp		

² While we did not finish this section for summer 2022, we left this in here to inspire you and get your help in producing content for future iterations of this resource.

PARSHA NOTES

Bamidbar

Accepting Responsibility

∞“These are the chronicles/children of Aaron and Moshe on the day that God spoke to Moshe at Mount Sinai. These are the names of Aaron's sons... These are the names of Moshe's sons” (Numbers 3:1-2, 26).

Rashi refers to “These are the offspring of Aaron and *Moshe*.” It mentions only the sons of Aaron, yet they are called “offspring of *Moshe*.” This is because he taught them Torah. This teaches us that whoever teaches his friend's son Torah it is as if

he had fathered him. (*Talmud Sanhedrin* 19B). In the role we have to care for and teach other people's children, we have a lot of responsibility. We also have a great opportunity and honor.

What are the most rewarding moments of being a counselor? What makes this responsibility difficult? Understand that this work might also change YOU. How might responsibility deepen your connection with yourself?

Work Ethic

∞“... Thus shall you do for them, so they shall live and not die; when they approach the Holy of Holies, Aaron and his sons shall come and assign them, every man to his work and to his burden. But they shall come and look as the holy is inserted, lest they die.” (Numbers 4:17-20)

In the time of the Tabernacle, Aaron and the priests coordinated the community to contribute meaningful gifts and offerings in the spirit of maintaining the integrity of the community. Though the high priests had a lot of responsibility, without delegating and empowering other people to participate, they would not have been

able to function. Both the Hobbit and Harry Potter celebrate the importance of the everyday person in accomplishing big tasks. Best articulated by the wisdom of the seniors in the community, Gandalf says, “I found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay;” Albus Dumbledore says, “Perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it.” In this holy work of Jewish education, we may sometimes feel like the everyday person who is fighting for power, and we may sometimes be the high priest who is given all of the authority.

Through our work, how are we involved in the most important parts of camp? How do we let other people glimpse our goals and processes so they can be a part of the work we do?

What are the goals of camp? Your goals at camp? What more can we do to motivate people to step up? Responsibility without power can be crazy-making. I need to accomplish something I'm not equipped for. What power do you **already** have to accomplish your goals? Can you articulate these goals?

Nasso

Seeking Truth

∞ “If a woman is accused of adultery by her husband, and there are serious grounds for suspicion, she is given a choice: accept a divorce or stand up to a strange test. The test, if she opts for it, requires her to drink “bitter waters” into which the name of God had been dissolved. If she is guilty, she dies instantaneously” (Numbers 5:12-31).

Not all moments at camp are warm, fuzzy, and fun. If someone has to step up to be the “bad cop” and maintain order in the community, uphold expectations, or enforce rules, how do they do that in a thoughtful way? We recognize the issues of gender here. Why do we focus on the possible misbehavior of women alone? This

biblical example of law, punishment and justice, raises interesting questions: What are “serious grounds” for suspicion? Are there tests that can actually prove someone’s innocence? What might be an ideal situation or dynamic after the conflict is over? These questions are important because **all communities need to address challenging behavior, as we establish and reestablish norms.** What is the basis for an accusation? Are these serious grounds based on rumor and group thinking? Could they even be a form of bullying? How do we protect our community from ungrounded accusations?

How do each of us respond? What are our policies and our consequences? And if it's important to us, how can we treat the person who made a mistake with care? Another question raised here is whether this accusation or confrontation takes place in the public or private sphere. Does the community's need for the truth outweigh the accused person's honor?

Empowering Others

∞” Though the offerings for the *korbanot* (sacrifices) were the same, the leaders brought different *kavanot* (intentions) and symbolisms that were unique to their tribe” (Numbers 7:10-36).

Each person has a unique motivation for participating in community, and each person in the group brings unique gifts, ideas, and perspectives to the team: some people may be learn best by seeing, hearing, doing, or even

teaching. Some campers will prefer group games, others reading alone. Some will seek adventure, and others will create art. There are multiple doorways to entering community, and having meaningful time at camp. The same holds true for staff – we each have different experiences, and strengths. What strengths do you see in others that help you in your work? The work that we do, and the sacrifices that we make will feel more worthwhile when everyone is fully invested in the process. **Share about a time that you were in a group with different kinds of people. What made those people different from each other? How did you get to understand and respect those differences? How can you take what you learned from your example to create an experience for campers that values and celebrates their differences? What does this look like at bedtime? During meals? Or, during other programming you create?**

Cultivating Gratitude

∞”The Lord spoke to Moshe saying: Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying: This is how you shall bless the children of Israel, saying to them: “May the Lord bless you and watch over you. May the Lord cause His countenance to shine to you and favor you. May the Lord raise His countenance toward you and grant you peace.” They shall bestow My Name upon the children of Israel, so that I will bless them.” (Numbers 7:22-27).

This blessing has 3 parts: God watches over us; God favors us, and God grants us peace. All 3 aspects have God SEEING us. **What are the blessings we overlook? Do you think you are blessed in ways you don't even notice? What if you set an alarm every hour, and had to look around you and find a blessing RIGHT THEN? The blessings of breathing, of grass and sun, of food, of friendship and of isolation.**

Beha'alotcha

Offering a Second Chance

∞ In the time of ritual sacrifices, anyone who was impure on the holiday of Passover, and therefore couldn't bring the mandatory *Korban* (sacrifice), was given the opportunity to do so a month later (Numbers 9:6-14).

Time may not always be on our side. As long as each day may feel, the weeks fly by, and things that we didn't plan for may interrupt our schedule. Maybe acknowledging mess ups is

sufficient for rebooting. **What is something you would like the chance to redo? Why? What was it like the first time when you didn't do your best and what would help you do better this time around?"**

[If applicable] as you hear your peers share, how can you commit to supporting someone else through something they would like a second chance at?

Including Others

∞ Moshe said to his father-in-law, Chovev son of Reuel the Midianite (also known as Yitro), "We are now on our way to the place that God promised to give us. Come with us and we will let you share the benefit of all the good things that God has promised Israel." "I would rather not go" replied Chovev/Yitro, "I wish to return to my land and my birthplace." "Do not abandon us" said Moshe, "After all you are familiar with the places where we are going to camp in the desert, and you can be our guide." (Numbers 10:29-31)

Yitro was not Jewish, and he was a valued member of Moshe's family. Moshe saw Yitro's presence as an opportunity to learn and be guided in a new adventure. There are people in our community who might be different from you: It may be easier to get a vantage point about our values and issues from another person who is not in the midst of the average experience. **What can you do to include someone who might feel different from those around them?**

How do we invite those who feel different to share their thoughts and feelings? How can someone who might feel like a stranger to you actually be your guide? To guide your answers, consider your personal experiences: All of us feel like outsiders at times. We see other people having fun without us and we feel rejected. We are envious of that one's clothes or this one's parents or the other person's vacations or everyone's curated image on social media. And yet we are judged by the same laws and expectations. Or are we? How do you feel when you see people treating others as outsiders? When someone is racist, anti-Semitic, sexist, or simply unkind? Do you judge the person responsible? Do you have a responsibility here – and can you carry it out? And, most importantly, what stops you? Look around you -- whose voices are silenced, either by fear or by other people? What do you need to do to make space for those voices?

Shlach

Positivity

∞ Ten of the twelve spies gave the following report: "We came to the land where you sent us, and it is indeed flowing with milk and honey, as you can see from its fruit. However, the people living in the land are aggressive, and the cities are large and well-fortified. We also saw the giant's descendants there." (Numbers 13:27-28)

The spies in this story had a mixed review about their experience. They saw that what they would be working for is worthwhile – and brought back concrete evidence when they showed the fruit. However, they focused on their fears about the challenges ahead. They had forgotten about recent victories and their ability to overcome obstacles. Their negativity is connected to

wandering in the desert for 40 years. In our lives, we have accomplished great things that can get lost to critique and fear. Fear is both a form of wisdom and an obstacle. **What journey are we about to explore and how do we feel? What is a balanced assessment of our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and problems- personally and collectively?** When do we let our fears stop us?

Forgiveness

∞ God was angry with the people of Israel, and was going to kill them with a plague and annihilate them. Moshe protested, so that the people would not be destroyed. He pleaded, "With Your great love, forgive the sin of this nation, just as You have forgiven them from the time they left Egypt until now" and God said, "I will grant forgiveness as you have requested." (Numbers 14:18-20)

The relationship between God and the Jewish people is described as a great first love that works through disagreements. In this passage, Moshe reminds God about that relationship. Perhaps he would urge God to take a listen to John Legend's song "[All of Me](#)" "love your curves and all your edges, all your perfect imperfections. Give your all to me, I'll give my all to you." When Moshe stands up for the people, he is focused on the original vision for a promising future.

I don't have to like all of you to value you. **When we are in conflict, we are often emotionally distraught. At those moments, how can we work through our unpleasant feelings to remind ourselves of what we are all here at camp for? What opportunities will arise as a result of moving through conflicts with others? In fact, the people I resolve conflicts with are often the people in my inner circle. How might resolving conflict bring us closer to one another?**

Korach

Contentment

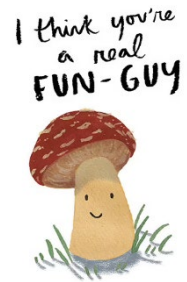
∞ "Isn't it enough that the God of Israel has separated you from the community of Israel? He has brought you close to Him, allowing you to serve in God's Tabernacle and to minister as the community's leaders. Although He gave this privilege to you and all your fellow Levites, you are now also demanding the priesthood!" (Numbers 16:9-10)

In Pirkei Avot 4:1 "Ben Zoma said: Who is rich? Those who are happy with their portion." In this text, Moshe is responding to Korah- who didn't have a large portion, but also wasn't happy. A role model for seeking happiness in the face of adversity is Sam Berns. Sam was diagnosed with progeria at age two- a disease which caused him to age quickly. At seventeen years old, a few months before he passed, he explained in a

[Ted Talk](#) how he beat obstacles by creating a "Philosophy for a Happy Life." His suggestions include:

- 1) Be OK with what you ultimately can't do, because there is so much more you can do.
- 2) Surround yourself with people you want to be around.
- 3) Keep moving forward.
- 4) Never miss a party if you can help it. So "clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth- because I'm happy" (Pharrell Williams).

What are you grateful for? What are you capable of doing? Who are the people who make you feel good? How will you move forward? How will you turn an event into a party? And wait, do we always have to be striving to feel good? When am I allowed to feel badly?



Power and Authority

∞ Korach, along with Dattan, Aviram, and 250 men from the tribe of Reuven, challenge Moshe and Aaron's leadership. Eventually Korach, Dattan, and Aviram, along with their entire families are swallowed up by the earth, while the 250 men were consumed by a heavenly fire (Numbers 16: 1- 35).

Korach's story raises some issues of challenging authority and group dynamics: leaders need to set limits, deal with inappropriate behavior, and stay positive, and community members need to find constructive ways to give them feedback and criticism. Consider the controversy of protests and strikes in America: there is an experience of inequity or injustice, difficult decision making

by the leadership, conflict, public inconvenience, and sometimes, a balanced resolution. **Who holds power and authority at camp? How do those with less power or authority get to manage up or disagree? Where do you see this at play as a staff member and where is it at play in a bunk? How can we encourage people to share power? If you don't get what you want, how do you move forward?**

Accepting Responsibility that Comes with Privilege

∞ Any devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. (Numbers 18:14)

What does it mean to experience privilege? By virtue of education, skin color, and economic opportunities. What privilege do you have that is based on opportunities you did not create? Being at camp is probably one. If you have opportunities, does that create obligation?

Chukat

Understanding Shared Goals

∞ The people of Israel want to pass through Edom's territory and make a series of offers, such as, "We shall go on the highway, and if we drink your water- I or my flock- I shall pay their price." Edom continues to say no, and threatens war.

When there is a need for help or cooperation, how the request is asked can make all the difference. Though the people of Israel made some generous offers, none of them were appealing to Edom because they did not align with his goals or desires. If we can learn what Desires and interests

others hold that are in common with our own, then we are more likely to have them respond favorably to our requests. **Think of someone you may need to make a request from - a co, a camper, perhaps your supervisor. What do you imagine to be their goals and interests? Which of those can you relate to?** Would it help to think about their needs and responses BEFORE you make the request?

Developing Perspective

∞ Miriam dies and the well dries up and the nation gathered against Moshe and Aaron to complain that there isn't any water (Numbers 20: 1-11).

There are all kinds of difficult circumstances at camp. Perhaps the cabin's too hot or the food's not good enough. Sometimes the situation

might in fact be difficult, but people will be better prepared to cope if they have perspective. In the Torah, the Israelites could either push onward, or return back to Egypt. Returning to Egypt is like giving up, and going home to something that is uncomfortable but familiar. Is it important that we have new experiences? Pushing onward in the desert is like going on an adventure that will expand horizons, but sometimes it's difficult to keep going. **At camp- what bogs us down? What can we do to push onward through our desert? When our resources are scarce, how do we treat our providers? (Consider the mail carriers, food service providers, bus drivers, or others we may take for granted.). How do we give appreciation to the people who support us through thick and thin?** It's really easy to come to expect predictable things: there will be dessert; the showers will work. What if we were GRATEFUL for these things? How might your life change if you searched out places and people for gratitude?

Processing Grief

∞ The entire congregation of the children of Israel arrived at the desert of Zin in the first month, and the people settled in Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there. The congregation had no water. (Numbers x:1-2)

When Miriam dies, the well that has followed the people through the wilderness disappears. A well is a physical representation of care, of love, of nurturing. Who nurtures you? Who provides you with water?

What do we lose in grief? Part of the process of grief is honoring what we have lost.

If you think about your COVID journey, what are you grieving? How do you honor your grief and your losses, without being lost in them? How can you honor the losses of others?

Balak

Heightening Awareness

∞ Along Bilam's way he has an encounter with his talking donkey. (Numbers 22: 21- 35)

Balaam is a man on a mission. It takes three times for Bilaam to listen to the donkey's nonverbal cues before the donkey starts speaking –which is a bizarre and magical

occurrence in the Torah! At camp, there might be subtle signs that lead to the crazy blow up. **How have we been blind or deaf to the things people around us are communicating? What makes it hard to pay attention? How do we act as our best selves, unwavering, when we realize what needs to be done?** Understand that behavior is always a form of communication. What are you learning from your behavior and that of other people, from campers to senior staff? Are you paying attention?

Emotional Regulation

∞ Though intending to curse the Israelites, Bilaam blesses them: "*Mah Tovv Ohalecha Yaakov.*" (Numbers 23:1- 24:28).

Balaam had his mind made up to be cold and angry, because he was hired by Balak to curse the Israelites. However, when Balaam got to a height where he was overlooking the Israelite community, he had a change of

heart. When he "let go", it is as if he said, "It's funny how some distance makes everything seem small; and the fears that once controlled me can't get to me at all" ([Frozen](#)). Ultimately, Balaam found his personal space to have a new perspective, and his blessing celebrates the "good tents" that are the safe space of the Jewish people. **If we are resistant, mad, or negative, how do we change our minds? What do we need to say out loud that we feel we can't? How can you work through your own unpleasant feelings so that they don't get in the way of your ability to collaborate or problem-solve? Similarly, sometimes we see things through a rosy lens -- everything is fine. How do we open ourselves to the reality that most things are mixed -- good and bad, happy and sad?**

Pinchas

Accepting Feedback

∞ Motivated by the question of Tzelafchad's daughters regarding their father who died without any sons, the laws of inheritance are discussed. Moshe brought their case to God, who told him that "the daughters of Tzafchad speak properly" (Numbers 27: 1-11).

They were heard by the leadership, and change was made- which demonstrates effective dialogue and feedback. At camp, everyone from the director to a first year bunk staff are best-served by welcoming the ideas and perspectives from those with less experience or designated authority. **When and from whom do we ask for feedback? How do we respond to unsolicited feedback? When it comes to questioning authority - when is it helpful and when is it harmful?**

The daughters saw inequity and found the courage to speak. What do you need to see inequity? Do you have the courage to speak? Is there a way we can speak to power that makes our words more or less likely to be considered?

Sometimes, there are situations we hadn't anticipated, and imagining worst and best case scenarios can prepare us to plan ahead. In this story, solutions come from a group of women who asked bold questions to advocate for their needs.

Developing Leadership

∞ Moshe is told to prepare for his death, and Joshua is chosen as his successor. (Numbers 27: 12- 23). The Midrash depicts Joshua as setting up chairs in the library after everyone else has left (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 21:14).

things. **What styles of leadership are manifest in our group? How might each of us expand our leadership tool box? In what natural ways do you have followers? How would you like others to follow you? We are taught to live our lives with a sense of their finitude. If today were the end, if you were going to be judged or grieved based on your behavior in each moment, how would you act? Are there changes you could make right now? Can you lead through silence, or is leadership always noisy?**

There are many different styles of leadership. Different situations demand different leaders and leadership styles. Leaders are figure heads who shape visions, and they help out with schlepping

Matot

Upholding Commitments

∞ The laws of personal vows and self-imposed verbal obligations are listed (Numbers 30: 2- 17).

The words we say can have a lasting impact. We can't undo a text message or an email after we've hit "send" and some people have faced severe consequences for their mistakes. We should be mindful

With our words so we make promises that we can keep to our campers, our fellow staff, or our supervisors. We can also get locked into self-imposed verbal obligations, when we say "could" "should" and "would." When we are in community and hear each other's commitments, we can choose to remain silent, hold each other accountable, or forgive and forget. **What promises have you made? What have you kept, and what do you need to be annulled? How do I hold others accountable? How do I wish to be held accountable? How is our group holding each other accountable to following through on our words?**

Determining What is Fair and Equitable

∞ As a concession so that Reuben and Gad could settle on the Eastern side of the Jordan, they agreed to lead the fight to conquer land. Moshe agreed, "When the land is then conquered before God, you may return [home] and you will be free of any obligation before God and Israel. (Numbers 32:22).

It must have taken courage for Reuben and Gad to ask for something different from the other Israelites. Perhaps for their families, they were doing acts of self-care when they requested to settle in a different location. However, when they asked, they recognized the greater good, and agreed to not abandon the

group when it counted. How do we respect the needs of the few as part of a larger group? Community is based on balancing individual needs WITHIN a communal context. **Therefore, when we ask for unique treatment how do we still engage with the group? And like Moshe, how do we communicate the bottom line of responsibilities and make decisions that people respect? How do we determine what is fair and equitable?** Can these decisions be made by a leader alone? What input might that leader need?

Masei

Learning from Mistakes

∞ “You must designate towns which shall serve you as refuge cities, to which a murderer, who killed a person accidentally, can flee” (Numbers 35:11).

At this point in the summer, it is inevitable that mistakes were made. If it feels like walls are tumbling down in the place that you love, and great clouds

are rolling in over the hills bringing darkness from above, you may wonder, “How am I going to be an optimist about this? And where do we begin?” Bastille’s song Pompeii describes this feeling of confusion and frustration, and suggests that it almost feels like we’ve been here before. In other words, mistakes continue to happen, and we need to have a plan, or a system, for responding. The Torah doesn’t suggest that murders are OK, but having a city of refuge gives the community a chance to pause and breathe so they can seek justice. **In our community, how do we respond to pressure, mistakes, and crises? How do we preserve and nurture this utopia, and make learning from mistakes part of the picture?** How do you pause? How do you ask for space?

Recognizing our Strengths

∞ Completion of the book of Numbers: “These are the commandments and laws that God instructed the Israelites through Moshe in the West Plains of Moab on the Jericho Jordan” (Numbers 36:13).

With the completion of reading a book of the Torah we say, “*Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek*” - Be strong be, strong, and may we be strengthened! On this occasion it is great to reflect on our strengths because there is something

that we are each an expert at. We are more than just a piece in the games. **What are the strengths of the community we have built together? What strengths do I hold that benefit my camp community? What strengths do others hold that our community needs to leverage?**

Maybe make a strength chart? Give each person a piece of paper and have them write their name and a strength, then pass it to their left, and continue doing this until everyone has written on all the papers. Encourage campers to write different strengths on different papers. When you receive your original paper again, discuss, as a group, how your strengths can be used in concert.

Devarim

Writing History

∞ Moshe recounts the history of the 40 years from after the 2nd Tablets (Deuteronomy 1:1- 18), but then moves them along: "*Rav lachem shevet*"- Enough of your dwelling by this mountain- journey "to the Amorite mountain", and "come and possess the land"

In Hebrew, Deuteronomy is called *Devarim*, words. In this section, most of the book is a repetition of the previous books of the Torah. The act of putting something into words and retelling a story transforms history into memory.

It was important to hear this message right before the encouragement to begin the next journey. **What stories will we tell about this summer in 6 months? 2 years? 10 years? What part of our shared experiences did we inherit and which did we create? Think of the game telephone. How might your stories be distorted by the passage of time or the impact of these you tell? How will you tell these stories to your parents, siblings, friends from home? Which stories really matter?**

Va'etchanan

Envisioning the Future

∞ Moshe looks over to the other side of the Jordan

There comes a time when leaders see the end of their journey; as we reach the end of a phase, we may not be able to finish what we started –

personally, with campers, and with our programs. Just because our hands aren't full doesn't mean we should check out. [Echosmith's song March Into the Sun](#) reminds us to keep up positive energy even if it feels like we are sitting on our hands: "with hands in our pockets, this doesn't have to be our last dance. With hands in our pockets, this world doesn't have to end. No grand finale. Hands in our pockets, we'll march into the sun." We can still lead our community as they march into the sun.

What's your dance move going to be, while you dance into the sun? If you could leave one more message, make one more impact, what will it be? Is this a principle you could use as a guidance for decisions and behavior going forward?

Reflect and Remember

∞ "*Pen Tishkach et hadvarim asher rau einecha*"- Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes have beheld and lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life, and make them known to your children and your children's children. *Citation needed here.*

The American Authors Song "[Best Day Of My Life](#)" relishes that moment of feeling on top of the world; we dreamt big, we reached high, and we may have actually danced with monsters through the night. **Before we wake, how will we make sure that we don't forget what we experienced? With things looking up, and the end**

in sight, how will we ensure that what we built will stick? How do you elevate what matters, rather than focusing on the small stuff?

Faith

∞ Here we have the first paragraph of the *Sh'ma* (Deuteronomy 6: 4- 9).

Why do we cover our eyes when we say the *Sh'ma*? There are a number of reasons, but it is interesting that so many of us know to do it, but do not necessarily know why

we do this. One explanation is that for the Jewish creed, there is a presumption that God has no form. So our deepest faith is in something that we will never experience with our eyes. In covering our eyes it is as if we are saying, "I believe in You/you even when I do not see You/you". **To what degree is this true for us in other relationships in our lives? Do we trust our staff members even when we do not have an eye on them? Do we trust our campers even when we do not have an eye on them? Do we feel like we are part of this community even when we do not see each**

other? Is camp part of our lives even when we are not here on site? What creates relationships of trust? It's important to note that trust isn't binary -- it's not that I trust you or don't trust you. Actually, trust is specific: I trust you with this and not with that. I trust you to put your clothes away, but not to drive the cart; I trust you with this secret about me but not with every secret.

Adapting to Change

∞"And the Lord spoke to me, saying, You have circled this mountain long enough; turn northward." (Deuteronomy 2: 2-3)

They -- and we -- are always on journeys. They are moving towards the promised land. We are moving forward in our lives, from childhood to adulthood, ignorance to learning, relationship to

deeper relationship. Journeys are complicated. They demand that we adapt. Humans don't like to change. We adapt slowly to new ideas, new experiences. Even this far into camp, new things can throw you. But new things can help us to grow. New experiences allow us to see how strong we are, how capable we are. And these muscles will help us to adapt more easily in the future. Struggling isn't bad. It's just struggling and growing.

What are recent changes you have struggled to adapt to? Why do you think that is? How about a change that has been easier for you to adopt? And, why might it have been easier for you?

Ekev

Supporting Each Others' Boundaries; Building Intentional Culture; Delegation

∞Moshe reviews the incident of the Golden Calf. (Deuteronomy 9:1-29)

The Golden Calf Incident (GCI) is an amazing case study in a dysfunctional group. One interesting aspect of the GCI

is Moshe's absence. Thinking back to last week, what can we posit about his trust of the people? Maybe being trusted is a lot of responsibility! How we do (or don't) support one another's' needs for time off can impact camp culture favorably, or otherwise. **Can the supervisor take a day off? If we cannot, what are the implications? What are the needs of the group and who can meet these needs so the supervisor can take a day off? How do we welcome the supervisor back after the absence?** How do we build enough trust to leave things in other people's hands? AND how do we rebuild trust when things don't go as we would have hoped?

Moshe wants to enter the land of Israel, but God says no. It's for the next generation.

∞But command Joshua and strengthen him and encourage him, for he will cross over before this people, and he will make them inherit the land which you will see. (Deuteronomy 3:28)

Jewish wisdom gives us this: "It is not incumbent upon you to complete the task, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it." **How do you determine**

what is best for you to do yourself versus what you pass on to others? How do you assess what type of leadership a circumstance needs? How do you imagine Moshe felt when he heard he would not enter the land? Was he angry? Relieved? Exhausted? What happens when we feel cheated of experiences -- a college I didn't get into, a prom I can't attend, a party I wasn't invited to? How can we accept these disappointments, recognizing both that we are entitled to feel and that we are not entitled to get everything we want?

Re'eh

Spirituality

∞ Did ever a people hear God's voice speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have heard, and live? (Deuteronomy 4:33)

**When do you hear God's voice?
In music? Nature? Friendship?
Camp? Is it just that you're
listening then, or is God's voice
louder or softer in some places?
If you hear God's voice at camp,
how do you bring it home?**

SUMMER EVENTS³

If you have ideas for this section please submit them to avi@jewishcamp.org

³ While we did not finish this section for summer 2022, we left this in here to inspire you and get your help in producing content for future iterations of this resource.

BONUS MATERIAL

THE GLORY OF FRIENDSHIP IN A TIME OF ISOLATION

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, not the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship.

In response to Covid-19 we have been forced to shelter in place and stay six feet apart. We live beyond reach of outstretched hands and the kindly smiles are hidden behind masks. During this time of social distancing we are literally and figuratively out of touch. While virtual connections are important, they are fundamentally not equal. We might even doubt if we are worthy of friendship. Covid-19 has reminded us of the essential value of relationships.

In thinking about the perils of isolation I got to thinking about Honi the Circle Drawer. As the story goes, one day Honi was journeying and he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked him how long it would take for this tree to bear fruit. The man replied: 70 years. Incredulous of his motives in that the man would not see the fruit of his labor, Honi asked why he was planting the tree. The man replied: As my forefathers planted these for me so I too plant these for my children. The story could have ended there but it goes on:

∞Honi sat down to have a meal and sleep overcame him. He went into sleep and he was sheltered by the mountain and he continued to sleep for 70 years. When he awoke he saw a man gathering the fruit of the carob tree and he asked him, Are you the man who planted this tree? The man replied: I am his grandson. Thereupon he exclaimed: It is clear that I slept for 70 years. He then caught sight of his ass who had given birth to several generations of mules and he returned home. He then inquired, Is the son of Honi the Circle-Drawer still alive? The people answered him, His son is no more, but his grandson is still living. Thereupon he said to them: I am Honi the Circle Drawer but no one would believe him. Honi then went to the House of Study and there he overheard the scholars say, The law is as clear to us as in the days of Honi the Circle Drawer for whenever he came to the House of Study he would settle for the scholars any difficulty that they had. Whereupon Honi called out, I am he. But the scholars would not believe him nor did they give him the honor due to him. This hurt him greatly and he prayed [for death] and he died. Rava said: Hence the saying, Give me friendship or death. (Taanit 23a)

On the surface, this Rip Van Winkle story is about Honi being witness to the vision of the man planting the carob tree coming true. While Honi does see the man's grandchild gathering the fruit of his labor, he does not seem to internalize the message. Despite the miracle, Honi is unable to enjoy the fruit of his family or scholarship. For some reason being able to connect to his descendants or know that his teaching was still appreciated is not enough. Honi needs to be recognized, believed, and honored.

The meaning of this tale comes into focus with Rava's Patrick Henry-like coda. Give me friendship, or give me death! Despite living a long life full of miracles, alas this is a tragedy because Honi fails in his search for relationships. Hauntingly foreshadowing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, in this story, we see Honi meet his basic needs of food and shelter. He then moves on to meet his psychological needs of belonging and esteem with his family and then the House of Study. Unable to be seen for who he is, Honi falls short of self-actualization and dies. Ironically Honi does not die from old age, but rather from isolation.

In making sure that we survived Covid-19, we turned inward to protect our basic needs. As we learn from Honi, that is not enough. We all need to be believed and honored for who we are. What will we find when we come out of our slumber if we do not invest in those relationships? We must reach out to sow the seeds of friendship, despite the extended time of social isolation. While we may have diminished social skills, our connections with each other are part of what makes us human. It might take a long time to bear fruit, but each of us is worthy of the glory of friendship.

Emerging from the Cave

How are our families coping in and out of isolation? As disruptive as Covid has been, emergence might pose an even bigger shock to our family systems. In reading Betsy's writing about families, I was brought back to an important story about Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his son. According to the version in the Talmud Bavli, to avoid an existential threat Rabbis Shimon and Eleazar hid in a cave, whereupon a carob-tree and a spring miraculously appeared there. In order to spare their garments they sat naked in the sand, in consequence of which their skin became covered with scabs. At the end of twelve years the prophet Elijah announced to them the death of the emperor, and the consequent annulment of the sentence of death against them. When they came forth and observed people occupied with quotidian pursuits to the

neglect of the Torah, and, being angered thereby, burned the world with their glances. A Divine Voice ordered him to return to the cave, where they remained twelve months longer. There we read:

∞ **The Divine Voice went out and said to them: Emerge from your cave. They emerged. Everywhere that Rabbi Elazar would strike, Rabbi Shimon would heal. Rabbi Shimon said to Rabbi Elazar: **My son, you and I suffice for the entire world,** as the two of us are engaged in the proper study of Torah. (Shabbat 33b)**

As we emerge from Covid we have the opportunity to reflect on our family relationships in the womb-ful isolation in our homes/caves. There is no doubt that we will burn things up as we emerge. As staff members and guardians we have to do our part to heal the world and the young people in our care. But, we do not need to do it alone. We need to work with their synagogues, schools, and the rest of camp to support these young people. We need to help them regain perspective and agency so that our youth can fix themselves and this broken world. And most importantly we have to give each other the support that we need. We will suffice. We are enough. We need to believe that we can and will build back better.

Making Meaning at Jewish Camp

Coming out of the isolation of COVID, we are now more than ever aware of the importance of camp in the lives of our campers and staff members. In so many ways camp, with its focus on bunk, group-dynamics, being close, and being present, is the polar opposite of the social distancing we have become accustomed to over the last two years. The bubble of that intentional community can be incredibly healing for us as individuals and as a collective. At the same time, we must recognize that these are skills we may need to relearn and hone. We are not the people we were.

Now more than ever we know the force that camp has to socialize our campers, but have we realized the full potential of camp as an educational institution? Camp is fun and therefore we are reluctant to think of it as educational, lest camp get besmirched as being school. Education is a planned formal process of acquiring knowledge or skills and developing the powers of reasoning and judgment. In contrast, we think that socialization is what happens in the in-between-moments of our lives. We are taught to think that socialization is an informal process which involves our getting in touch with our inner selves and how to get along with others. We are taught to think that formal education is serious while camp is fun. In fact the dichotomy between education and socialization is misplaced. Effective formal education is not nearly as planned as we might think. Effective socialization needs to be much more methodical in planning spontaneity.

In Hebrew we translate the word education as *chinuch*, but the reverse is not true. *Chinuch* cannot be translated simply into English as education. Proverbs instructs us *Chanuch⁴ LaNaar al Pi Darko* - to "Initiate a child in his way so when the child is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Alternatively, when you move into a new house, you would invite people over to join you in celebrating a *Chanuka² HaBayit*, - a dedication of your new house. As we learn from *Rashi* – the premier Medieval Rabbinic Commentator – “the root *ChaNaCh²* means the beginning of the entry of a person or an implement into the craft in which he/it is destined to stay” (*Rashi* on Genesis 14:14). It follows that *Chinuch*- Jewish education – is truly about dedication and initiation.

Camp is a special learning environment with a very tight “learning loop”, a holistic cycle where the camper pays attention to the counselor because the camper wants to follow the counselor’s example and join the camp’s staff in the near future. In this sense the *chanichim²*- campers- are truly initiates to the larger learning project of camp. One goal of camp is to train the next generation of *madrichim*- counselors. The *chanichim* are being socialized to become educators.

But there is also danger here. What examples are we setting for children? Do we permit or encourage bullying, shame? Do we give disproportionate power to some groups of kids? Is our affection for some diminishing the self-esteem of others? This learning look has risks as well as rewards!

In retrospect, the transformative experiences that the *chanichim* remember seem to transcend the mundane formal dynamics of camp. *Madrichim*, especially those who were themselves initiates, are loathsome to look under the hood and understand the mechanics of how these experiences are engineered. If we are brave enough to reflect on what drives these transcendent experiences, we will find four main dynamics of how camp works. Role modeling, relationship building, rituals, and how we create context are important ways in which we communicate meaning in the educational platform we call camp.

⁴ Same root as *chinuch*

Role Modeling

This learning “learning Loop” is founded in the campers wanting to imitate the staff. It is critical that the staff exemplify the camp’s values. This is a tremendous power in camping that needs to be used responsibly. *Chanichim* know if the people are crafting their experience from whole cloth. The staff is the fabric of camp.⁵ It is essential to hire, orient, and train staff according to the camp’s philosophy and Jewish Identity⁶, and to invest in these teens to help them be the best they can be. Our staff are not simply workers -- they are the creators of the future. We must treat them as treasured shepherds.

Relationships

While the *chanichim* look up to the staff; their peers are going to be their community for life. Building and maintaining healthy relationships that reinforce the values of the camp are critical to sustaining the camp community among both campers and staff. The *Limud by the Lake* study by Dr. Amy Sales argued that relationships are essential elements of the camp experience.⁷ The recent study by Dr. Sales shows that ten years later this is diminished, but still a very significant factor.⁸

Ritual

While we tend to associate ritual with religion, camping is replete with its own rituals. While these camp rituals are not necessarily sacramental in nature, it does not mean that they are devoid of meaning. Are we using camp ritual to communicate the values of the camp? In understanding, creating, and enacting effective camp ritual, tradition and programming it is essential that the staff are intentional in their planning, designing, implementing and facilitating programs that challenge their campers to learn, grow, and develop as Jewish people. Understand that ritual is not simply repetition -- ritual is values driven and value producing. A ritual that looks like fun to some might be miserable for others. Do your rituals support the wellness of kids, or do they simply represent camp continuity? List the rituals that exist in your camp setting and evaluate their impact. What do you want to keep? Why?

Jewish “ConText”⁹

Anyone who has spent any time at camp has experienced a certain degree of sanctity of space. There are other ways of creating meaning beyond reliance on the hallowed ground of the place where we do Havdalah or sports field. We also create a holy context by invoking our collective memory. Each of us needs a working knowledge and comfort in accessing Jewish history, culture, and textual traditions to effectively get our *chanichim* to join us in this “ConText”. In many ways the simulated Jewish ConText has a more significant educational outcome than just relying on the physical context; these experiences that play with reality create life long memories. How do you bring values into your space? Do you act with intention?

While excellence in these dynamics might be second nature to some *madrichim*, the aspiration is that every camp professional consistently achieves excellence. Understanding how these dynamics work in camp enable the camp professional to utilize the platform of camp to communicate the values of their camp. Being disciplined in designing camp with the outcomes in mind will help make a good staff member into a great educator. Excellence in camp education will happen when we make the shift from intuition to intention.

In addition, if we share a common language for how camp works as an educational institution we will be able to share best practices across ideological and cultural divides more effectively. This sharing is not an effort to create homogeneity of Jewish camps or in their staff. Just as the variety of camps expands our capacity to connect with a larger range of families, the variety of camp staff members expands a camp’s opportunity to connect with more campers. Having an appreciation of the palate of how to paint does not mean we will all paint the same thing. On the

⁵ To see great research into this within the Ramah system see Dr. Zachary Adam Lasker’s dissertation *The Camp Counselor as Educator and Role Model for the Core Jewish Values and Practices of the Conservative Movement (2009)*

⁶ Which means we must recognize our “named identity” may or may not be our lived identity.

⁷ Sales, Amy and Leonard Sax. (2002) *Limud by the Lake: Fulfilling the Educational Potential of Jewish Summer Camp*. New York, NY: The Avi Chai Foundation.

⁸ Look for Dr. Sales soon to be published a reflection on ten years after *Limud By the Lake* which will be titled *Extending the Tent and Strengthening the Tent Stakes: Growth and Change in Jewish Summer Camp*.

⁹ Foundation for Jewish Camp sees Jewish text writ large as being a critical component to building meaningful Jewish experiences so we accent the text in creating “ConText”.

contrary this sharing will help camp professionals deepen and differentiate experiences for the *chanichim*. Understanding the techniques without an understanding of camp's mission, and vision is not helpful. For camp to be truly educational the staff needs to have a real appreciation and a sense of ownership of the objectives of the experience, and a sense of how their skills can impact this mission.

Perhaps the story of the Stone Cutters of Salisbury Cathedral best underscores the significance of putting the mission first. One version of the story goes:

On a foggy autumn day nearly 800 years ago a traveler happened upon a large group of workers adjacent to the River Avon. Despite being tardy for an important rendezvous curiosity convinced the traveler that he should inquire about their work. With a slight detour he moved toward the first of the three tradesmen and said "my dear fellow what is it that you are doing?" The man continued his work and grumbled, "I am cutting stones." Realizing that the mason did not wish to engage in a conversation the traveler moved toward the second of the three and repeated the question. To the traveler's delight this time the man stopped his work, ever so briefly, and stated that he was a stonecutter. He then added "I came to Salisbury from the north to work but as soon as I earn ten quid I will return home." The traveler thanked the second mason, wished him a safe journey home and began to head to the third of the trio. When he reached the third worker he once again asked the original question. This time the worker paused, glanced at the traveler until they made eye contact and then looked skyward drawing the traveler's eyes upward. The third mason replied, "I am a mason and I am building a cathedral." He continued, "I have journeyed many miles to be part of the team that is constructing this magnificent cathedral. I have spent many months away from my family and I miss them dearly. However, I know how important Salisbury Cathedral will be one day and I know how many people will find sanctuary and solace here. I know this because the Bishop once told me his vision for this great place. He described how people would come from all parts to worship here. He also told that the Cathedral would not be completed in our days but that the future depends on our hard work." He paused and then said, "So I am prepared to be away from my family because I know it is the right thing to do. I hope that one day my son will continue in my footsteps and perhaps even his son if need be."¹⁰

It is a special stone cutter who understands that he is building the Salisbury Cathedral. It is a special *madrich* who understands that she is preparing a child for life. *Chinuch* is not about building temples or limited to imparting or acquiring of extrinsic knowledge, rather, it is a discovery of intrinsic wisdom. It was already there; it is just the process of awakening our awareness of its presence. *Chinuch* is truly helping the initiate dedicate him/herself to a cause. In camp the *chanich* is rarely motivated by the authority of the educator; rather they are moved by their role models, relationships, rituals, and life lived in a Jewish ConText to dedicate her/himself to live meaningful lives infused with Jewish values. To this end, the *madrich* needs to model connecting to his/her own "passion-based learning".¹¹

Though some *madrichim* loath to see themselves as educators, if they have the vision of the stone cutter building the Salisbury Cathedral they can be unmatched as educators. In Hallel¹² we read:

Even maasu habonim, hayta le'rosh pina.

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone (Psalms 118:22)

Even if initially they might have rejected being educators, excellent *madrichim* understand that *chinuch* at camp is serious fun. They use these four dynamics of camping to communicate Jewish values to their *chanichim*. Together they build temples of meaning that last their whole lives. For every single *chanich* there should be a *madrich* who can become that cornerstone¹³.

¹⁰ Girard J.P. and Lambert S (2007) "The Story of Knowledge: Writing Stories that Guide Organizations into the Future" *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management* Volume 5 Issue 2, pp 161-172.



















¹¹ Brown, John Seely and Richard P. Adler. (2008) *Minds on Fire: Open Education, the Long Tail, and Learning 2.0* Available at http://foruminnova.files.wordpress.com/2007/12/minds_on_fire.pdf

¹² Hallel is a liturgical prayer of praise and thanksgiving

¹³ Started in 2003 the Cornerstone Fellowship, made possible by the generosity of the AVI CHAI Foundation, empowers third-year Jewish bunk counselors to view themselves as experiential Jewish educators.

MODALITY LEGEND

We realize that in leading your staff and your campers there are many ways to engage them in Jewish wisdom. It could look anything from exploring text together in a book, to a discussion, to a sharing, etc. Here is a growing list of various ways you might frame the experience for your community. We might suggest some for the various segments, but you should feel free to adopt, adapt, or use any of these modalities for any of these tidbits or for any staff or camper meeting.

	Start with Why: Why are we doing what we are doing?
∞	Text or quote to consider
	Bonus Information
	Going Deeper
	Discussion around circle
	Popcorn discussion
	Split into Chevruta - partners to study or discuss idea
	Silent Meditation
	What song would connect to this idea?
	For Campers
	For Camp Staff Members
	What are opinions that are not being considered in the room
	Start Stop Continue
	In a place where there is no one, be the one - Perkey Avot
	Recharger Activity
	Devil Advocate
	Gratitude Practice
	Rose, Bud, Thorn: Name something good and bad that happened this last week and something you are looking forward to this coming week.
Δ	What is the Delta? Are we making a difference
	Pick a random modality

BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Betsy Stone, Ph.D. is a Yale-educated psychologist. She has spent the pandemic at her dining room table, thinking, teaching and writing about trauma, teens and families, post-traumatic growth and wellness. She leads groups for clergy of different faiths as we navigate what our next normal will look like. Her website is BetsyStonephd.com

Rabbi Avi Orlow is an educator with a love of irreverent, relevant, and revealing Torah. Avi is the Vice President, Innovation and Education at the Foundation for Jewish Camp. Avi has a BA in religious studies from Columbia University and was ordained in the charter class of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the open Orthodox rabbinical school. He blogs religiously at saidtomyself.com



Again, this is a draft. We recognize that it is far from complete. It is part of an interactive process to provide deep, accessible, and relevant resources for the field. Please give us your feedback and other content you would like to see us put into these notes for next year. Be in touch avi@jewishcamp.org