



## Sharing Responsibility להתחלק באחריות

### From Parshat Devarim פרשת דברים A Production of Matzapiece Theatre

<b>Category of Activity</b>	Shabbat activity
<b>Grade Level</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grades
<b>Time</b>	Shabbat evening: 30 minutes Shabbat afternoon: 45 minutes
<b>Method</b>	Discussion, presentation
<b>Size of Group</b>	Eidah and small groups
<b>Keywords</b>	Blessing, curse

#### GOALS

1. The campers will become familiar with one part of the weekly Torah reading and gain an understanding of its contents.
2. The campers will enact an *aliyah* of the Torah portion and "personalize" some of the experiences and problems described in it.
3. The campers will discuss how some of the issues in the Torah portion can be applied to current and ongoing problems of the Jewish community.

#### BACKGROUND

The material offered can be used for Shabbat evening or Shabbat afternoon or both. The skit can be presented Shabbat evening and the discussion held on Shabbat afternoon. Or the entire program can be presented Shabbat evening or Shabbat afternoon.

#### PLACE

1. A room or space large enough for the entire Eidah to hold the Shabbat evening and Shabbat afternoon activity
2. Places for small group discussions on Shabbat afternoon.

#### PREPARATION OF SUPPLIES AND RESOURCES

1. The program leader should make sure that sufficient scripts are copied for the cast in the presentation.
2. The program leader should make name signs for the actors in the skit.

3. The program leader should make sure that sufficient resource sheets are available for the discussion groups on Shabbat afternoon.
4. Relevant props, costumes or pictures of props to illustrate the story.

#### STAFF PREPARATION

1. The program leader should review the weekly Torah portion and select the *aliyah* to be dramatized (suggestion: use commentary in *Mikraot Ramah* by Rabbi Eli L. Garfinkel; see **Attachment 2** for appropriate selections).
2. The program leader should review the script with the staff (**Attachment 3**).
3. The program leader should review the discussion questions for the Shabbat afternoon session with the staff (see **Attachment 4**).
4. The program leader should consult with the camp rabbi or scholar-in-residence re: narrative and legal aspects of the Torah portion.

#### SETUP PREPARATION

See staff and supplies preparation.

#### METHODOLOGY AND DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

### Several Days Before the Program

1. The program leader should prepare copies of the "Background", and the script (**Attachments 1 and 3**) for the staff, and the text of the *aliyah* and discussion questions (**Attachments 2 and 4**) for all of the campers and counselors.
2. The program leader should review the selected *aliyah* of the Torah portion with the staff (**Attachment 2**) to help them fully understand the issues.

### Shabbat Evening

1. The program leader should present a brief introduction to the Torah portion and the particular issue to be dramatized (3 minutes).
2. The actors should be called on to present the skit.
3. The program leader should summarize the main theme of the presentation.

### Shabbat afternoon

1. On Shabbat afternoon, the program leader should assemble the Eidah and review/summarize the presentation made Shabbat evening (5 –7 minutes).
2. The program leader should divide the Eidah into small discussion groups with one or two staff members.
3. The small group discussion leaders should conduct a discussion based on the questions presented in **Attachment 4**.

#### ATTACHMENTS- RESOURCE TEXTS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Attachment 1

## Background

In the preceding portion (*Parshat Mattot-Massei*), we learned the laws of vows taken by women in various situations and the right of their husbands or fathers (depending on the situation) to nullify them.

A war of retribution was waged against the Midianites for their treachery in leading Israel into the pagan worship of Baal-peor and the resultant plague. When the spoils of war are brought back to camp, regulations of purification are given for the items and a tax is levied: 1/500 for the soldiers, 1/50 for the remainder of the people. In gratitude for the safe delivery of all the Israelite soldiers, the commanders of the troop divisions present an offering of gold to the Tabernacle.

As the people are just about to enter the Promised Land, the two and one-half tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh ask Moses' permission to settle in the territories east of the Jordan, where there is appropriate grazing land for their herds. Moses is at first very angry, but then agrees to allow them to settle outside the land of Israel, provided that they advance as shock troops before the Israelite army in its conquest of the land.

All the stops along the route of the Israelites in the wilderness, from Rameses in Egypt until the steppes of Moab, facing Jericho, are reviewed. This would appear to be a summary of the wilderness account.

Preparations are made to divide the land of Israel by lots to the tribes, depending on their respective sizes. The tribe of Levi will not inherit property, but will be assigned 48 cities and surrounding pastureland, including six cities of refuge. The laws of the accidental manslayer are then introduced, with the provision that the manslayer may leave his city of refuge only upon the death of the high priest (whenever that may be!).

The chieftains of Manasseh appeal to Moses to address an aspect not previously considered in the plea of the daughters of Zelophehad, namely that if the daughters marry into other tribes, their tribal property will be cut off from Manasseh and given to the tribes of the men they marry. An emendation is made in the law: women who inherit property from a father who died without sons must marry within their own tribe, so as to preserve the territorial holdings of the tribe.

Moses seems ready to leave the people of Israel upon their entry into the Promised Land.

The above may be summarized by the staff member who presents the overview at the program.

## Attachment 2

First and Second *Aliyot*: Deuteronomy 1:1-10, 1:11-21.

דברים פרק א  
 (ט) וְאִמַּרְתָּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר לֹא אוֹכַל לְבַדִּי שְׂאת אֲתֶכֶם:  
 (י) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵרְבָה אֲתֶכֶם וְהִנֵּכֶם הַיּוֹם כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב:  
 (יא) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵכֶם יִסַּף עֲלֵיכֶם כְּכֶם אֶלֶף פְּעָמִים וַיְבָרַךְ אֲתֶכֶם  
 כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָכֶם:  
 (יב) אֵיכָה אֲשָׂא לְבַדִּי טְרַחְתְּכֶם וּמִשְׁאַכֶּם וְרִיבְכֶם:  
 (יג) הֲבוּ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וְנָבִיִּים וַיִּדְעִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם וְאֲשִׁימָם בְּרֹאשֵׁיכֶם:  
 (יד) וַתַּעֲנוּ אֵת יְהוָה וַתֹּאמְרוּ טוֹב הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת:  
 (טו) וְאָקַח אֶת רֹאשֵׁי שִׁבְטֵיכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וַיִּדְעִים וְאֶתְּנֶנּוּ אוֹתָם רֹאשִׁים  
 עֲלֵיכֶם שְׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשְׂרֵי מֵאוֹת וְשְׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשְׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֵי וְשְׂרֵי טְרִים  
 לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם:  
 (טז) וְאֶצְוֶה אֶת שְׂפִטֵיכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר שְׂמַע בֵּין אַחֵיכֶם וּשְׁפֹטֵתֶם צְדָק  
 בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין אָחִיו וּבֵין גֵּרוֹ:  
 (יז) לֹא תִכְיֹרוּ פָנִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט כִּקְטָן כַּגֹּדֹל תִּשְׁמַעוּן לֹא תִגְוְרוּ מִפְּנֵי אִישׁ כִּי  
 הַמִּשְׁפָּט לֹאלֹהִים הוּא וְהַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִקְשֶׁה מִכֶּם תִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּיו:  
 (יח) וְאֶצְוֶה אֲתֶכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן:

<sup>9</sup>Thereupon I said to you, "I cannot bear the burden of you by myself. <sup>10</sup>The LORD your God has multiplied you until you are today as numerous as the stars in the sky. <sup>11</sup>May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase your numbers a thousandfold, and bless you as He promised you. <sup>12</sup>How can I bear unaided the trouble of you, and the burden, and the bickering! <sup>13</sup>Pick from each of your tribes men who are wise, discerning, and experienced, and I will appoint them as your heads." <sup>14</sup>You answered me and said, "What you propose to do is good." <sup>15</sup>So I took your tribal leaders, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you: chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens, and officials for your tribes. <sup>16</sup>I charged your magistrates at that time as follows, "Hear out your fellow men, and decide justly between any man and a fellow Israelite or a stranger. <sup>17</sup>You shall not be partial in judgment: hear out low and high alike. Fear no man, for judgment is God's. And any matter that is too difficult for you, you shall bring to me and I will hear it." <sup>18</sup>Thus I instructed you, at that time, about the various things that you should do.

### Attachment 3 The Script

#### The Players:

Narrator  
 Zipporah  
 Moses  
 Jethro  
 Israelite A  
 Israelite B

Israelite C  
Israelite D

**Scene 1: Inside the tent of Moses.**

NARRATOR: Moses is busily preparing his farewell address to the People of Israel. Zipporah, his wife, enters with a hot drink for him.

ZIPPORAH: Here, Moses, have a glass of tea... I made it especially for you.

MOSES: Thanks, Zipporah, but I don't have time for it. I'm supposed to address the people in twenty minutes and I haven't finished writing my speech.

ZIPPORAH: You'll feel better if you have a glass of tea. Besides, your speeches are always inspired. You just open your mouth...

MOSES: And God supplies the words? Don't take that for granted. It's a lot harder than you think.

ZIPPORAH: If only you didn't stutter when you speak...

MOSES: *(Miffed by this comment.)* I've worked on that stutter for over forty years! It's not something that I can overcome that easily...

ZIPPORAH: They say it's often stress-induced. Are you under a lot of pressure?

MOSES: You have no idea! Anyway, my brother Aaron can speak for me, though I'd really like to deliver this speech myself.

ZIPPORAH: What have you written so far?

MOSES: Well, I start off today, the first of the eleventh month in the fortieth year since the Exodus from Egypt, just as the people are about to do what I expected of them forty years ago – enter the Promised Land.

ZIPPORAH: Forty years? It feels more like one hundred.

MOSES: *(Reminiscing.)* We were young and enthusiastic in those days... I was only 80 years old!

ZIPPORAH: Who was it that said "youth is wasted on the young"?

MOSES: Never mind, they were good years, despite all the wandering in

the wilderness. We had just received the Ten Commandments at Sinai, when God told us to "start out and make your way to the hill country of the Amorites... *(He rises as he speaks, fired with excitement.)* Go, take possession of the land that the Lord promised to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them."

ZIPPORAH: Can you imagine taking the entire people into the land of Canaan? A wild, disruptive bunch, always arguing and rebelling...

MOSES: What did you expect? They had just been freed from centuries of slavery! How would they know how to conduct themselves as free citizens of a new state?

ZIPPORAH: You must admit that you, too, were pretty discouraged with them back then.

MOSES: You're right. I was pretty hard-pressed. I told the people that I could not "bear the burden of you by myself," but in the same breath I prayed that God would "increase their numbers a thousandfold – and bless you as He promised you."

ZIPPORAH: I remember many a night you came home from the *Mishkan*, totally worn out by their bickering and fighting.

MOSES: It's true. That's when your father came to stay with us. He suggested a system of judges to hear the disputes that arose among the people and decide them accordingly. Oh, Jethro, what would I ever have done without you?

ZIPPORAH: I hope you'll mention him in your speech.

MOSES: Don't worry, I've already included him in my book.

**NARRATOR: Flashback:** We are now in the Israelite camp at Horeb. A long line of people, all bickering and arguing with one another,

awaits the arrival of Moses to judge them.

Israelite A: Where is he? He should have been here ten minutes ago.

Israelite B: He's always so punctual. Every morning at 6:15, you can find him sitting here...

Israelite C: Till sunset – and beyond!

Israelite D: What are you talking about? Moses is always late. He always has some excuse about getting an urgent call from On High...

Israelite B: Look at the line already! We'll be here all day!

Israelite E: (*Cutting into line.*) I just want to ask a question...

Israelite D: That's what they all say!

Israelite C: I also want to ask a question.

Israelite E: But mine will only take a minute...

Israelite C: Forget it, lady. You can wait on line, just like the rest of us.

Israelite B: Take a number!

Israelite E: (*Takes a number.*) Oh, no! I'll be waiting here for hours.

Israelite B: What's your number?

Israelite C: What's yours?

Israelite B: 378.

Israelite C: I'm before you! (*Moves ahead of Israelite B in line.*)

Israelite A: By the way, did you hear that Moses' father-in-law came to visit?

Israelite C: No wonder he's late.

Israelite B: You mean Jethro, the priest of Midian?

Israelite A: Yes. He rode into camp last night with Moses' wife, Zipporah, and her two sons.

Israelite C: How long are they planning to stay?

Israelite A: Who knows? You know these Midianites... They come for a day  
and stay for six months.

Israelite D: Sssh! Here he comes!

NARRATOR: The ISRAELITES have now acknowledged the arrival of Moses.

He is accompanied by his father-in-law, Jethro.)

MOSES: *(Who's been giving JETHRO a tour of the camp.)* ...And this is the  
seat of judgment. Every morning I sit here and  
decide the cases that the people bring before the  
Lord.

JETHRO: What kind of cases?

MOSES: Oh, practically everything under the sun: family quarrels,  
neighborhood disputes, marital problems,  
inheritance laws, spots of leprosy, which birds  
can be eaten, how to handle a stubborn son...

JETHRO: But look at the line of people waiting for you! You can't  
possibly  
listen to all these cases!

MOSES: With God's help, I'll try my best.

JETHRO: Moses, listen to me: what you are doing is not right. You're  
going to wear yourself out, and the people, too!  
The job is far too much for you – you cannot  
handle it alone!

MOSES: So what should I do?

JETHRO: Listen to me; please take my advice. You represent the people  
before God – you bring the disputes before God  
and inform the people of His laws and teachings,  
instructing them as to the way they are to go and  
the practices they are to follow.

MOSES: That's what I have been doing...

JETHRO: You should also seek out from among the people capable men



men who fear God, who are trustworthy, and who spurn ill-gotten gain. Set these men over the people as chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties and chiefs of tens. Let them exercise authority over the people at all times. Let them decide all the minor disputes themselves, and bring only the major disputes to you.

MOSES: You mean I should delegate authority and establish a system of courts?

JETHRO: Exactly. That way you won't have the entire burden of judgment on your shoulders; you'll be able to share it with others.

MOSES: But how do I know that God approves of such a system? He didn't mention it to me on the mountain.

JETHRO: Trust me! Make it easier for yourself, and let the chieftains share the burden with you. If you do this – and God so commands you – you will be able to bear up, and all these people will be able to receive an equitable hearing without standing out here all day.

MOSES: (*Mulls it over.*) Hmm... Your proposal is a good one. I'm willing to try it out. (*Calls for his assistant.*) Joshua!

JOSHUA: (*Steps forward.*) Yes, sir?

MOSES: Joshua, I want you to summon the tribal leaders for an important meeting. We are going to appoint judges! They will hear out the people and decide justly between any individual and his fellow Israelite or a stranger. They will not be partial in judgment, but hear out low and high alike, fearing no man, for judgment is the Lord's... And any case that is too difficult for them, they will bring to me and I will hear it...

JETHRO: Consulting, obviously, with the Lord.

MOSES: Of course...

JOSHUA: Yes, sir. When would you like to hold the meeting?

MOSES: Immediately – at once! The people can't wait! *(He exits quickly, with JETHRO.)*

Israelite B: What do you mean, "can't wait"? I've been waiting since dawn!

Israelite D: I sure hope he gets back soon.

Israelite E: I'm never going to make my appointment at the hairdresser's...

#### **Attachment 4**

#### **Discussion Questions: *Based on the Text of the Aliyah***

1. What seems to be Moses' problem?
2. What is Jethro's suggestion to Moses?
3. What do you think are the advantages of having a strong central leader like the President of the US:
  - a. For the leader?
  - b. For the people?
  - c. For the organization or group?
4. What do you think are the disadvantages of having a strong central leader:
  - a. For the leader?
  - b. For the people?
  - c. For the organization or group?
5. Is it okay for Moses to be taking such important advice from his father-in-law who was not a part of the people of Israel?
6. What do you think are the challenges that face a leader such as a counselor, parent, or group leader who decides to delegate responsibility?
7. What do you think is the price to be paid by a leader such as a counselor, parent, or group leader who decides to delegate responsibility?

#### **Attachment 5**

#### **The "Matzapiece Theatre" Theme Song** midmatzapiece theme song.mid

A recording of the Rondeau from Mouret's First Symphonic Suite (ca. 1720) is included on the Ramah Program Bank CD-ROM. The melody may easily be sung as a *niggun* without words, using "Da-da-dum" as lyrics.

The theme song is intended as a signal that the "Matzapiece Theatre" program is beginning and ending. Singing or chanting it by the entire group should indicate the transition from other activities to this particular program.

*Note:* This theme song was used on PBS Television's *Masterpiece Theatre* for several seasons.

## **Supplementary Materials**

None

**This program was developed by Rabbi Robert Binder, 2002**