

Matot Peulat Shabbat – July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014

## Order of Events

- a. Divide into groups (4:45 – 4:50)
  - b. Ask group what they know about this week's parsha (4:50 – 4:55)
  - c. Read provided story out loud (4:55 – 5:00)
  - d. Discussion questions (5:00 – 5:15)
  - e. What should a good Nivonim be? (5:15 – 5:35)
1. Summary of Matot (from Chabad.com)
    - a. Moses conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel.
    - b. War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest.
    - c. The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Manasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.
  2. Read story out loud (pass the story around the group to read out loud)
  3. Discussion Questions
    - a. How do we think of biblical leaders compared to how we think of leaders now?
    - b. Where have you found the tools to become better leaders?
    - c. Who's another camper you see as a leader at camp? Why?
    - d. A central component of Nivonim is about Leadership. How have you become stronger leaders so far this summer?
    - e. At the end, Ben says "you need a certain kind of independence in order to become yourself". Why do you think this confidence is often found at camp?
    - f. How will the tools you've gained in Nivonim impact you in your life during the year?
    - g. What do you think makes a good leader?
    - h. Can you be a leader while not being at the front of a group?
    - i. What's one thing you can improve to become a better leader this summer?

4. Meet back in moadon for edah discussion about Nivonim (5:15 – 5:35)

### Matot Story

"Hello," a slim boy with bushy brown hair said. "My name is Jacob." Ben looked up at the new voice. "Hi" he said, "my name is Ben." The boys smiled, they liked Camp Ramah and it was fun meeting new friends.

"Can I help you?" Jacob asked, looking at Ben's small pile of sticks at the Ilanot Medura spot. It was the first day of camp and Jacob had noticed Ben sitting alone at the carnival. "What are you doing?"

"I'm trying to make a bow and arrow," Ben said. "I'm trying to find some nice strong sticks that I could use for the arrows, and a long springy one that could be the bow."

"That's funny," Jacob said, "this week's Torah portion is actually called *Matot*, which means sticks."

"Himm," said Ben, who had learnt some Hebrew during Ivrit with Yehuda, "you're right, *mateh* means stick. But why did they call a Torah portion with a name that means sticks?"

"Well," answered Jacob, "that is the name which the Torah would sometimes call the twelve tribes of Israel."

"But," Ben said, "weren't the tribes called *shevatim*? *Shevet* means tribe."

"Yes," Jacob said, "the tribes had two names: *shevatim* and *matot*."

"Interesting," Ben said as he picked up a slim branch to see how strong it was. He tried bending it, but it just sort of folded over.

"I think that one just recently was cut down from the tree," Jacob said. "Look, there is still sap in it. My teacher said that *shevet* means a branch that is still on the tree, it is still connected to the tree and is still soft. It hasn't yet become strong and firm."

"The *mateh*," Jacob explained further, as he held up a hard stick from the forest floor "is a hard branch that has already fallen off the tree and is firm and strong."

"If you think about it," said Ben, who was very imaginative, "you could say that

sticks are like people, when we were young we were still like the *shevet*, the soft branch staying at home. And then we got older and kind of got disconnected from the tree and went off to camp and things like that and now we are much tougher, like the *mateh*, the stick that isn't connected to the tree."

"You are right," Jacob said. "And the interesting thing is that the *mateh* only gets really hard after it gets disconnected from the tree. It is somehow teaching us that we only really grow in Torah and mitzvot and as a person when we disconnect ourselves and go off to camp. That's where we learn how to make friends on our own, and to be nice to all different types of people. We leave our families at home to join our new families at camp - our edah."

"Yes," said Ben. "We help each other out and become strong in our character like the *mateh* which only gets hard when it gets disconnected from the tree. You need a certain kind of independence in order to become yourself..."