

פרשת חקת - Parashat Hukat

The Beginning of the Story

א וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל-הָעֵדָה מִדְּבַר-צִן בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן וַיָּשֶׁב הָעָם בְּקֶדֶשׁ וַתָּמָת שָׁם מִרְיָם וַתִּקָּבֵר שָׁם: ב וְלֹא-הָיָה מַיִם לָעֵדָה וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל-מֹשֶׁה וְעַל-אַהֲרֹן: ג וַיִּרְבּוּ הָעָם עִם-מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר וְלוֹ גִּוְעַנּוּ בְּגֹעַ אַחֲיֵינוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ד וְלָמָּה הֵבֵאתֶם אֶת-קְהֵל יְהוָה אֶל-הַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לָמוֹת שָׁם אֲנַחְנוּ וּבְעִירָנוּ:

1. Then came the people of Israel, the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month; and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.
2. And there was no water for the congregation; and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.
3. And the people quarrelled with Moses, and spoke, saying, Would God that we had died when our brothers died before the Lord!
4. And why have you brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

Discussion:

- * Is the way that the people of Israel behaved expected, after all that Moshe has done for them?
- * How can we explain their behavior?
- * How do you think Moshe felt when he heard the people of Israel complaining?

ו וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן מִפְּנֵי הַקְּהָל אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד-יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם:

6. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and they fell upon their faces; and the glory of the Lord appeared to them.

Discussion and Integration of Text:

- * What are the similarities between the way Moshe felt and the way we, as madrichim, sometimes feel?
- * How can we, or should we, respond differently than Moshe did?
- * Moshe (and Aaron) "went *from* the presence of the assembly *to* the door of the Tent of Meeting". Can you make an analogy to camp life here? What (or where) are your resources?

Role Play

- * You send your campers back to their bunk to get ready and packed for Etgar. You stop at the misrad to pick something up, and expect, upon your arrival back at the bunk, to find your

campers occupied with the task you gave them. In reality, they are complaining about going on Etgar, and are organizing themselves to protest the trip. They do not want to go - they have no interest in sleeping outside, they think the food is gross, and aren't interested in doing this at all. They elect one of their bunkmates as their "leader" to tell you that they aren't going on Etgar. What do you do? How do you react?

God's Solution

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: חַק אֶת-הַמַּטֶּה וְהַקְהֵל אֶת-הָעֵדָה אִתָּהּ וְאַהֲרֹן אַחִיךָ וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל-הַסֵּלַע לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִימּוֹ וְהוֹצֵאתָ לָהֶם מִים מִן-הַסֵּלַע וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אֶת-הָעֵדָה וְאֶת-בְּעִירָם: ט וַיַּחַק מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַמַּטֶּה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ: י וַיַּקְהֵלוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת-הַקְהָל אֶל-פְּנֵי הַסֵּלַע וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶם שְׁמְעוּ-נָא הַמְרִים הַמֹּ-הַסֵּלַע הַזֶּה נוֹצֵיא לָכֶם מַיִם: יא וַיִּרֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת-הַסֵּלַע בַּמַּטֶּהוּ פַעַמִּים וַיִּצְאוּ מִים רַבִּים וַתִּשְׁתְּ הָעֵדָה וְהַבְּעִירָם:

7. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
8. Take the rod, and gather the assembly together, you, and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and you shall bring forth to them water out of the rock; so you shall give the congregation and their beasts drink.
9. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him.
10. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said to them, Hear now, you rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?
11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he struck the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

Discussion of Text:

- * What is the difference between the way Moshe acted and the way that God told him to act?
- * Does this really make a big difference?
- * Which is a bigger miracle, talking to the rock or striking it?
- * What did Moshe call the people of Israel before he gave them water? Why do you think he did this?
- * What can we learn from the tone of Moshe's reaction to the people?
- * What are some possible reasons for the Moshe's behavior?

Integration of Text:

- * Quickly list things that Moshe did wrong, that we know not to do with our bunks? (*call them names, react impulsively, etc.*)
- * How can we teach ourselves to react differently? How might Moshe reflect on his actions (even after the fact) and react differently next time he is faced with a similar problem?
- * Being a "Reflective Practitioner" - (see handout)

Being A Reflective Practitioner

Being a *reflective practitioner* means that you make a commitment to personal awareness of your automatic reactions and prejudices by taking time to think back on them and perhaps record them in a journal or discuss them with someone you trust and respect.

Why?

Because you don't want to be kept out of the Promised Land, like Moshe! No, seriously, because everyone who reads this story knows what Moshe did wrong - he over-reacted and was too emotional. Hind-sight may be 20/20 but if Moshe could have known how he reacted in stressful situations, he may have made it into the Land of Canaan. The Israelites knew just which buttons to push, to cause a reaction. Your campers are just like the Israelites. They know how to get a reaction out of you, and may even enjoy it. It is your job to not react hastily and without reason. You need to be the adult in the situation, the calm presence - you need to achieve what Moshe couldn't.

How?

By reflecting on who you are, how you react, and what your "hot-button issues" are. Ask the people around you, that know you, how you react under pressure? Think about how you feel 20 minutes after you've reacted to something? An hour after? A day after? Do you wish you had handled it differently? What would you have done differently? What are the trigger signs, for you to recognize that you need to take a step back?

When?

You can start thinking about your reactions RIGHT NOW! This week, you can start writing in a journal, thinking, processing, or talking with a friend. Its never too late to start reflecting on your actions. Even after you've reacted poorly (like Moshe!) you can try to figure out ways to react differently.

What are the benefits?

Your campers will behave better (and like you more!) because you will be a more consistent presence. Your co-counselors will trust your reactions and ask your opinions. Most importantly, you will be a more successful counselor - and we will all be very proud of you!

Moshe and Aaron's Punishment

יבַּיְאֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן יַעַן לֹא-הֵאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישׁנִי לְעֵינֵי
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ אֶת-הַקְּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-נָתַתִּי לָהֶם:

12. And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, Because you did not believe me to sanctify me in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Discussion of Text:

- * Why do you think Moshe and Aaron got such a big punishment?
- * Is this a fair punishment? They were the leaders, should they be held to a higher standard than their people? Or should they be given room to make mistakes?

Integration of Text:

* "Thumbs up, Thumbs down" exercise - put your thumb up if you agree with the following statements, put your thumb down if you disagree:

- * "We as madrichim need to set a perfect personal example."
- * "What is acceptable for chanichim is often completely unacceptable for a madrich."
- * "With power comes big responsibility"
- * "Sometimes chanichium can't see the big picture. It is our job, as madrichim, to always consider the big picture. We can't always make them happy in this particular incident, but its ok if our actions help the bigger picture"
- * Discuss people's answers

Summary

- * What can Moshe's behavior teach us - for good or for bad?
- * Pair up with a neighbor and come up with a "first response plan" - what will your first response be to frustration? and then what will your next step be? Share with the group.