



CAMP RAMAH IN CALIFORNIA

At the Max & Pauline Zimmer Conference Center

A Journey for a Lifetime

News from Camp Ramah in California - Summer 2006

Session 1 - Week 2

July 7, 2006 - 11 Tammuz, 5766

Dear Families of Camp Ramah in California,

It's been a great 2nd week of 1st session here at camp. Earlier this week and after much anticipation, our Amitzim campers and Ezra staff members arrived making us, for the first time this summer, a complete community! On Tuesday we had a great Yom Meyuchad - special program day - focused on Tikkun Olam and the situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan. Also on Tuesday, our Gesher A campers departed after a GREAT week of camp, hopefully inspired and motivated to come back for a full month for many summers to come.

Wednesday, our Gesher staff welcomed the Gesher B campers. Already they are settled into camp and already enjoying the fun!



Session 1 is in Full Swing



What time is lunch??

This Week's Torah Portion - "Being Right or Being in Relationship"

Torah Portion **Hukat**

Rabbi Daniel Greyber – Camp Ramah in California

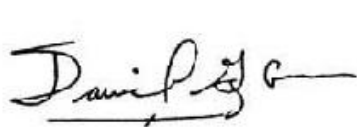
What is *Hukat*, or a "hok?" In Jewish tradition, the rabbis, especially in the middle ages, often explained reasons behind laws of the Torah, at least in part to make it easier for people to obey the Torah because people are more likely to observe a ritual if they understand the meaning behind it. But one category of laws in the Jewish tradition defied explanation – one of which begins this week's Torah portion *Hukat* – and those laws were called *hukim*.

Some people don't like *hukim* very much because they don't like the idea of doing rituals that don't make sense or that they don't understand. But I think *hukim* have a very deep message to teach us about our relationship with God – **that there are some things we do in our relationship with God, not only in spite of the fact that we don't understand them, but especially because we don't understand them.**

Many people struggle with faith in God because God doesn't make sense to them. God may seem unjust or, at the very least, hard to figure out. But one lesson about *hukim* is that **sometimes we have to act first and then we may, or may not, understand later but we act because we are committed to the relationship.** It is what one of my teachers described to me as choosing between being right and being in relationship. Sometimes we need to let go of being right, of resolving every last doubt in our minds, in order to be in relationship with God. That's what a *hok* – a law that doesn't make sense – is asking of us.

What better message for camp. When campers live together in community, they often must choose between being right, or being part of the group. Campers must share the load in everything from cleaning up the tent, clearing the table, whether to keep the lights on or off and so on . . . Too many people "keep score." "I've already done that twice but you only did it once!" "It's my turn!" "We always sleep with the lights off!" But when we keep score, we just end up feeling hurt and angry and cheated. This week's Torah portion teaches us that part of being in a community is learning to give up on being right sometimes, and instead just to give of ourselves to one another. In doing so, we will not only create a better community for ourselves; we will choose as God would have us choose with Him; to never let doubts and concerns mean that we end up alone.

Kol Tuv and Shabbat Shalom,



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