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כ' מנחם אב תשנ"ז

פרשת עקב

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With Heartfelt Thanks

As you prepare for the coming year, let's look back for a moment upon this past summer. We are grateful for so many small and big things that happened to each and everyone of us. So many people worked hard to make sure we had a great summer. Thank to our counselors who were always there for us from morn till night. Thank to the sports staff for our new learned skills, their patience and intercamps. The kitchen fed us better than ever with all kinds of new menus. The waiters were fast and tried to get us all the food we liked. Our music staff lifted our spirits with wonderful songs and beautiful tunes. Keep an eye out for those shiria tapes which should arrive soon. We were transfered to another time and place by our drama department. The productions were enhanced by lovely sets, beautiful costumes, extraordinary sound, and glowing lighting. We learned basic and advanced water skills on the water front as we swam laps to stay fit in our new lap lanes on both waterfronts. Some of us took LGT and CPR as we learned the responsibility of helping save others. Thank to the Doctors, Nurses and Infirmary staff for taking care of us when we were sick. Our overnights proved to be a major natural experience thanx to our Israeli Chevra. We thank the housekeeping and maintenance staff for maintaining our campuses so well. Our canteen orders were taken care of in a timely and caring manner. Day Camp for taking care of our most

precious children in Day Camp. The mothers helpers for taking such wonderful care of our staff children. Thank to the office staff for our messages, mail, and news from around the world always with a cheery smile. Thank to Camp America in their help in maintaining the camp in the dining room, kitchen, bakery, sports, canoeing and helping to set up for every major or minor event that took place this summer. Many thank to the bakery for helping us put on some weight, those desserts were outrageous. We look up to our division heads for their guidance, wisdom and care. Thank to the camp moms for that touch of TLC not to mention the interest they showed us.

Thank to the drivers for getting us where we had to go; hospitals, D.J.'s (really J.D.) rollerskating, bowling etc. Thank to A&C, & woodshop staff for all those beautiful projects we worked on. Thank to the dancing staff for make our feet jump for joy. The essence of Morasha is limud Torah and we thank the entire educational staff for teaching us Torah and Midot. To our Library staff for enabling us to read and learn in an intelligent environment. Thank to Machon 97 for helping in every area in camp. We enjoyed learning about all these events and more in our back issues of the Shalhevet our weekly camp news forum. Best wishes for a healthy and wonderful coming year.

With much appreciation,

*Abie, Aviva, Michele, Ruchie & Muttie,
Jeff, Shmuel & Sheri, Barbara, Louis,
Rabbi Allen*

Closing Message From Our Rabbi

There is a work in Chazal known as the *Midot De' Rabbi Natan*. Some in the scholarly world of *Midot* considered that this work was directed towards human behavior and thus equated *Avot De' Rabbi Natan* with the *Midot De' Rabbi Natan*. *Avot De' Rabbi Natan* is a larger version of *Pirkei Avot* and both are indeed dedicated in large part to the perfection of our behavior. Another school of thought, however, considered the *Midot De' Rabbi Natan* to be one and the same as *Masechet Midot*, which outlines the measurements of the *Beit HaMikdash*.

The confusion between *midot* as measurements and as behavioral guidelines helps to explain why our behavioral norms are called *midot* in the first place. The way we act is a measure of what we are, of what we believe in, and of what our priorities are.

This past summer's theme has been *Midot K'neged Midot*, and Camp Morasha has attempted to suffuse everything we did with this theme. Whether on the courts, at the waterfront, in the classroom, in the *Beis HaMidrash*, or in the framework of *Tefilla*, we always want to know: How are we enhancing our *midot* in this activity? Having fun along the way often helps this endeavor and we hope that we made these learning experiences fun.

Every group in camp raised money for *tzedaka* in the most imaginative of ways. The *Ilanot*, *Alufim/Alufot* and *Machon* took part in wonderful *Learnathons*, as the voice of Torah rang out late at night in the *Bondi* area. Over 250 *Siddurim* were repaired on *Tisha B'Av*. The camp completed all of *Tanach* and *Mishnayot* and we joined with 10 other camps in solidarity with Israel in a daily completion of *Sefer Tehillim*. These are but a few of the activities that drew us together and hopefully are significant measurements for a wonderful year, and if we don't all spend next summer in *Yerushalayim*, I hope to see you at *Morasha* next summer in good health.

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

Rabbi Allen Schwartz

TORAH THOUGHTS

פרשת עקב or Multiple Choice Mitzvot
"והיה עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה..."

In this week's parsha, Moshe continues to encourage B'nei Yisrael to trust and believe in Hashem. If we only perform the mitzvot, says Moshe, we will be prosperous. Yet the language of the first pasuk presents some difficulty. Why is the word "עקב", which actually means "heel", mentioned at all? And how may we translate the pasuk so that it makes sense?

Rashi answers the question midrashically, saying that the word עקב refers to mitzvot which people believe to be minor. These seemingly less important mitzvot get "stepped on" with people's heels. Thus Rashi explains that if we are careful to follow even the smaller mitzvot, Hashem will reward us.

Yet which mitzvot are less important? This is a question which each person may answer differently. Imagine presenting each Jew with a question listing multiple choice mitzvot, with instructions to choose the ones that are most important. How different the answers would be! Some would choose keeping Shabbat and kashrut over not speaking Lashon Hara. Others would pick kindness to others over everything else. We all have our own ideas about how mitzvot rank, and we prioritize them in our lives accordingly.

It is significant to note that the gematria equivalent of "עקב" is 172, the exact number of words in the עשרת הדברות. Perhaps this is meant to teach us that even what we might consider to be minor mitzvot are just as vital as the most basic ones. The word עקב teaches us an important lesson: The only correct answer for multiple choice mitzvot is "all of the above".

Yaffa Klugerman

MORASHIA '97

This past week Morasha witnessed one of the most successful Morashia's ever! As part of the requirements, each team submitted ten Shalhevet articles. What follows is a small sample of those creative literary works.

דבור - Red Team's Article

by: David Hellman - Alufim

Tehillim Chapter 34, verses 13-14 state "Which man desires life, who loves days of seeing good? Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceitfully." Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan exemplified this pasuk, and was therefore known as the Chofetz Chaim. Many times he explained that even though a person's mouth can be used for such great things as Torah, it unfortunately, can also be used for such lowly things as *lashon hara*. The following story of רבי שמעון בן גמליאל and his servant, טבי, illustrates this point. One day רבי שמעון sent his servant to the market, and told him to bring back only good food. The servant returned with a cow's tongue, only to be sent to the market again. This time he was asked to bring back some bad food. Walking to the market, the servant tried to understand why רבי שמעון asked for bad food. When he reached the market he realized the lesson his rebbe was trying to teach him. Once again the servant brought his rebbe a piece of tongue. רבי שמעון asked him, "Can a piece of tongue be both good and bad?" The servant answered, "Yes, if one speaks *divrei torah and tefillot*, he has a good tongue; but if one speaks slander and lies then his tongue is bad." רבי שמעון rejoiced at his servant's understanding. The Chafetz Chaim spent much of his life dealing with the plague of *lashon hara*.

The Chafetz Chaim was born in 1838, and until he was 10 he was taught by his parents. Then he moved to Vilna to continue his education. Soon he began towering over his peers and making giant steps in Torah. Even when his greatness was recognized, he refused to take a position as a rabbi. Instead he opened a grocery store that his wife managed. He never intended to open a Yeshiva but by 1869, so many students had flocked to him that his home began to be called *The Vilna Yeshiva*. In 1873, at the age of 35, he published his first work, *The Chofetz Chaim*, a book on the laws of slander. In 1879 and 1929 he published two more books on the same topic. In all he published 21 books on many different topics. His most widely studied work is the *Mishna Brura*.

Throughout his life, the Chofetz Chaim also travelled extensively trying to gain support for Jewish causes. Many European yeshivot survived the financial troubles of the war period, solely because of the Chofetz Chaim's efforts. Throughout his life, the Chofetz Chaim taught his generation immense amounts of Torah, and led them with great piety. We feel his influence even today, and if there is one thing we can learn from him, it is that it is better to be silent than to misuse Hashem's gift of speech.

Red Team's Article

ירושלים של זהב ושל נחשת ושל אור

by Machon Girls

Throughout the ages, melodies and songs have been used by the Jewish people as an integral means of expression. We express our thoughts, hopes and dreams through music which is one facet of speech - דבור. The words of Naomi Shemer's song celebrate modern day religious zionism and will always remain an inspiration to Am Yisrael.

Not only is song a facet of speech, but a facilitator of speech. An individual who ordinarily stutters is able to sing clearly without difficulty.

Universally, Jews feel a strong connection toward Eretz Yisrael, the Jewish State and homeland. We are presently struggling to keep Israel in our hands through peacetalks. Once again, we use דבור in order to attempt to escalate and maintain peace in the Middle East.

Tefilla also plays a major role in Judaism. By using speech one can form an irreplaceable bond between an individual and Hashem. Not only can speech bolster relationships between man and God but also between man and his Fellow man.

May we as a people use our ability of דבור in a positive way and continue to pray for the coming of Moshiach speedily in our day.