

CALIFORNIA

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[Adapted with the permission of the author from "Special Torah Column: High Holy Day Season, 2007/5768," in Today's Torah weekly e-mail from the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Los Angeles, CA, September 17, 2007.]

I have fifteen-year-old twins—Jacob and Shira—in my opinion, both of them wonderful, extraordinary children and both of them in their own way, very devoted to Jewish life—in very distinct ways—but devoted nonetheless. Jacob wrestles with having autism, and as a result of his autism, he has had to give up certain dreams. How ironic that the child who most loves Torah study and who most loves daily *tefillot*, has not been able to participate in formal Jewish education or Jewish camping because nobody offers a program that he is able to be part of. Because he misses her, summer after summer, Jacob watched his sister go off to Camp Ramah with sorrow—but also with envy. Other kids go to Camp Ramah despite the *tefillot* and despite the *limmud*. The first time Jacob was told that there are non-Jewish camps, he asked:

“Do they have Torah studies?”

“No.”

“Do they do *shabarit*?”

“No.”

“Then why bother going to camp?”

And I, of course, as the *abba*, eventually made my peace with the particular strengths and challenges of each of my children, and one of those challenges meant that at Camp Ramah, the summer camp that I most love, there was no place for my son who loves Torah—until this summer. This summer, for the first time, the Amitzim Program (for children with special needs) allowed a child to attend with an aide, thus making the inclusion inclusive and enabling Jacob to participate. Jacob says that this summer was the greatest summer of his life and that the greatest week of the greatest summer of his life was his time at Camp Ramah because he could spend a week with his sister at Camp Ramah, which was, he said, “The dream of a lifetime!”

It was indeed the dream of a lifetime, not only his, but mine as well. So I want to share with you the exact moment that was for me, *dayyenu*.

After serving as camp rabbi for one week each summer for as long as my kids have been alive, my daughter, Shira, last year, banished me from camp. I was not allowed to be camp rabbi because for God's sake, she is a fourteen-year-old girl, and who wants her dad hanging around at camp? But

this summer she is a mature fifteen-year-old girl, which makes all the difference, and she decided that since this was her last summer as a camper that I would be allowed to come back as camp rabbi for the final week of the session (in part because she did not want to take the bus home). Those of you who are parents know that tainted love is good enough!

So, I was there as camp rabbi for a week, and Jacob and Elana were invited to join me for Shabbat. Jacob had already enjoyed his week at camp with Amitzim, but he came back with Elana, his mom, my wife. An extremely raucous *minḥah* (afternoon service) is part of the last transitional celebration that takes place during one's final summer as a camper (in the Machon *edab*). Those of you who have never seen a Far West USY (or a Camp Ramah in California) *minḥah* service are missing extraordinary worship. Teens jump over tables, literally. Their singing is non-stop, their creativity and humor is amazing, and the energy level is astonishing. Camp Ramah in Ojai has a *beit keneset* (house of prayer) in the round. When you shut all the doors and windows, the noise level reverberates in your sternum. You don't have to rely on your outer ears; your inner ear can hear each and every shout and stomp, and your inner ears want to be covered just as much as your outer ones.

As the *minḥah* service is about to start, Shira is sitting in the middle of the *beit keneset* with her friends on one of the iron-hard benches. She stands and emerges from the *beit keneset* and says to me, "Where's Jacob?" I point out where he is on a nearby path, and she walks over to him and takes him by the hand, saying, "Come with me." Then she leads her brother into the *beit keneset*, which is a noisy *balagan*.

For those of you who do not know, autistic kids have trouble with loud noise.

So, Jacob walks in, Shira holding his hand—he doesn't really have a choice in this—and she continues to pull him through the crowd. Shira uses her other hand to move the dancing, singing, shouting teens out of the way. Jacob uses his spare hand to try to cover both ears, but he makes himself walk with his sister through the room. When Shira reaches her bench in the middle of the noise and the chaos and the jumping and the shouting, she asks one of her friends to move over, and they make room for her and her brother. Shira sits Jacob down, and she sits next to him with her arms around him, causing Jacob to get so excited that he leaps up and tries to bolt.

I am standing next to the bench beside the twins, and Elana is on the far side of the room, against a wall. Every time Jacob leaps up, Shira helps calm him down and bring him back. Occasionally, I have to go and smile at him and help him come back. The entire time that Jacob is there, he has a smile on his

face so big, you could see it from the *badar ochel* (dining hall), which is a long way away.

And at that moment, if I had dropped dead—dayyenu, it would have been sufficient.

To see my twins at the minḥah service at Camp Ramah, in the Machon year, sitting together; to watch the other “Machonies” smiling at Jacob, encouraging him with their warmth, telling him sometimes, “It’s good that you’re here,” and even when they were not telling him verbally, smiling to let him know how welcome he was, to see Jacob mustering superhuman strength to stay in that noise—despite his intense feelings—because his sister had given him the greatest *kavod* in the world; to see my girl so loving and sweet that she was able to transcend the self-absorption of most teenagers; to know that she could contribute something that no other person on the planet could do at that moment; and then to look across the room to see Elana with a smile as big as Jacob’s, and to know that our family was complete, that we were all there together, and that our complete family included Camp Ramah, included all of the Jewish people—that was dayyenu!

In an instant, a dream that I had abandoned and a prayer that I had stopped saying was granted me. Dayyenu. It’s enough. If I never have another dayyenu moment, I will look back on that one and say, whatever else life brings, it was worth it—for that shimmering pure moment of bliss.