

Special Needs and the Jewish Community  
*D'var Torah* Outline

- I. Introduction
  1. Welcome and open conference
  2. Tell short story about a special needs child, who you reveal at the end of your story to be none other than the great Moses
- II. Question(s)
  3. Why did God choose a special needs child to become the redeemer of Israel? What does that teach us about redemption?
  4. How did Moses learn to view his disabilities and challenges? How did the people of Israel relate to him and ultimately come to esteem him? What does that teach us as a community about inclusiveness and faith in people?
- III. Answer(s)
  5. Lessons of absolute worth of every individual and their personal potentials.
  6. Lesson of value of positive attitude — how Moses learns to respect and redeem himself.
  7. Need for enablers and for educational partnership in helping people achieve redemption, and celebrate and maximize their personal potentials — Pharaoh's daughter, Jethro, Aaron, Israel, and God.
- IV. Application
  8. We need to develop special education which speaks to the individual needs of special needs children and help them maximize their personal potentials. Their handicaps should be viewed as challenges and we must learn to recognize the special contributions that they can make to our community.
- V. Conclusion
  9. Chasidic Story about Reb Zusha — purpose is to relate the story of the great Moses to every case of special needs, even acute situations. Every person has their special mission.
  10. End with a one-line personal Challenge

A *d'var Torah* can be a powerful communication tool. It can truly teach by engaging, communicating, and celebrating our values and visions. Composing a *d'var Torah* is as challenging as it is rewarding — in the words of our Sages, "*Le-fum tza'ara agra* — according to the effort comes the reward." *Chazak ve-ematz* — Be strong and resolute! Study hard and work diligently, but most of all, enjoy the beauty of Torah!