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SUMMER IS A GREAT TIME FOR LEARNING (PART 1)

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Believe it or not, summertime is upon us. Less hectic days and schedules, vacations, time by the pool or away at summer camp...all those things are on the horizon. These are called the 'lazy days of summer' with good reason; during the summer months, there is a tendency to shy away from anything that resembles learning. We too often see the summer as a time to "take a break" or to "let our minds rest." And yet, in "Pirke Avot" we find "... do not say, 'When I am free, I will study,' for perhaps you will not become free ..." In other words, don't wait until that perfect time to study. It may never come. Don't wait until the fall to learn; study now, while we can, because there may not be a better time than the present – during this summer.

That doesn't mean that we have to sign up for university classes or spend hours pouring over reference books at the library. It does mean, however, that we should find a few moments each day to enrich ourselves and our lives as well by learning something new.

And it's not as difficult as one might think. The opportunities are endless. Here are some suggestions:

Discuss the weekly Torah portion. Join us online for Torah study on Thursdays at 10 a.m. Additionally, check out reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study to find resources that can help students of all ages (tots to adults!) learn about the weekly Torah reading. There you will find commentaries to explore as well as discussion topics to engage the whole family in discussion. It's amazing just how much the ancient lessons are still relevant today.

Study the Psalms. Join us on Tuesdays at noon in June and July to take a look at how these ancient words still have meaning for us today. Can't come in person? Join us online.

Catch up on your Jewish reading. There are just so many great books to read! And many of them have Jewish themes. Need suggestions? Just ask! I am happy to share what I am reading.

Venture into the world of podcasts. Check out reformjudaism.org/learning/podcasts to find a new story to listen to each week. Listen to "Stories We Tell" and tap into Judaism's rich tradition of storytelling and enjoy this collection of great ones. Or sign up for Union of Reform Judaism President Rick Jacobs' "On the Other Hand: 10 Minutes of Torah" and hear his weekly Torah insights on how Judaism continues to have a contemporary influence on our lives.

Remember that summer is a great time for learning. Try some of the options listed above or wait for next month's ideas (stay tuned for part 2!) The possibilities are endless. So... How are we going to continue our learning this summer?