



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



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Connecting To His Oneness

Going through high school in Israel, we are expected to learn a lot of Torah. We take many Torah Bagrutot, have chavrutot in our free time, and engage in peulot on NCSY Israel Shabbatonim. We spend hours of our lives delving into all the different and diverse outlooks in Judaism. One of the few things that everyone seems to agree on is that learning Torah is a very crucial part. Why is learning Torah so important?

A profound answer lies within a special-well known text from this week's parsha. "שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד" "Hear oh Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is one." This isn't just a statement championing monotheism over polytheism, but is also declaring our belief in the philosophical concept of the singularity of God. God is One that cannot be split, that is incomparable and unlike any other single thing in existence, which are all made up of smaller particles. God is truly one, He is infinite, and ultimately out of our ability to really comprehend.

The very next pasuk states "ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאודך"

We must love this single God with all of our heart and soul. Isn't it fascinating that this pasuk follows the declaration of 'Hashem echad'? Shouldn't it come in a different context? Perhaps after telling us that Hashem is our father or that he took us out of Egypt? How in the world are we supposed to love this 'Hashem echad', an abstract philosophical concept that one can't even really define?

The midrash (ספרי דברים פרק ו) suggests that the very next pesukim answer this question.

"וְהָיָה הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶנֶכִּי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבָבְךָ וְשִׁנְתֶם לְבִינְךָ וּדְבַרְתָּ בָם בְּשַׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלַחְתְּךָ בְּדַרְךָ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ."

"All of which I am commanding you today should be on your heart. And you should teach it to your children and speak it in your households, while you travel, in the mornings and evenings".

God gave us a way to peer into his "soul". Through learning and internalizing God's Torah we have a chance to understand just a bit about Him. We can start to comprehend the ways He sees and relates to the world, how He defines good and bad. This understanding leads to connection, and through this connection we can ultimately come to love this philosophical concept we call God. ■



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Preparing For The Test

At the very beginning of this week's Parsha, Moshe recounts the story when he prayed to Hashem to let him enter Israel. Interestingly, while explaining why Hashem said no, Moshe blames Bnei Yisrael in a way that throws them under the bus. "ויתעבר ה' בי לתענכם ולא שמע אלי" which Artscroll translates as "And Hashem became angry at me because of you and he did not listen to me" This isn't a normal characteristic of Moshe Rabbeinu. Why is he blaming them? It was Moshe's sin, and even if they had a part in it, is it really appropriate to place the blame on others? Shouldn't he be encouraging them as they are about to enter into Eretz Yisrael?

Perhaps we can suggest that we must translate לתענכם literally; that it means "for your sake". Moshe was actually telling the people that Hashem didn't let him in for Bnei Yisrael's benefit.

To understand this we can use an analogy, a teacher only helps you before the test, but the actual test needs to be done alone. A true teacher prepares his students with the skills to pass the test. That is why Moshe couldn't join Bnei Yisrael entering the land. It was their time to shine and prove to God that they can pass the test of entering Eretz Yisrael.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank NCSY for the great times and giving

me the skills to make it on my own in the world - and pass my own tests! ■

NCSY Israel is the premier organization in Israel, dedicated to connect, inspire, and empower teen olim to the Land of Israel by encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition. Find out more at israel.ncsy.org

SHIUR SPONSORS

Wednesday, July 29th - Rabbi Nadel's shiur is sponsored by Emunah Murray in Loving Memory of her Mother **Nancy Leugers a"h**

Wednesday, July 29th - Rabbi Manning's shiur is sponsored by Miriam Marcus in loving memory of her Mother **Liba Pesha bat Natan a"h** on her 3rd yahrzeit, 7 Av, and **Natan ben Moshe z"l**, her Zaida (her Mother's Father) 55th Yahrzeit on Tisha B'Av

Wednesday, July 29th - Rabbi Manning's shiur is sponsored by Shelley Hirshberg, Lilui nishmat her Mother **Asna bat R' Shneur a"h** on her 16th Yahrzeit, the day before Tisha B'av.

She personified ahavat chinam. A modest person who accepted everyone for whom they were, without judgements. At her levaya on Tisha B AV hundreds of people and Rabbaim of all hats came to pay their last respects.

May her memory be blessed and may she be a melitza yashara for us, and all of Am Yisrael.

Sunday, August 2 and Monday August 3 Rabbi Adler's and Rabbi Goldsheider's shiurim are sponsored by Simone Pierce in loving memory of her Mother, **Semcha Andree (Zeitoun) bat Jules & Irene a"h** on the 16th yahrzeit - She had a difficult life but never lost faith and kept the mitzvot, Her Mother taught "Do it for the Mitzvot"