



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg
Co-Regional Director,
NCSY Israel

Simcha Le'Artzecha

Parshat Ki Tavo opens with the words “היה כי תבוא אל הארץ” “And it will be when you enter the Land (of Israel).” Many commentaries discuss why we need the extra word vehaya, “and it will be.” In my love for Israel, the Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh spoke to me. He says that ‘Vehaya’ is a lashon of Simcha and there is no greater Simcha than that of the mitzvah of dwelling in the Land of Israel.

The Rambam tells us that in order for a Mitzvah to be done properly a mitzvah needs the proper Kavanah, and in order to have the proper Kavanah the mitzvah needs to be done with Simcha. The question then begs to be asked, how about the mitzvot where you are commanded to be sad like that of mourning? How are you supposed to have Simcha?

I'd like to suggest that Simcha does not only mean happiness. It could mean happiness, but first and foremost I would define it as content. Not everything in Israel is easy or makes one happy. Not

everything tastes as good as where one used to live or runs as smoothly as things used to. Coming to the Land of Israel is a sacrifice and won't always make one happy. But knowing that you're in the right place, where you belong, with your people and being content with that knowledge can trump any level of happiness. It gives one the ability to smile when they are sad and laugh when they are happy. We should be content and confident in knowing that as hard as it may be and with all its challenges, we are living the word of Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom! ■



Gav Jacob
12th Grade,
Beit Shemesh

Zooming out

Parshat Ki Tavo talks about Bikkurim - bringing the first fruits to Jerusalem. There, we make a declaration of gratitude, saying:

“An Aramite man tried to destroy my father, and our nation endured slavery in Egypt.”

Why would this be said in gratitude?

The commentators explain: The Aramite is Lavan, who tricked Ya'akov by switching Rachel and Leah. (Ya'akov had planned to

רפואה שלמה
יהודה מאיר בן יקירה

marry Rachel, but Leah appeared under the chuppah instead.) Now let's consider: If Lavan had never done that, then Ya'akov would have married Rachel as he intended - and Yoseph would have been the first born son. When Ya'akov showed favoritism toward Joseph, the other brothers would have likely not been jealous - and Yoseph never would have been sold into slavery.

Here's the crazy part: Yoseph would never have become Egyptian "prime minister" who, years later, was able to save the Jewish people from famine. So, yes, even though Lavan the Aramite tried to destroy Ya'akov, we express the gratitude that somehow, in some weird way, it was all for the best.

When tragedy strikes, it's impossible to see the big picture and understand why this may have happened.

We don't always know why things happen. When events occur that are so unfathomable, all we can do is trust in God. This is the lesson we learn when bringing the first fruits to Jerusalem - we express the gratitude, that somehow, in some way, it's all for the best. ■

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