



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



A Message from NCSY Israel's Regional Directors



Rabbi Michael Kahn & Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg

What is the overall theme of the Haggadah? If we look closely at the word “Haggadah”, there is much more than meets the eye. The word “הגדה” has the numerical value of 17. This number is significant because it is not only the same numerical value of “טוב” which means good, but it also represents the age of Yosef when he was sold and brought down into Egypt. Out of all the possible words one would have thought to associate a brother being sold into slavery by his fellow brethren, “good” would probably not be one of them. What

is the connection to Yosef’s sale to Egypt and the word טוב? Rabbi Benjamin Blech comments in his Haggadah “Redemption, Then and Now” that the numerical allusion is to remind us of the terrible act that started the story which we are about to engage in on Seder night. We need to remember that the tragedy of Yosef’s sale at the age of seventeen led to the miracle of our redemption and the Revelation at Sinai. No matter how blind any event may appear at the time, the dark of night is always followed by the dawn.

Just over a year ago marked the time when NCSY Israel had to unfortunately close its doors to in-person programming due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The inspirational Shabbatonim, the personal meaningful discussions, and high energy mega events all came to a pause. What would be with NCSY Israel? How does a social group for teens continue to be impactful and relevant when it cannot operate the way it had for the past five years? As difficult and challenging as it might have been, we somehow found a way to not only continue and survive but thrive. Events shifted to a virtual model at first with creative and engaging programming, allowing teens to connect with one another from all over the country, and for some events, around the world. With the initiation of our chapter programming last

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year, we were set up to ultimately move to local in-person programming when the situation improved, and we are now returning to our unparalleled mega events surrounding Pesach.

What is the overall theme of the Haggadah? The Mishnah in Pesachim 10:4 tells us that when we tell over the story of leaving Egypt we must **begin with shame and end with praise**. We begin by detailing the hard and bitter times and then conclude in praise. One year ago, we tasted the bitterness of this pandemic. Our system was shocked and we were forced to rethink and recreate ourselves. We are now seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and we are celebrating the sweetness as we come out of this transformative time.

When we look back at this past year we will only have one word to describe it and that word is "טוב". We are thankful to Hashem for the challenges we faced as it brought out the best in our region from our staff to our teens. We look forward to the new world NCSY Israel will be greeting as we continue to inspire the Jewish future **in Israel**.

Chag Sameach! ■

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



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