



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL

YOM HA'ATZMAUT



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The Land As Our Blanket

The holy Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin once shared an important lesson and parable on the simple science of warmth. A person who is cold goes into his bed under a down blanket. How does he warm up? First his body gives off warmth which then is trapped by the blanket. The blanket then sends back the original heat from the body with the added new warmth of the blanket. The body then receives its original heat, but hotter. This goes back and forth until both the body and blanket achieve their maximum potential heat level. If, lo aleinu, a lifeless body was placed under a blanket, then both the lifeless body and the blanket

would stay cold since there is no source of heat. We see from here that the source of heat comes from the body, not the blanket.

Parshat Ki Tavo opens with the words "...והיה 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.

That heat gets trapped by the land and sent back to us in an even warmer form

The Rambam tells us that in order for a Mitzvah to be done properly, it needs the proper Kavanah, and in order to have the proper Kavanah a 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

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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, the nation and people of Israel, are the body, and the land is our blanket. When we are content in our land, when we perform G-D's will in His land, or when we simply smile knowing that with all our challenges we are at home, we radiate heat. That heat gets trapped by the land and sent back to us in an even warmer form, until both the Land and its people will ultimately reach their potential. On this holy day of Yom Ha'atzmaut, may we merit to bring our holy land and people to its warmest potential with the coming of the final redemption speedily in our days.

Moadim Lesimcha Le'Geulah Sheleimah! ■

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