



## TORAH 4 TEENS

## BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



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Development

### Looking Forward

In Va'etchanan Moshe warns Bnei Yisrael against turning away from Hashem after he dies and describes the tragedies that will occur if they do so. Following that passage the Torah relates "Then Moses decided to separate three cities on the side of the Jordan towards the sunrise" (Devarim 4:41). Moshe designates three cities of refuge, *arei miklat* to the east of the Jordan River. Why does this happen now? After all, as Rashi points out, these three cities don't actually take effect as *arei miklat* until Yehoshua sets aside further *arei miklat* in the Land of Israel.

Rashi answers that Moshe wanted to do a mitzvah right away. Even if the *arei miklat* were not yet effective, Moshe wanted to

designate them to accomplish that mitzvah. Perhaps there is yet another deeper approach.

Following the description of tragedies to take place if (or when) the Jewish people turn away from Hashem, Moshe needed to find some comfort. He is about to transfer the leadership and say goodbye to his people. His comfort comes from thinking of the future, from looking forward. He can see a hopeful future where Yehoshua conquers the Land of Israel and sets aside further cities of refuge. So, Moshe does his part now in setting the stage for that future reality by separating cities as *arei miklat*.

I sincerely hope that since this article was written our Tisha B'av has become one of celebration. But, if this is not the case, how do we move on? How are we comforted when we are still in *churban*? Perhaps our comfort comes not from seeing where we are now, but from looking forward and taking steps towards a brighter future. That has always been at the core of NCSY Israel where we "inspire the Jewish future in Israel." ■

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