



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



Gavriel Novick, Director of Regional Development

It's Good to be Home

Following Hashem's command, Avram arrives in Eretz Yisrael at the beginning of the parsha. He passes through Shechem and then to Bet El where he pitches his tent and builds an altar for Hashem. Shortly after his arrival he is forced to relocate to Egypt as there is a famine in the Land of Israel. After Avram's episode in Egypt he returns to Eretz Yisrael. He travels "from the south and until Bet El, until the place where his tent had been previously; to the place of the altar that he had made at first, and Avram called there in the name of God."

The Torah stresses that Avram returned to the same place he had been before. There is a certain comfort in returning to a familiar place and certainly in coming home. Even

after an exciting or relaxing vacation there is something nice about coming back to your regular bed with the pillow and sheets that are already familiar to you. Bet El was such a headquarters for Avram and according to the Torah's account, it was not a comfy bed that Avram missed most. Rather his altar to Hashem was most important to him and inspired him to connect with God once again, as the Torah relates "and Avram called there in the name of God."

The Land of Israel serves as that original home to all Jewish people. There is certainly a sense of comfort in not needing to hide or feel embarrassed by our Jewish identity and practices. There are also the familiar sites of Jerusalem and the Kotel which we pray towards from across the globe, making us feel at home here. On a deeper level though, Israel has the power to inspire us to connect more deeply to God. Just as when Avram returned to Bet El and reconnected with the altar he originally



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built there he was inspired to again call out in the name of God, we also can connect with the stories, buildings and landmarks our ancestors created in this Land and similarly be motivated to become closer to Hashem.

But coming on an Aliyah flight to Israel does not always look or feel like coming to a nice comfortable and familiar home. Aliyah often comes with challenges. It often comes with a feeling of being lost or foreign, the exact opposite of feeling at home. Although our Jewish roots are always connected to the Land of Israel, practically, new olim can feel very out of place. This is especially true of teenagers coming on Aliyah without a network of friends and advisors to guide them in their new surroundings. In 2015, NCSY Israel was created to address this exact problem. NCSY Israel serves as the only youth movement specifically dedicated to Anglo teen olim, helping them with their unique challenges and providing them with role models and a network of support. Although the Aliyah transition can be hard and uncomfortable, NCSY Israel is proud to enable teens to feel at home. ■

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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