



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



MESSAGE FROM NCSY ISRAEL LEADERSHIP

Becoming More: From Inspiration to Action



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Yom Kippur gives us a day filled with thoughts, words, reflection, and emotion. But then comes Sukkot. We leave the Beit Kneset, pick up the *Arba Minim*, build a Sukkah, eat in it, celebrate in it, and bring our renewed commitments into everyday life. The transition from Yom Kippur to Sukkot reminds us that inspiration is only the beginning. **Growth becomes real when it becomes action.**

That message feels especially meaningful as we reflect on a year of growth at NCSY Israel. In 5786, more than 750 unique teens participated in NCSY Israel and Chai programming, a 34% increase over the previous year. We welcomed 405 first-time participants and recorded more than 3,000 attendances across 170 programs and events. But behind every number is a teen who showed up, connected, learned, questioned, led, or took another step forward. You can see more of our 5786 Year in Review in this week's *Torah Tidbits*.

Now, as we launch 5787, our challenge is not simply to **do more**, but to **become more**. And becoming more happens through action. Choose one new commitment to Torah or *tefillah*. Work on one *middah*. Reach out to someone who needs a friend. Take responsibility when it would be easier to wait for someone else. Step into a leadership role. Turn an idea you believe in into something you actually do.

As Yom Kippur comes to a close, we naturally think about *teshuvah*: what we want to change, what we can improve, and who we hope to become in the year ahead. But perhaps *teshuvah* is about something even bigger. Chazal teach that *teshuvah* was created before the world itself (פסחים נד). **Rav Yerucham Levovitz (1875–1936), the famed Mashgiach of the Mir Yeshiva**, asks: If *teshuvah* exists only to repair sin, why was it created before there were people capable of sinning? His answer changes our understanding of *teshuvah*. Teshuvah is not merely about fixing the past. It is a fundamental capacity Hashem placed within us: the ability to grow, to return to ourselves, and to become closer to the people we are capable of being.

The Torah tells us: כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד, בפני (דברים ל, יד). ובלבבך לעשותו (דברים ל, יד). The progression is powerful: בפני - what we say; בלבבך - what we feel; but ultimately לעשותו - what we do.

As we move from Yom Kippur into Sukkot and begin a new year of NCSY Israel, may 5787 be a year in which the thoughts of our minds and the aspirations of our hearts become the actions of our lives. May Hashem give our entire community the courage to keep growing, to keep acting, and ultimately to **become more of who we were created to be.**

גמר חתימה טובה וחג שמח!



YIGAL MARCUS

Board Chair, NCSY Israel Friends

A few years ago, before October 7, I met a teenager at an NCSY Israel Shabbaton whom I will call “Moshe.” As we discussed his future, he told me that he hoped to fulfill his national service through one of Israel’s sports programs rather than enlist in a traditional IDF role.

I remember thinking about his remarkable potential. Moshe was charismatic, influential, and naturally gifted at connecting with others. With the right encouragement, he could use those qualities to serve his country and strengthen those around him.

When I saw Moshe again recently, he was wearing an IDF uniform. He had set aside his athletic plans and chosen to join a combat unit.

What changed? What inspires a young person to embrace a greater responsibility?

Before making aliyah, I spent 21 years coaching the championship-winning Mock Trial Team at Torah Academy of Bergen County in Teaneck, New Jersey. That experience

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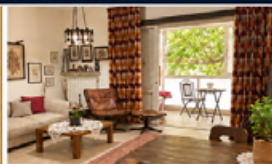
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taught me that our young people possess extraordinary, often untapped potential.

The best coaching does not simply tell teenagers what they can accomplish. It creates a culture of self-discovery, inspiration, and high expectations in which they recognize that potential for themselves—and choose to pursue something worthy of it.

That is what NCSY Israel did for Moshe. Through meaningful relationships and dedicated mentors, it helped him understand that he had a unique contribution to make to Klal Yisrael.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks taught: “Leaders are not born; they are made, and they are made when people have the opportunity and the responsibility to lead.”

Our young people are searching for meaning, belonging, and a purpose larger than themselves. NCSY Israel gives them the tools, encouragement, and opportunities to discover that they need not wait for adulthood to lead. They can begin serving and shaping the Jewish future today.

Please join us in cultivating the next generation of Jewish leaders.

Wishing you and your family a Shana Tova—a year of peace, health, success, and abundant nachat. ■