

## A Message from NCSY Israel's Founders

As we write this opening letter for our NCSY Israel Haggadah companion, it is Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar 5784 and we are five months into the war in Israel. Since October 7th, we have been fighting, praying, and learning Torah to defeat our enemies in and outside of our homeland. It is our hope that when you receive this publication the Mashiach will have come, and we will be dancing in the streets of Yerushalayim and offering the Korban Pesach together celebrating our nation's physical and spiritual redemption.

The Talmud in Megilah (6B) has a discussion when there is a leap year when should one perform the mitzvot of Purim, in the first Adar or the second Adar? It first raises the idea that it would seem to make most sense to perform the Mitzvot in the first Adar since "We do not pass over the opportunity to perform Mitzvot" and therefore we should take the first opportunity that comes available to us. Ultimately, we conclude the second Adar is when one should celebrate Purim because "The juxtaposition of the redemption of Purim to the redemption of Pesach is an even more worthwhile principle." Since the holiday of Pesach follows directly one month after Purim we decide to therefore celebrate Purim in the second Adar instead of the first to connect their redemptive narratives.

Why is it so important to connect the redemptive narratives of Purim and Pesach? What lesson is so vital for us to learn in juxtaposing each experience a month apart from one another. The Talmud in Megilah (14a) asks why isn't Hallel recited on Purim? One of the reasons mentioned is because "The redemption was not complete, and we remained as servants to Achashverosh." Although we were saved from an imminent physical danger, we still were subservient to a foreign kingdom without Jewish autonomy. On Pesach we declare at the Seder night "Once we were slaves in Egypt. Now, we are free." If we are not slaves in Egypt anymore then is it not obvious we are free? What is the deeper message to this seemingly obvious proclamation? Rav Adin Steinsaltz z"tl explains that it is not enough to physically leave servitude and automatically become fully liberated. Complete freedom for the Jewish people is the ability to live out our purpose dictated by God alone. We must recognize the miracles of Purim and our physical salvation, but we must not be complacent and stop there. Pesach wasn't just about leaving Mitzrayim it was about beginning the path to ultimately receive the Torah and live as a nation in Israel to develop into the model nation the world so desperately needs. It was our spiritual salvation.

From our own personal experiences these past five months it feels like our nation is finally transitioning from the "Purim redemption" to the "Pesach redemption." Medinat Yisrael became a safe haven after the devastation of the Holocaust providing a physical asylum for Jews worldwide. At the same time, we have witnessed the spiritual light of our nation develop slowly. Since October 7th, that light is shining brighter than ever before. More Tzitzit are being worn by IDF Soldiers than ever before, more Torah is being learned now than in any point in Jewish history, and we have never seen such unprecedented unity in our Nation. More so, the teens of NCSY Israel and all around the country are fired up with Jewish connection and Jewish pride. May this year be the year we merit to experience the juxtaposition of redemption to redemption with the bringing of Mashiach and a rebuilt Jerusalem now!

We welcome you to experience the Seder with NCSY Israel's fifth annual  
Torah 4 Teens by Teens Haggadah Companion.

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