



# BE A MENTSCH

Rabbi Yitzchok Sanders



Hashem -

The

***Neshamah you gave me is pure!* פְּרִשְׁת אֶתְרֵי מוֹת**

Perhaps the most important idea that is found in the entire Torah is the idea of תְּשׁוּבָה, *returning to Hashem* after having done something wrong. We have a chance to come back closer to the רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם. Every morning we have a special Tefilah that we say that teaches us an important lesson. אֱלֹהֵינוּ, נְשָׁמָה שְׁנָתָהּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא. “Hashem, the *Neshamah* you gave me is pure.” No matter what we may have done *yesterday*, there is always a part of us which remains טְהוֹר, pure. This helps us to always try to use *today* to do better. We should never give up; keep on trying to be the best we can be. This is not only true for the individual Jew, but for the entire Jewish people, the world over. There are many different types of Jews and each one on a different level who are part of a larger group who must continue to improve and better ourselves as a single nation.

In this week’s parsha, אֶתְרֵי מוֹת, the Torah teaches us about the עֲבוּדַת יוֹם, what was done in the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ on the holy day of Yom Kippur. This is the one day a year when we focus on *returning to Hashem*. The כַּהֵן גָּדוֹל would enter the קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים with קִטְרֶת and attempt to strengthen our bond with הוֹיָה הוֹיָה. He would say a short Tefilah to Hashem for the needs of the entire Jewish people. It was important that the Tefilah be short so that *Am Yisrael* would not have to wait or worry that perhaps something had happened. *Ultimately, the length of the Tefilah isn’t so critical, but how genuine our תְּשׁוּבָה is – is very important.*

Especially now, during the days of Sefira, when we try to improve our own behavior towards each other, both ideas of being a single people and of *returning to Hashem* become so important. We must know Hashem encourages us to never give up even if we have done something wrong and we are not perfect. All we need is a short Tefilah and a sincere effort. *Being a Mentsch* means that we think of at least one act that we can do to come a little bit closer to Hashem and what better way than to treat each other with dignity even though we may be different!

Have a Great Shabbos!