



BE A MENTSCH

Rabbi Yitzchok Sanders



Appreciate!

פְּרִישֵׁת וְאַרְא

There are many ways people can express care and warmth for each other. It can be a smile, a handshake, a hug or even the wave of a hand. These acts do not require a person to say even one word. All a person needs to do is let the other person know they want to be friendly. The opposite is also true. If you don't make faces, if you don't roll your eyes and you don't do something hurtful, your friend knows that you can be trusted. Not hurting others is a basic first step in learning how to get along with other people.

In this week's Parsha, Hashem commands Moshe to tell Aharon to do the first 3 מְכוֹת of דָּם צִפְרֹדֶעַ כְּנִים. The water of the Nile river saved Moshe's life when he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, בְּתִי. As a result, he couldn't hit the water of the Nile himself. Aharon had to hit it. Since the sand had helped Moshe escape from Pharaoh, by burying the מְצָרִי, he couldn't hit the sand. Aharon had to. This was to teach Moshe to have הַפְּרַת הַטּוֹב for something that had helped save his life. It wasn't even appreciation to a person, but to water or sand. So even though Moshe started the other מְכוֹת, he couldn't do a silent act of hitting.

Later on when בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל were in the desert, Hashem told Moshe to attack the people of Midyan. Moshe sent Aharon's grandson, פְּנֹהָם, to lead the army against Midyan, but Moshe himself did not go fight against Midyan. Chazal tell us that because Midyan was where Moshe escaped from Pharaoh, Moshe had הַפְּרַת הַטּוֹב and he didn't think it right to fight against them himself. What an important lesson for us; "*Being a Mentsch*" means we should not do anything hurtful to another person, especially not to those who have already been kind to us.

The Perfect Destination

Rabbi Daniel Staum relates the following story:

One winter Friday afternoon as I walked into my garage an hour before Shabbos I was met by an unpleasant surprise: my garage was flooded. A pipe had burst. Thankfully, the water did not reach near the house. However, it was not in the best of situations especially considering that Shabbos was to begin in just a short while.

Immediately calling the plumber, I eagerly tried to have someone come over to my house at the soonest opportunity before Shabbos. But right then, I was interrupted. "There's someone on the phone for you!" my wife called out to me. Not wishing to get caught up in something else right now, I felt like asking her to tell the person to call back later. "Can you pick it up?" came my wife's voice again. And so, compliantly, I picked it up.

"Hi Rabbi, do you remember me? It's Eli from camp." "Sure I do; how are you doing?" "Great," he said. "Can you do me a favor? I am on my way right now with a few friends to Waterbury, Connecticut to serve as counselors for a Kiruv Shabbaton with Rabbi Josh Cohen. We left Brooklyn at noon and had to stop off in Queens. But then we got a flat tire. All things considered, the GPS says that we are an hour away from our destination. The problem is that sunset is in fifty-five minutes, after which we will no longer be able to drive. I am afraid we will not make it in time, especially because we are driving with a spare tire. Do you think we can stay at your house for Shabbos?" Listening to the difficult predicament these boys were in, I said that they would be more than welcome to stay at my home for Shabbos, although I didn't think they would make to my house either.

Right then, there was a knock at my door. It was my neighbor. Still on the phone with Eli and remembering in the back of my mind that I was trying to get in touch with a plumber to repair the flood, there stood my neighbor. "Hi," he said, "I noticed that some water was leaking out of your garage. Can I help you?" To my relief, he helped me shut off the main water valve and put to rest the water issue for the meantime. I was graciously appreciative of his help. And then I got back on the phone with Eli.

Rushing to my computer, I quickly began looking for the closest place he could stay over Shabbos. After a few minutes, I was able to figure out that he was just about twenty minutes from Mount Kisco. There were two communities there: Nitra

Chassidim and a Shul headed by Rabbi Eli Cohen. Thanking me profusely, Eli hoped to make it to Mount Kisco. That was the last time we spoke before Shabbos.

Sunday night I received a phone call. It was Eli. "Eli, what happened? Where did you spend Shabbos?" "Rabbi, let me tell you what happened. We arrived in Mount Kisco fifteen minutes before Shabbos. Driving over to the house of Rabbi Cohen, we knocked on the door. Rabbi Cohen opened up and warmly welcomed us in. After explaining our situation to him, he told us something we could not believe." "I am actually hosting at my house this Shabbos a Shabbaton for a bunch of kids. We have tons of food and programs planned for them. The only problem is that we are short counselors. Would you be able to help us out?"

"We couldn't believe what had happened," Eli said. "Not only did we experience a beautiful and inspiring Shabbos, but they even asked us to come back again. We thought we were going to do kiruv with Rabbi Cohen in Waterbury," concluded Eli, "but instead we did kiruv with a different Rabbi Cohen in Mount Kisco."

Everyone experiences ups and downs throughout their lives. Whether it be a flat tire, plumbing problem, time constraint or all of the above combined, life is full of tests and challenges. But the main point to keep in mind is that there is a Divine plan to all that occurs. We have to be ready to be helpful to others! Can you imagine! These bochurim were sent by Hashem just to help someone else in need.

Have a Great Shabbos!