



BE A MENTSCH



Did I Say That?

פְּרִשַׁת תְּזַרִיעַ

In this week's parsha, פְּרִשַׁת תְּזַרִיעַ, the Torah discusses what happens to a person who has צָרַעַת. The person grows his or her hair, tears their clothing and leaves the city. In fact, they must live alone in isolation. Rashi explains why. Since a person who talks לְשׁוֹן הָרַע causes people to feel uncomfortable and awkward and may even cause friends to distance or separate themselves from each other, he or she is punished with צָרַעַת and is forced to live alone. A person can then realize what separation from people feels like and hopefully will learn **not to talk in a hurtful way**. Only when the צָרַעַת is gone, can he or she return to live with others.

“*Being A Mentsch*” means that we try being friendly to all other Jews and interested in helping them. Most importantly, **we watch what we say to people**. In the Tefila that we said last week on שְׁבַת מְבָרְכִים אֵיךְ, we always say חֲבֵרִים כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, we always say שְׁבַת מְבָרְכִים אֵיךְ, we always say חֲבֵרִים כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל - “all of *Klal Yisroel* are friends”. As הַפֶּסַח recedes from our memories, let us maintain at least the sense of family and belonging that is engendered during this Yom Tov and let us talk about the pride and importance of being part of בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל and connected to each other. This is the Mitzvah of “וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ”.

In the Navi Yeshayahu the pasuk says: "אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ יַעֲזֹרוּ וְלֹאֲחָיו יֹאמֶר חֲזַק", each person should help his friend (wherever they may be) and say to his brother “Be Strong”. In our city, Baltimore, we bring different people together by helping them, being friendly to each other and **by saying kind words**. Moreover, the month of Iyar, אֵיךְ, stands for the words, "אֲנִי ה' רוֹפֵאֶיךָ" - I am Hashem, your healer. We have to extend encouragement, kindness and support to people who need a רְפוּאָה שְׂלֵמָה so they too feel part of our community. In this merit, אִי"ה we should live to greet מְשִׁיחַ מְשִׁיחַ soon in good health!

Have a Great Shabbos!