



BE A MENTSCH

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Prepare!

פְּרִישֵׁת וַיִּגַּשׁ

Being a Mentsch means **preparing** to do the right thing. It is important to plan what do I need to do *now* so that I can be kind or helpful *later*. If we make a plan to do something, it shows that we think it is important. Before Yaakov Avinu came down to *Mitzrayim* to meet Yosef, he made certain **preparations** first. Even if it meant that he had to delay his trip, Yaakov thought about what he needed to live as a Jew in *Mitzrayim*. He needed a place to daven to Hashem and a place to learn about Hashem's *Mitzvos*. He needed a *Bais HaMedrash*. So the Torah tells us that he sent Yehudah ahead to the land of Goshen in order to prepare a building as a *Bais HaKnesses* and a *Bais HaMedrash*. When Yaakov would arrive in Goshen, he could immediately start davening and learning.

In addition, Yaakov also brought down cedar trees to plant in *Mitzrayim* to **prepare** wood for the boards of the *Mishkan*. He did this so that Bnei Yisroel would have the materials to build a *Mishkan* when they would be in the desert 210 years later. We must learn from Yaakov to **prepare** to do *Mitzvos* in advance.

Yaakov Avinu learnt this trait from his grandfather, Avraham Avinu. The pasuk says וַיִּטַע אֲשֵׁל בְּבְאֵר שֶׁבַע, Avraham planted a tree in Beer Sheva. The Targum Yonason in Sefer Shemos (פרק כו: כז) tells us that this wood was also used for the inner bolt that went inside the boards of the *Mishkan*. Avraham wanted this wood to be used in acts of kindness with guests. He planted a tree for shade so that he could welcome visitors in comfort. The wood used for this bolt was first used to help others. This was planning to do kindness with the wood that would one day support the beams of the *Mishkan*. *Let's also plan ahead and prepare for Shabbos on Thursday nights by setting the table early!*

Rabbanit Amit Yaghoubi relates the following incident:

As a young man was once driving down the highway, he was looking forward to a wonderful day ahead of himself. But there was one problem: traffic was heavy. And so, figuring that he would make the best use of his time and listen to a Torah lecture as he drove, he put a CD of a lecture into his car radio while he continued to move along.

Not too much later, the man heard the sounds of a siren. Looking down at his speedometer, his heart fluttered. Had he been speeding all along and not noticed? He didn't think that was the case. But without giving the matter any further thought, he pulled over to the side of the highway expecting a police car to soon pull up behind him. And then he waited.

After a few moments and still no sight of an officer, he looked behind himself. There was no car nor any person present. Confused and sure that he had heard a siren indicating that he pull over, he tried to gain his composure. Looking behind himself a second time, there still was no sign of any police officer.

And then he heard the siren again. Slowly looking in all directions, he tried to pinpoint where the sound was emanating from. And then it hit him. Listening closely to the CD player in his car, he heard the sound of a siren. It then hit him. The noises were coming not from outside his car, but inside his car. As the lecturer was speaking, an ambulance or police officer must have driven by and the recording picked up the sound. Breathing in a sigh of relief, he was happy that he was spared an expensive ticket.

Looking back over his shoulder, he made his way back onto the highway and joined the traffic. Now traffic was very heavy. Bumper to bumper, he was barely moving. "What happened?" he thought to himself. Finally, after some time, the source of the traffic was revealed. An accident had taken place. A large truck had collided with the car driving right next to it.

Now while most people who drove by gave the accident one look and moved along, this man was shocked. Thinking to himself, he remembered that before he had turned to the side of the road to stop for the false alarm, a large truck was driving right next to him. And now before his very own eyes, that same large truck collided with the car beside it. Had it not been for the false siren sounding from his car earlier and delaying him, perhaps he now would have needed a real siren.

From time to time we look for reasons why things occur. “Why did this happen to me?” we frustratingly ask. And while often times we may never fully understand the reason and must accept that reality, other times we are allowed a peek into the Divine plan Hashem prepares from above. “You know why you were delayed?” says Hashem; “it was because I was looking after you.” All we must do in our own lives is recognize the signaling messages our Father sends from above and remind ourselves, “I have nothing to worry about when G-d runs the world.” It doesn’t take much for Hashem to prepare and arrange that someone be spared from an accident. Even a little siren can do the job.

Have a Great Shabbos!