

# Weekly Teaching

## September 15, 2017

Fundamental to our Judaism is our belief that every human being is created equally in the image of God.

*“And God created the human in the image of God; in the image of God, God created the human; male and female, God created them.” (Gen. 1:27)*

If every human being would truly believe in this inherent Godliness that exists equally in all human beings, imagine how differently we might behave?

Because of our inherent Godliness, the Rabbis constructed a concept called *Derekh Eretz*; literally “the way of the land.”

*Derekh Eretz* is the Hebrew term by which we understand our obligations to always behave in a thoughtful manner; embracing wholly good manners and common decency.

Taking on the obligation of being polite in our interpersonal relationships is testimony to our belief in the inherent Godliness of all human beings.

Acting with respect and kindness are all at the heart of embracing mutual holiness.

Another term for the person who embraces *Derekh Eretz* as their guiding principle of behavior is *Menschlekeit*, or “being a Mensch.”

Mensch literally is a “full human being;” in other words living fully to the state of Godliness by which you have been created.

Life brings with it many challenges, many of which we can’t control.

But, finding the discipline to live a life grounded upon *Derekh Eretz* and *Menschlekeit* is something we can always control.

We can always choose to seek the presence of holiness in every form of communication we participate in.

May God help us truly see the equal status and holiness that exists when we are with others, and to then choose how we can best exemplify this holiness in our own communicative interactions.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Mitch

[rabbimitch@templesholom.com](mailto:rabbimitch@templesholom.com)