

A Portion of Kindness: A Weekly Portion of Chesed by Rosally Saltsman Quotes

A great source of bliss is helping the needy or cheering the brokenhearted. Some authorities claim that all it takes to get out of depression is to spend two hours a week doing acts of kindness for others. The pleasure of past good deeds continues in the present. Take a second now to remember a good meal that you ate two years ago. Do you feel the pleasure now? Probably not. Now think back to one of your good deeds of the past. Doesn't the memory fill you with satisfaction? Inner feelings don't lie and they show that doing good deeds makes people happy. (Yes You Can – A Guide to Success in Life by Aron Friedman. Artsroll pp. 55-56)

What is our first thought when someone asks us for a favor? Is it 'Oh, no, I really don't need this now'? If so, we are in trouble. For when someone asks us a favor, it is like Hashem asking us a favor -- and since Hashem reads our minds, this thought is a slap in His face. Moreover, there is another problem... The success of the world depends on us helping each other, boosting each other, encouraging each other. However, naturally, unconsciously, we are reluctant to help others. And so Hashem gives us a push. Hashem sends us someone to ask a favor. If we agree to do this favor, we are on our way. For through doing one favor, and then another, we learn to become people who do favors and all is well. But if we refuse, we seal our own fate. We miss the opportunity of becoming givers, of building the world and building ourselves -- and we must suffer the consequence of being amongst those who know only how to take. Thus, when someone asks us a favor, our response should be, 'Baruch Hashem, I have an opportunity to do something for someone else and something for myself'. (Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Schwartz)

It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him. (Bereishis 2:18) Sometimes, the best help we can give a person is to oppose him. A good wife tells her husband when she feels what he's doing is wrong. God told Avraham to listen to Sarah when she told him to send Hagar and Yishmael away. When people are doing something which is obviously destructive and we're certain is not in their best interests it is a chesed to point this out to them. Many people don't like to make waves, but often these very waves can save

someone from drowning... The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground! (Bereishis 4:10) The word blood is in the plural here, intimating that Cayin also killed all of Hevel's descendents. When we harm one person, we harm everyone else who comes after him. But the converse is true as well. If we help someone, if we save his life or even do a chesed for him, we can be saving the lives or improving the circumstances of all his future descendents.

Chazal tell us that someone who is Jewish but who is raised not to keep the Torah is a tinok shenishba (Shabbos 68B; Rambam Hilchos Mamrim Perek 3, Halachah 3), a child who has been taken captive. He has been taken hostage by alien mindsets and values. Doing kiruv and 'freeing' him from the influence of ideas foreign to Judaism is akin to freeing a prisoner. His body may not be being held captive, but his mind is. Every time we engage in kiruv, we are redeeming a hostage. It is not coincidental that the people who accompanied Avraham to free Lot were the students whom he had brought close to Judaism.

And he said, "I beg you, my brothers do not act wickedly... I have two daughters... do to them as you please; but to these men do nothing inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof." (Bereishis 19:7-8) There is an obvious paradox here. Lot begs the Sodomites not to touch his guests as they are under the shelter of his roof, yet he offers them his daughters in their place whom he also harbors under his roof. Many times we do chesed at the expense of our family. We give others money when our children need it; we volunteer our time while denying our family the same; we show patience and kindness to strangers while we are inconsiderate and impatient with our own household. This is certainly not chesed. Chesed begins at home and only after one's own and one's family's needs are met, can one go out and give to the community.

The first is that if someone wants to do chesed for us (especially our enemy), we should graciously accept it and not say we have everything we need. We are supposed to encourage the chesed in others however flawed it may be.

Buy the book: <https://www.amazon.com.au/Portion-Kindness-Rosally-Saltsman/dp/9659097204>

