

Good Shabbos Everyone. This week's parsha tells of the death of Aharon, Moshe's brother. According to our tradition Aharon haKohen personified the character trait of - chessed - doing kindness for others. Thus it is appropriate that we discuss a little about the concept of chessed - kindness. The verse in Tehillim tells us "עולם חסד" (89:3) "יבנה"); this is a verse which has many interpretations. One of the meanings of this verse is that the world is built on chessed - kindness. Similarly, the Sages tell us in Avos that kindness is one of the three pillars on which the world stands.

Often times in life, people are dependent on others to give a helping hand. Sometimes, the people in need seem hardly "deserving" of the helping hand. Similarly, the bystander seems hardly obligated to help out.

This is perhaps why our tradition teaches that the world stands on chessed; people, who are under no obligation to help another - who nevertheless extend a helping hand to someone who by all appearances doesn't "deserve" the help. That is chessed! And that is why the world depends on it, because Hashem created us to work on our character traits, especially the selfish nature with which we were born. By doing chessed, especially when not we are not obligated and the recipient is not "deserving" we demonstrate that we are breaking the horrible character trait of selfishness and we are thus fulfilling one of the purposes of Creation, character development.

The following amazing story is told (ironically) by a person named "Chessed" Halberstam, who worked in the employ of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, for eighteen years -- from 1970 until the Rebbetzin's passing in 1988 -- performing household chores and serving as the Rebbetzin's driver.

"The Rebbe requested that I try to see to it that the Rebbetzin gets out of the house every day for fresh air. Usually we would drive out to a park in Long Island. In the years that my son, Ari, was a young child, we would often drive by his school on Ocean Parkway to take him along; the Rebbetzin, who was unfortunately childless herself, enjoyed playing with him, pushing him on the swings in the park playground, etc.

One day, as we neared the park, we found our regular route closed off due to road work, and were forced to proceed instead on a parallel street. As we drove along that street, we heard the sound of a woman screaming in Russian.

When I stopped at the next traffic light, the Rebbetzin turned to me and said: "I heard a woman screaming; can you go back and see what that was about?" We drove back to the beginning of the street.

There we saw a woman standing on the curb and weeping, while near her workers were carrying furniture and household items from a house and loading them on to a truck belonging to the county marshal.

At the Rebbetzin's request, I parked behind the marshal's truck and went to learn the details of what was going on. The marshal explained that the woman had not paid her rent for many months and was now being evicted from her home. When I reported back to the Rebbetzin, she asked me to go back and inquire from the marshal how much the woman owed, and if he would accept a personal check; she also asked that I should not say anything to the family being evicted.

At this point, I still did not realize where all this was leading, but I fulfilled the Rebbetzin's request. The sum that the family owed was approximately \$6,700.

The marshal said that he had no problem accepting a personal check, as long as he confirms with the bank that the check is covered; he also said that if he received the payment, his men would carry everything back into the house.

When I informed the Rebbetzin of the details, she took out her checkbook and, to my amazement, wrote out a check for the full amount, and asked me to give it to the marshal.

The marshal made a phone call to the bank, and then instructed his workers to take everything back into the house. T

he Rebbetzin immediately urged me to quickly drive away, before the woman realized what had transpired. I was completely amazed at what I had seen and later, when we were in the park, I could not contain myself and asked the Rebbetzin what had prompted her to give such a large sum to a total stranger?

"Do you really want to know?" asked the Rebbetzin. "Yes, I do," I replied. "Then I'll tell you," she said. "Once, when I was a young girl, my father took me for a walk in the park. He sat me down on a bench and started to tell me about the idea of hashgachah pratis ('divine providence').

'Every time' -- said my father -- 'that something causes us to deviate from our normal routine, there is a divinely ordained reason for this; every time we see something unusual, there is a purpose in why we've been shown this sight.'

"Today," continued the Rebbetzin, "when I saw the 'Detour' sign instructing us to deviate from our regular route, I remembered my father's words and immediately thought to myself: Every day we drive by this street; suddenly, the street's closed off and we're sent to a different street. What is the purpose of this? How is this connected to me? Then I heard the sound of a woman crying and screaming. I realized that we have been sent along this route for a purpose." (from Chabad of Bel-Air) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**