

Chesed as...

Hospitality



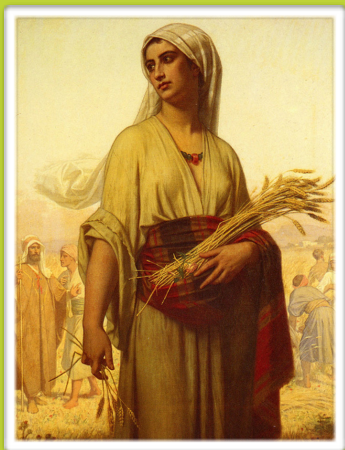
Abraham is considered the biblical character who most embodies the value of chesed. Though he himself is a stranger in the Land of Israel, he never fails to open his home to others. When he is in pain after performing circumcision at God's command, he nevertheless runs out to welcome three strangers that he sees passing by. He washes their feet and prepares his best food for them. As anyone who has hosted before knows, inviting strangers into one's home is not easy; we make ourselves vulnerable when we welcome a stranger inside. According to the rabbis, Abraham's tent was open in all directions. This served two purposes. It allowed Abraham to see in all directions just in case there was a traveler in need of his hospitality. At the same time, it signaled to all travelers that Abraham's tent was a place that they could find respite.

Questions:

- ? Who are the modern examples of those who embody chesed as hospitality?
- ? Can you think of an example where you tried to perform chesed as hospitality?
- ? Was it easy or hard and why?

Chesed as...

Sacrifice



Imagine for a moment that your whole world has been turned upside down. Your spouse has unexpectedly and tragically died. Your best option would be to return to your family so they can help you start your life over. Your mother-in-law, however, has also been left without a soul in the world. Her only option is to return back to her homeland once more, but she must do so knowing that she has no one to look after her or take care of her. When she leaves, you will probably never see her again, and who knows whether she will even survive.

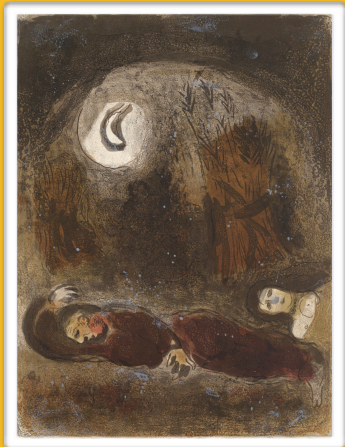
To go with her would mean giving up on all that you know. You would be a stranger in a strange land, with few prospects for building a new life for yourself, and may very well find yourself tied to her forever. This was **Ruth's** predicament. She made a profound sacrifice out of her love for her mother-in-law Naomi, to ensure that she would not be left helpless and forlorn. Ruth returned with her to the Land of Israel, and the two were able to build a life together. Ruth's act of chesed is so great that her great-grandson, David, becomes the king of Israel.

Questions:

- ? Who are the modern examples of those who embody chesed as sacrifice?
- ? Can you think of an example where someone did an act of chesed for you that was a genuine sacrifice?

Chesed as...

Going Above & Beyond



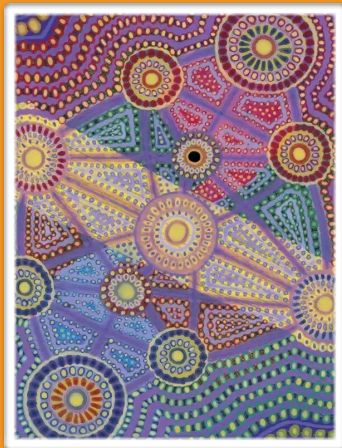
Most of us think of ourselves as good people. When the time comes we want to do the right thing, whatever that may be. But the truth is we usually only do the minimum. Not so little as to be considered deplorable but rarely enough to truly make a difference. **Boaz** was different. When he heard about the chesed that Ruth had done for Naomi, he decided that it was not enough to simply allow her to glean from his fields. This would have been the equivalent of only throwing a few coins her way. Rather, he instructed those who worked for him to ensure that Ruth was looked after and that she was able to take whatever produce from his fields that she needed. Even though Ruth was a Moabite, a total outsider, Boaz recognized that she was not only deserving of his charity but ultimately his love as well.

Questions:

- ? Who are the modern examples of those who embody chesed as going above and beyond?
- ? Can you think of when you had been a recipient of this kind of chesed?

Chesed as...

Everything



While the Torah offers many different attributes for **God**, none is perhaps more important than chesed. When the Talmud asks what it means to imitate God, the answer is do chesed. The reason for this, the Talmud explains, is that the Torah begins with an act of chesed by God and ends with an act of chesed by God. When Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden, God makes sure to clothe them so that they do not have to go out into the world naked and vulnerable. When Moshe died, it is God who buries him. When the prophet Micah asks what is it that God ultimately wants from us, he answers with the following (Micah 6:8), “Only to do justice and to love chesed, and to walk modestly with your God”.

Question:

? When have you experienced the world through this type of chesed?

Chesed as...



Questions:

