

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair and glasses, smiling broadly and hugging a person whose head is covered in a red cloth. The woman is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The person being hugged is wearing a patterned blue and white garment. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor setting.

THE GIFT OF

Giving

Generosity
- Shavuot

Written and edited by **Dr. Ronit Ziv Kreger**,
Momentum Director of Education and Leadership Development.

“We make a living by what we get; we make a life
by what we give.”

-Winston Churchill



A QUALITY THAT BUILDS WORLDS

If you had to identify a key quality that is central to creating and sustaining a family, an organization, a community, or the world, what quality would you pick?

Jewish teachings maintain that God created and sustains our world through *chesed*. What does the Hebrew word *chesed* mean? It is typically translated as loving-kindness. It is love as deed. On the Momentum trip, we learn that in Hebrew the word for love, *ahava*, comes from the word *hav* — to give. *Chesed* goes beyond ‘being nice.’ It is love that is woven through faithful gestures of understanding, generosity, and support, coming from kindness and no other motive. ***Chesed is one of the pillars that sustains the world.***

When we learn how to become givers — through acts of *chesed* and generous giving (*tzedakah*), we help others and we transform ourselves. We look at the world with fresh eyes, open to the needs of those around us and eager to use our powers to make the world a better place.

Some questions to ask yourself as you move through this unit:

- *How can I better understand the needs of others?*
- *Where in your life have you seen giving that is also receiving and receiving that is also giving?*
- *Where in your life do you see kindness and generosity being contagious?*
- *What stories of generosity inspire you?*
- *Knowing that givers are happier people, how might you grow your generosity and share it with your children?*

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF ACTS OF KINDNESS

Watch one of the following inspirational videos:
one about two women's act of *chesed* during a baseball game: www.bit.ly/2ngGB2x or one about a story from Israel about God acting through human *chesed*, so to speak: www.tinyurl.com/hcjrww9

- *What effect does the story have on you?*
- *What builds the ability to see a need of others and to effectively pivot to take action?*
- *According to the Talmud, the broken pieces of the first tablets that God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai, which Moses had broken, were placed in the holy ark side-by-side with the second whole Tablets. The broken and the whole, side-by-side. What does carrying broken and whole side-by-side have to do with chesed? Where in the videos do you see this? How do you carry both the broken and the whole and for whom?*

Rabbi Yeruchem Halevi Levovitz (1873-1936)

The seismograph has taught us that a tremor in any part of the world can be felt by a sufficiently sensitive instrument everywhere in the world. The same is true of a person's deeds. One should not think that one's actions do not affect others. Everything one does in some way affects everyone else in the world.



- *If you knew that your actions had significant impact beyond your surroundings, what advice would you give yourself?*
- *What are some reminders you could set or routines you could implement to do acts of loving kindness regularly?*
- *On airplanes, we are told to put our own oxygen mask on first. This reminds us that when we care for ourselves, we are better able to care for others. In what ways do you show chesed, kindness, to yourself?*
- *In your own life, how do you do chesed with your body? How do you do chesed with your money? Which one is easier for you?*

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT GIVERS

We are so busy and over scheduled. Can we afford the time and resources to give?

The holiday of Shavuot marks the giving and receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and is named for both types of actions. As it turns out, giving and receiving are actually more connected than they may seem.

Tal Ben Shachar, an Israeli and American professor who created a course on Positive Psychology — which became the most highly rated course in Harvard's history, notes that, "In Hebrew 'to give' is *natan*. It's a palindrome, which is very fitting because when I give, I also receive. Today we have the research to back up this linguistic wisdom."

During an experiment, researchers gave people a nice sum of money and told them to spend it on themselves. (By the way, where can we sign up for this research?!!) Not surprisingly, their levels of happiness increased. Tal Ben Shachar laughed and said, "It's the first time in recorded history that we have evidence for the claim that 'buying shoes makes you happy.' However, this shoppers' high lasted one day at most. One day later, the effect was all gone. A second group of people got a similar amount and was told to spend it *on someone else*. They too experienced a 'high.' However, the significant difference was that the effect lasted much longer. The impact was still measurable a week later!" The givers were measurably happier.

Adrienne Gold describes it this way, "Just as a candle can light many other candles without losing any of its own light,

generosity is a trait that can illuminate the lives of others without diminishing its own power! We are often afraid to 'share our light' because we worry that we will not have 'enough left for ourselves.' Yet, the more we give, the more we have! **The more we share our light — our resources, our time, and our energy — the brighter we shine as well!"**

Givers are not only happy people. According to psychologist, Wharton business professor, and author, Adam Grant, givers are also successful people. In his book *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success* presents scores of research studies and stories that suggest the benefits of an attitude of extreme giving at work: "Givers are the rare breed of people who contribute to others without expecting anything in return... Although some givers get exploited and burn out, the rest achieve extraordinary results across a wide range of industries."

Beginning with a small step can become a practice.

Identify someone whom you love or whom you would like to build a deeper affection for. Direct your attention toward understanding that person's needs - look, listen, and consider how you could help them. What is one *small* thing you could do? Perhaps you could offer them a meal, a ride, an opportunity to exercise or learn together, a gift, your company. Focus on your yearning to love and to be generous and set aside the time to do it.

Remembering that musicians begin with tuning their instrument, consider tender self-care as part of your practice.

SPREADING KINDNESS IS CONTAGIOUS

Stories by Susan Kramer



By showing random acts of kindness, we really can change the world.

I decided to incorporate acts of kindness into my Starbucks habit at my neighborhood drive-through. About once a week, I ask the barista what the bill is for the car behind me. When the bill is less than \$5, I cover it and ask the barista to tell the person to have a blessed day.

This weekly ritual brings me much joy. I imagine how it must feel to get this unexpected gift — especially at 7:30 in the morning.

To my surprise, the barista also began giving me random gifts of coffee. He told me, “You are such a kind person. This one is on me.”

I gave without expecting anything in return. But, what goes around comes around. Spreading kindness is contagious.

Try it — spread kindness and watch how the world gives you kindness, too.

You Never Know

I was heading to Israel to join my whole family to celebrate my mom's 70th birthday. But, my flight out of Denver was postponed for four hours — and that was just the beginning!

What's a woman to do with a four-hour delay? Buy a round of drinks for all of the young people at the gate!

Finally our plane took off, but we still missed our international connection. A young adult named Noah, who I'd bought a drink for earlier, also missed his connection.

- *When in your life have you seen that spreading of kindness is contagious?*
- *What examples have you witnessed or experienced where acts of kindness led to happiness or other non-material rewards?*
- *What stories about kindness and generosity inspire you? How might you share that inspiration with your children to help them grow as givers?*
- *Consider doing an act of generous giving that is totally anonymous. Reflect on what you learn from the experience.*

He was traveling alone with no money and with his charger in his checked bag. He also had family waiting for him in Israel.

During our 24-hour delay, I took care of Noah, making sure that he had both food and a charged phone.

When we finally boarded our plane to Israel, my name was called over the intercom. I was told to remove my belongings from the plane and to leave. My seat had been double booked.

Well, after missing an international flight and waiting 24 hours for the next one, I was not about to leave the plane. The air marshal approached me and encouraged me to gather my belongings and leave the plane.

It was at that moment that Noah stood up from his seat and said, "Leave her on the plane. I will get off."

I had thought that our chance meeting was about what I could give Noah and how I could do acts of kindness for him. But, that was ultimately not the case.

Noah did this ultimate *mitzvah* for me, allowing me to get to Israel and to be with my family.

Months later, I invited Noah to our home for Shabbat dinner and learned that he made it onto the next flight and reunited with his family, too.

LOVING-KINDNESS IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

The holiday of Shavuot commemorates the Giving of the Torah, a grand public spectacle!

The special scroll — *megillah* — that we read on the holiday — the Book of Ruth — focuses on acts of kindness between individuals. In the Book of Ruth, a widowed Moabite woman named Ruth chooses to accompany her impoverished mother in law, Naomi, back to the Land of Israel, despite the fact that there are no realistic prospects for her there. As the story unfolds, she meets a man named Boaz who, in turn, acts with great kindness, *chesed*, toward Ruth and Naomi, leading to restoration and redemption for the family.

The Book of Ruth, Chapter One¹

In the days when the judges judged, there was a famine in the land; and a man of Bethlehem in Judah, with his wife and two sons, went to reside in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Chilion — Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. They came to the country of Moab and remained there.

Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. Both of them married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth, and they lived there about ten years. Then those two — Mahlon and Chilion — also died; so the woman was left bereaved of her two sons and without her husband.

She started out with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab; for in the country of Moab she had heard that the Lord had taken note of His people and given them food. Accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, she left the place where she had been living; and they set out on the road back to the land of Judah.

But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Turn back, each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have shown the dead and me! May the Lord grant that each of you find security in the house of a husband!" And she kissed them farewell. They broke into weeping and said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

But Naomi replied, "Turn back, my daughters! Why should you go with me? Have I any more sons in my body who might be husbands for you? Turn back, my daughters, for I am too old to be married. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I were married tonight and I also bore sons, should you wait for them to grow up? Should you on their account debar yourselves from marriage? Oh no, my daughters! Your presence is very bitter for me now, for the hand of the Lord has struck out against me."

¹ Adapted from Jewish Publication Society Tanakh

They broke into weeping again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law farewell. But Ruth clung to her. So she said, “See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Go follow your sister-in-law.” But Ruth replied, “Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the Lord do to me if anything but death parts me from you.” Naomi saw how determined Ruth was to go with her, she ceased to argue with her; and the two went on until they reached Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole city buzzed with excitement over them. The women said, “Can this be Naomi?” “Do not call me Naomi,” she replied. “Call me *Mara* (bitter), for God has made my lot very bitter. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me ‘Naomi’? The Lord has dealt harshly with me; God has brought misfortune upon me!” This is how Naomi returned from the country of Moab...

Despite the seeming impossibility of a happy ending, Ruth ends up marrying Naomi’s relative Boaz, has a son, and her great-grandson is King David!

- *Do you know anyone like Ruth, whose love and care for others overwhelms logical, “realistic” arguments? What gives them the strength to proceed?*
- *What about this story might be a gift for you? What of this story might you share with another person, at home or elsewhere?*



רות א

א ויהי בימי שפט השפטים ייחזקאל ויהי עבד נאצרון ויהי אש מבית לחם יהודה לגור בשדי מואב הוא ואשתו ושני בנים. ב ושם האיש אלימלך ושם אשתו נעמי ושם שני-בניו מחלון וכליון אפרתים מבית לחם יהודה ויבאו שדי-מואב ויהיו-שם. ג וימת אלימלך איש נעמי ותשארו היא ושני בניה. ד וישאו להם נשים מאביות שם האחת ערפה ושם השנית רות וישבו שם כעשר שנים. ה וימתו גם-שניהם מחלון וכליון ותשארו האשה משני ילדיה ומאשה. ו ותקם היא וכלתיה ותשב משדי מואב כי שמעה בשדי מואב כי-פקד ה' את-עמו לתת להם לחם. ז ותצא מן-המקום אשר היתה-שמה ושתי כלותיה עמה ותלכנה בדרך לשוב אל-ארץ יהודה. ח ותאמר נעמי לשתי כלתיה לכנה שבנה אשה לבית אמה יעשה (עש) ה' עמכם חסד כאשר עשיתם עם-המתים ועמדי. ט יתן ה' לכם ומצאן מנוחה אשה בית אישה ותשק להן ותשאנה קולן ותבקנה. י ותאמרנה-לה כי-אתן נשוב לעמך. יא ותאמר נעמי שבנה בנתי למה תלכנה עמי העוד-לי בנים במעי והיו לכם לאנשים. יב שבנה בנתי לכן כי זקנתי מהיות לאיש כי אמרתי יש-לי תקנה גם הייתי הלילה לאיש וגם ילדתי בנים. יג הלהן תשבנה עד אשר יגדלו הלהן תענגנה לביתיה היות לאיש אל בנתי כי-מר-לי מאד מכם כי-צאה בי יד-ה'. יד ותשנה קולן ותבקנה עוד ותשק ערפה לחמותה ורות דבקה בה. טו ותאמר הנה שבה בבתך אל-עמה ואל-אלקיה שובי אחרי בבתך. טז ותאמר רות אל-תפגעי-בי לעזבך לשוב מאחריך כי אל-אשר תלכי אלך ובאשר תליני אליו עמך עמי ואלקך אלקי. יז באשר תמותי אמות ושם אקבר כה יעשה ה' לי וכה יוסיף כי המות יפריד ביני ובינך. יח ותרא כי-מתאמצת היא ללכת אתה ותחדל לדבר אליה. יט ותלכנה שתיהם עד-בואנה בית לחם ויהי כבואנה בית לחם ותהם כל-העיר עליהן ותאמרנה הזאת נעמי. כ ותאמר אליהן אל-תקראנה לי נעמי קראן לי מרא כי-המר ש-קי לי מאד. כא אני מלאה הלכתי וריקם השיבני ה' למה תקראנה לי נעמי וה' ענה בי וש-קי הרע לי. כב ותשב נעמי ורות המואבית כלתה עמה השבה משדי מואב והמה באו בית לחם בתחלת קציר שעורים.

GENEROUS GIVING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Exodus 25: 1-2, 8

God spoke to Moses, saying: “speak to the People of Israel, that they should take a gift for Me, from every person whose heart is moved you should take My gift... And let them build Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst.”

וַיֹּדֶבֶר יי, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָקֻחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה. וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ
וְשִׁכְנִיתִי בְּתוֹכָם.

Sometimes our hearts are open, soft, trusting, and erupt with kindness, noticing what’s needed by others and lovingly providing.

It may be the natural impulse of the human heart to be kind, curious and generous. But we all know that isn’t always our reality.

Giving away money, time, or other resources can be hard, especially in a culture that often directs us to accumulate.

In the face of hurt, our heart shutters close up for protection. When we feel shamed, betrayed, abandoned, or scared we instinctively pull back, and even armor our hearts. We may build barriers to separate ourselves from further pain. When we are reminded of the original pain, feel re-stimulated, we may respond with fear, further walling off and barricading our hearts, consciously or unconsciously.

But our armor shuts out not only the pain but also the gain, the flow of giving and receiving, the spontaneous, trusting generosity, and the flow of forgiveness and love.

What is one to do? The prophet Ezekiel spoke of two phases in the process of opening and softening our hearts. First, “remove your heart of stone.” How might you explore places your heart is hardened? When you imagine being spontaneously generous, can you identify any fears? What calculated risks of kindness and generosity could break through walled-off areas of your heart? When you experience a softening and your heart flowing with generosity, there’s more. Ezekiel spoke of a second phase, “I will give you a heart of flesh.” Our work giving can lead to the spiritual gift of a transformed loving heart.

It is the spiritual practice of giving that can help us create a more supple heart, one that offers access to the sanctuary of our heart. Such regular practice is what Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, founder of the Mussar movement of character development, means when he said, “**The spiritual is higher than the physical, but the physical needs of the other are the work of my spiritual life.**”

Jewish tradition wants us to be happy people. It provides guidance and practices to open our hearts and create healthy and just communities. Spontaneous giving is wonderful and yet the Torah doesn’t want our spiritual life and the wellbeing of our communities to depend on what our heart is feeling:

Deuteronomy 15: 7-8

When any of your kinsfolk is poor, in the land God is giving you, do not harden your heart or shut your hand against your needy kin. Open your hand generously, providing for what the person needs and is lacking.

1 Adapted from Ronit Ziv-Kreger (c) 2012

כִּי יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֲבִיּוֹן מֵאַחַד אַחֶיךָ, בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ, בְּאַרְצֶךָ, אֲשֶׁר יִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ, לֹא תִאֲמִין אֶת לִבְּךָ, וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת יָדְךָ מֵאַחֶיךָ הָאֲבִיּוֹן. כִּי פֶתַח תִּפְתָּח אֶת יָדְךָ לוֹ, וְהַעֲבֵט תַּעֲבִיטֻנוּ דֵּי מַחֲסָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִחְסֹר לוֹ

Tzedakah is the prescribed obligatory practice to give a portion of our income.

The following are some of the honed Jewish spiritual practices for opening our heart to generosity:

- **Noticing needs** — Set a certain time of day to practice looking carefully, to notice people around you in need – one may need monetary help, another needs work, others may need health, emotional or spiritual nourishment. Practice discerning the needs of others. Step one is to grow one’s ability to identify the needs of others, because there’s an important distinction between giving what you *feel like* giving vs. carefully looking and listening to discern what are the real needs of another and seeking to meet *those* needs.

Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, *Shenei Luchot Ha-Berit*

“God’s *chesed* (lovingkindness) the entire day” (Psalm 52:3). A person should see to it that there is never a day on which she does not perform an act of *chesed*, either with her body or with her money.

שני לוחות הברית

“חסד אל כל היום” (תהלים נב:ג). ראו לאדם שכל ימי חייו יראה שלא יהיה שום יום שלא יעשה בו גמילות חסדים או בגופו או בממונו.

- **Practicing small acts of giving** – Set a certain number of days where you will notice others’ needs and deliberately give to meet a need you saw. Jewish teachings guide us towards a regular and deliberate practice. Consider planning to do a daily act of deliberate kindness or giving for a full week. Reflect on the experience through journaling or setting time to speak with one of your *Sisters* or with a friend.
- **Judging favorably** – Set a practice of intentionally judging people favorably, finding their strengths, and reflecting those back to them. When you are inclined to say something critical, take a deep breath and stay quiet until you are able to find true beauty and value in the person or the situation. Only then, take any needed action from a mindset of generosity and kindness. This is not easy. Take time to reflect about it through journaling, prayer, or speaking with your *Havruta Sister*. Remember to judge yourself favorably too and to celebrate small successes along the way.
- *Tzedakah* – no matter how much we have (or don’t) figure out what you are prepared to give. Figure out where you are with regular giving and take one step forward. For some it can be gathering as a family for a conversation about where and to whom to give, for others it may be setting a regular time to give, such as Friday evening (some do it before lighting Shabbat candles), and for others it may be to calculate income and set a percentage to give. Notice what stress and worries come up and how you can build a practice that opens your heart.

PRIORITIES IN GIVING



There are so many needs and so many causes. It can be overwhelming to choose to whom to give and what! What guidance on this is available?

Maimonides (Laws of Gifts to the Poor Chapter 10:7-14) lists eight levels of giving *tzedakah*, sometimes called Maimonides' Ladder. Working with a partner, turn to the end of this session and find the activity titled Sorting Levels of *Tzedakah*. Cut out the eight sentences describing ways of giving and order them from the lowest level of generosity on the bottom to the highest level at the top.

- *Which of the categories on this ladder have you considered when seeking to help another?*
- *Are there any new insights for you from this list or considerations you'd like to take into account in the future? What additional considerations would you add that are not included in Maimonides' list?*

Maimonides or Rambam, as Rabbi Moses ben Maimon is often referred to, was a prolific medieval Sephardic Jewish philosopher and physician, who became one of the most influential Torah scholars of the Middle Ages.

What stories have you heard from family, friends, or colleagues, that have inspired your priorities in terms of generous giving? In the following story, Rabbi Akiva teaches Rabbi Tarfon the importance of giving *tzedakah* to support Jewish education.

Adapted from Kallah Rabbati 2

Rabbi Tarfon was very wealthy man but did not give much money to the poor. One day, Rabbi Akiva asked him, “Would you like me to buy a town or two for you [so you can earn money from the investment]?” Rabbi Tarfon answered, “Yes.” Rabbi Tarfon went and brought him 4000 golden dinars. Rabbi Akiva went and distributed the money: some of the money to the poor, some to support those who study Torah, and some to the Houses of Study. After several days, Rabbi Tarfon asked Rabbi Akiva, “Where are the towns you bought for me? Are they a good investment?” Rabbi Akiva answered, “The returns are unlimited.”

- *Have you had someone in your life who awakened you to the importance of giving generously to the poor or to support Jewish education, as Rabbi Akiva did for Rabbi Tarfon?*
- *Rabbi Akiva says that Jewish education is a good investment with unending rewards. In what ways is Jewish education an investment in terms of the individual, the family, the community and the world?*
- *There are so many important causes that could benefit from financial contributions. How do you make choices about where to allocate your contributions? What are the benefits of involving children and the whole family?*

Rabbi Akiva took him by the hand and brought him to the House of Study. He brought before him a child carrying a Book of Psalms. The child read until he reached the verse, “The person who has given freely, the person who has given to the poor, that person’s righteousness lasts forever” (Psalms 111.9).



Reflective Writing

Give yourselves 5-10 minutes to write down your answers to these questions. Write in silence allowing your thoughts to flow freely, unedited. When you are finished writing, discuss with your sister some of the issues and ideas that came up for you in this exercise.

- *Where am I in my giving of my time and resources to others in need?*
- *What causes have been or are becoming priorities for me in terms of giving? How do I prioritize among the many possible needs, such as the poor, the sick, Jewish institutions in my community, education, the organization with which I came on the Momentum journey, Momentum, special education and inclusion, Israel, environment, human rights, politics, other issues important to me?*
- *What is one piece of advice I would like to give myself about acting with loving-kindness, chesed and generosity?*

SPOTLIGHT ON ISRAEL EMERGENCY RESPONSE



April 2017, photo by IsraAid

When tragedies and trauma happen in the world, it's often hard to face the devastation with hopefulness and to know how we can help. Israel is often in the forefront of emergency response. It can be inspiring and helpful to share stories such as the following. It also shines a light on Israelis being guided by *chesed*.

Many Israelis take the challenges that the country and its citizens face, including terrorism, and share solutions they have developed with others in the world.

The Israeli organization IsraAID, is one of many Israeli humanitarian organization that share life-saving technologies, which have proven vital in disaster zones around the world.

IsraAID focuses on providing emergency relief and long-term development for populations affected by disaster. Deployed

teams, made up of professional volunteers from across Israeli society, are able to quickly build field hospitals and dispatch search and rescue specialists as well as medical and trauma professionals immediately following a disaster. IsraAID teams have worked in over 50 countries around the world.

In 2017, IsraAID deployed to Peru to support affected communities following devastating floods and mudslides that destroyed much of the country's infrastructure.

One affected resident, Gloria Sedana Pascual, described the flooding, saying, "We were at home when we heard screaming coming from the street- when we ran outside we saw the river and mudslides entering the street in front the house. We thought to try and block the flood so we started organizing, but after about 10 minutes we were struck by another strong mudslide

that came from behind our house. The last mudslide left everything destroyed; my house is inhabitable, my garden is destroyed, and my belongings are ruined."

Hundreds of thousands of people like Gloria were displaced, and emergency supplies were desperately needed. The deployed IsraAID team journeyed to impoverished and remote areas, providing access to basic items like food, safe water, and hygiene kits, as well as working to develop and support the ravaged local economy.

- *With whom might you share this story?*
- *How do you take challenge and brokenness and the strengths and tools gained through the struggle and share the learning to benefit others?*

Press, Viva Sarah (April 2, 2017). Israeli emergency teams support flood survivors in Peru, Israel21c. Retrieved from www.israel21c.org/israeli-emergency-teams-support-flood-survivorsin-peru



Within 72 hours of the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015, IsraAID was on the ground saving lives from under the rubble, tending to over 5,000 sick and injured, and rebuilding homes for 700 families.

The local economy was devastated by the destruction, and women in particular were affected. In response, IsraAID introduced HoneyAID, a beekeeping program that empowers women to become entrepreneurs and leaders in their community, training them to become beekeepers and organizers of local cooperatives.

With the skills they've learned through HoneyAID, Nepalese women affected by the earthquake now have a greater ability to support and provide for their families. A Nepalese HoneyAID participant, named Sonu, shared: "[w]hen this project entered into our village women are becoming so active and get involved in the activities of the society."

- *IsraAID focused on the women who were especially affected by the devastation of their homes and the need to provide for their children. To what weak segments in your community might you be able to offer chesed-kindness?*

Adapted from:

Honeyaid: Women Beekeepers Promote Growth in Nepal's Recovery, www.israaid.co.il/news/honeyaid-women-beekeepers-promotegrowth-nepals-recovery

September, 2016, photo by IsraAid

The desire to do good in the world is also seen through Israel's life-saving medical advancements and its role in easing the global suffering of children and families.

The organization Save a Child's Heart is an Israeli non-profit that provides urgent pediatric heart surgery and follow-up care for children from developing countries. SACH was founded in 1995 and has since repaired the hearts of more than 2,100 children from a wide variety of countries including China, Congo, Ecuador, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Iraq, Jordan, Russia, Sri Lanka and Ukraine as well as children in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

A visiting American doctor explained, "With all the turmoil and suffering in the Middle East and around the world, it's easy to be heartbroken, it's a lot harder to mend a heart – and that's what these guys are doing here every day. It's inspiring how they overcome politics and geography to save children's lives. The doctors and all the staff here are heroes, they really are." - SACH Facebook page

- *If chesed builds families, communities, and the world, it might do it by opening and healing hearts. Even if not medically, whose heart might you want to help heal this week? What is one first small step that is easily achievable?*

Katz, Jessica (2015), How Saving a Child's Heart Is Crossing Boundaries In the Middle East. The Huffington Post. Retrieved from: www.huffingtonpost.com/jessica-katz/how-saving-a-childs-heart_b_6591776.html.

Israel on the Frontline of International Aid, www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Aid/Pages/Israel_on_frontline_international_aid.aspx



LEARN WITH YOUR SISTER

Getting Started with Giving *Tzedakah* Spotlight on Heather Greene



When Heather Greene, a mother, wife, and self-employed Certified Elder Care Coordinator, from Cleveland, Ohio, was invited to spend Shabbat with Lori Palatnik, she jumped at the opportunity. That Shabbat, coupled with her 2009 MOMentum Trip to Israel, jumpstarted her family's Jewish journey.

Then, Heather's family was asked to make an annual contribution to their synagogue. But, between daycare, utilities, and many other expenses, Heather didn't know how they would be able to set the necessary money aside. When her rabbi asked her to consider donating a certain amount of money each month, instead of a lump sum, she happily agreed. "That option hadn't dawned on me until then, but I realized that we could definitely do that," Heather said.

Soon, *tzedakah* became a core part of Heather's Jewish practice, and Heather and her family contributed small amounts whenever the opportunity arose. First, they gave to organizations that Heather had learned about during her MOMentum Trip, including the Koby Mandell Foundation and a lone soldier center. At the end of the year, Heather's accountant let her know that, by chance, they had given 10% of their earnings to *tzedakah*, and she and her husband decided to make that amount their ongoing goal.

"When you give *tzedakah*, you feel good, other people feel good, and you help make a difference in people's lives," Heather said. "It's a win-win."

Heather's Advice for Giving Tzedakah

1. Start Small

When we first started giving *tzedakah*, we just gave small amounts to organizations that we believed in — \$18, \$36, and sometimes \$54. But, even with small contributions, we have been able to support more than a dozen initiatives that are important to us.

2. Make it Feel Real

It's wonderful to make a donation with the click of a button. And it feels even better when you're personally invested in your contribution. One year, my children volunteered at a kosher food pantry. Afterward, my children were excited to donate *tzedakah* to the pantry, because they felt a connection to it and understood its importance.

3. Get Creative

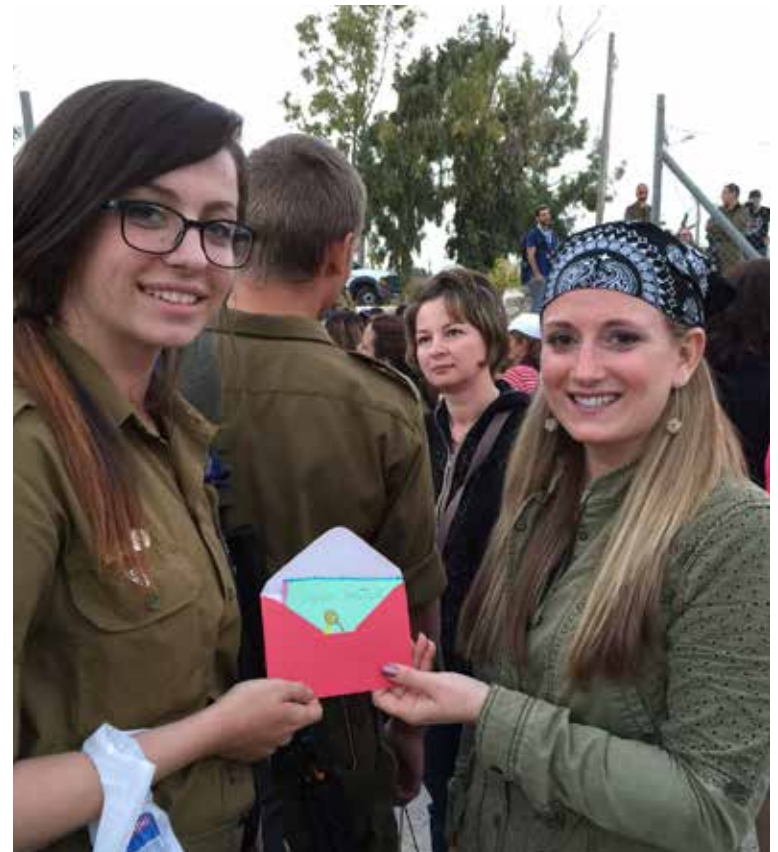
During my MOMentum Trip, we visited an orphanage in Jerusalem. When I returned home, I organized one of my kid's grades to buy board games for the children. We couldn't ship them because of the huge customs fees, so the eighth graders delivered them during their trip to Israel.

4. Involve the whole family

I want *tzedakah* to be a collaborative effort for my family. So, before each Yom Kippur, we began a tradition of rolling our loose change and then choosing where to donate the money. Also, my son just celebrated his Bar Mitzvah and is looking forward to exploring organizations where he wants to donate 10% of his gifts.

5. Embrace the feeling of humility

Tzedakah reminds me that my family's money isn't simply ours. God has blessed us with what we have, and we need to acknowledge that by giving *tzedakah*.



LEARN WITH YOUR SISTER UNIVERSAL DONOR²

By Lori Palatnik



If you really want a conversation stopper, tell someone you are planning to donate a kidney and you don't even know whom you're giving it to.

It all started several years ago when my husband's good friend needed a kidney. None of his family matched or was able to donate for various reasons. My blood type is O Positive, which in the world of kidney donations makes me a universal donor. I liked the sound of it. Now I had to see if I could live up to the title.

After speaking to my husband and our rabbi, I decided to offer my kidney to our friend. But, as soon as I began the testing

process, his medical team told me that my kidney would not be able to sustain his body.

I still wasn't ready to give up, though.

When I learned about a very sick five-year-old boy who needed a kidney, I offered to help. Unfortunately, he was ultimately too sick for a transplant. But, then I was asked to undergo testing for other people — whom I didn't know. I decided to do so.

The few people who knew of my plans were incredulous. How could I put my life at risk? I had children and a husband and responsibilities. What was I thinking?

I explained that for donors, the risks are very low — about the same as any surgery where there is general anesthetic. And if you donate a kidney, and for some reason down the road you need one yourself, you are bumped to the very top of the list.

After an intensive process of testing, a recipient for my kidney was selected and I had the opportunity to speak to her. But, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. What if I didn't like her? What if she was judgmental? In the end, I decided that I did want to speak to her, but only if she felt comfortable speaking to me.

"There are no words," she began during our first call.

I learned that she was an extremely brave woman with seven kids. She was one year older than me, and a year and a half ago, during routine blood tests to correct a hernia, she learned that she had KPD, a deadly kidney disease.

A kidney transplant is the only cure for KPD. But thousands of people die each year waiting.

The surgery was scheduled for a Thursday. That Monday, the woman who would receive my kidney invited me to her home

² A longer version can be found at <http://www.aish.com/sp/so/48937647.html?s=srcon>
"Universal Donor" refers to a person of blood group O, who can theoretically donate blood to recipients of any blood group.

for dinner. I felt like I was about to meet a twin sister who was separated from me at birth.

We were so alike in so many ways, and her husband even reminded me of my husband! Clearly this was a match made in heaven. Since receiving her diagnosis, she had married off three children. “With each wedding, I knew that this child would be alright. They had married a good person. If I was to die, it would be difficult for them, but they could go on. I just wanted to live long enough to marry off my last two children.”

I couldn’t imagine being so strong. In the face of her dire situation, she always had a smile on her face. Her faith in God never wavered; in fact, it only became stronger. She continued to work full time, and was clearly the energy force of her family.

The night before the surgery, she called me. “Lori, you are taking a risk, and I want you to know that you can absolutely change your mind.”

I was moved, and I reassured her that I would be at the hospital the next morning as planned.

The Big Day

Many people have asked me if I ever had any doubts. There was only one moment when I hesitated. It was on my way to the operating room. “Here we go,” the nurse said.

“Hold on,” I said. “I need to say a prayer.”

So I stood there and said the Shema, and asked God to let me live and to let the kidney recipient live, too.

“Okay,” I said, “I’m ready.”

And then she opened the doors to the operating room and I was shocked to see a room so filled with people running around and maneuvering equipment and machines. I saw the lights, the long

operating table with straps, and I froze. “What am I doing?” And then I closed my eyes and said to myself, “Just do it. Just do it.”

I laid down on the table, and the next thing I knew, I was in recovery and they were telling me that the surgery had been successful.

The Life It Gave Me

The surgery was laparoscopic and I was in the hospital for just a few days. During that time, the grown children of my “Kidney Sister” and her extended family streamed into my room, thanking me for saving her life. When I felt better, I walked down the hall to visit her. She was doing great. She told me that she felt as though a truck had been hurtling towards her in full force, and that I had stepped in front of her from out of nowhere and put my arms out to stop the truck.

God gave me the opportunity to give her life, and the gratitude she and her family feel towards me is immense. I realized that I should feel that same gratitude to my parents, who gave me life. It was humbling to realize how casually we accept that we are here, and how little regard we have for the people who made it possible.

I am still processing the whole experience and feel very small in the face of the enormity and fragility of life and death.

Giving away your kidney is not for everyone. Some people literally cannot do it because of personal or family medical history. But as one person told me just before I left for the surgery, “Lori, I may not give away my kidney, but because of what you are doing, I will now be more of a giver.”

Take pleasure in your life. But, also, take care of the life that you have. And please ask yourself how you can help others do the same.

LEARN WITH YOUR SISTER

Laws of *Tzedakah*

What are the best kept secrets for how Jewish communities bridge the gap between the haves and have-nots? What are traditional Jewish laws which guided Jewish giving and helped create communities of caring? What might we learn from them?

A biblical law that calls for offering interest-free-loans within the Jewish community resulted in hundreds of years of caring. Practically all Jewish communities in the Diaspora had volunteer-run societies allowing community members to give money for others to receive loans interest-free. These were called “gemach,” an acronym for “acts of chesed.”

Most Jewish communities today still have a gemach to take the shame out of needing community support. But today a gemach is more of a Jewish swap society where people can borrow and then return useful objects. It’s a way in which Jewish community members take care of one another.

In Israel, one gemach, founded to provide respirators to children in Jerusalem, grew to have over 100 branches around the country, including in Arab municipalities. This volunteer organization, Yad Sarah, has become the world’s largest lender of medical devices!

Below are additional laws of giving to the poor, organized by Maimonides.

Maimonides, Laws of Gifts to the Poor Chapter 7: 1-3, 5,7,13

It is a positive commandment from the Torah to give *tzedakah* to the poor of Israel according to what is appropriate for the poor person if the donor can afford it... and all who see a poor person asking [for help] and avert their eyes, and do not give *tzedakah*, transgress a commandment.

You are commanded to provide to the poor person what s/he is lacking — if one does not have clothing, we provide clothes; if one does not have household items, we buy him household items; if s/he is not married, we marry him/ her

If a poor person came and asked for what he is lacking, and you do not have the ability to provide it — you give according to the extent that you are financially able. And how much should one give? The highest form of *tzedakah* is to give up to one-fifth of your resources. Giving one tenth of your resources is considered ordinary, less than that is considered stingy. “...” Even a poor person who survives by receiving *tzedakah* must give *tzedakah* to another.

We give money and clothing to poor non-Jews along with Jews because of the ways of peace.

You should give priority [in your *tzedakah*] to a poor person who is a relative; a poor person in your household has priority over the poor of your city; the poor of your city have priority over the poor of another city.

- *Do any of these laws of generosity surprise you?*
- *Which of these laws is especially meaningful to you? Why?*

הלכות מתנות עניים פרק ז

א מַצוֹת עֲשֵׂה לִיתֵן צְדָקָה לְעֲנִיִּים כְּפִי מִה שֶׁרָאִי לְעֵנִי. אִם הִיְתָה יָד הַנּוֹתֵן מְשֻׁגָּת...

[ב] וכל הרואה עני מבקש, והעלים עיניו ממנו, ולא נתן לו צדקה--עובר בלא תעשה,

ב [ג] לפי מה שחסר העני, אתה מצווה ליתן לו--אם אין לו כסות, מכסין אותו; אין לו כלי בית, קונין לו כלי בית; אין לו אישה, משיאין לו אישה; ואם הייתה אישה, משיאין אותה לאיש...;

ד [ה] בא עני ושאל די מחסורו, ואין יד הנותן משגת--נותן לו כפי השגת ידו. וכמה: עד חמיש נכסיו, מצוה מן המובחר; ואחד מעשרה בנכסיו, בינוני; פחות מכאן, עין רעה. "... ואפילו עני המתפרנס מן הצדקה, חייב ליתן צדקה לאחר.

ו [ז] מפרנסין ומכסין עניי גוים עם עניי ישראל, מפני דרכי שלום.

יג עני שהוא קרובו, קודם לכל אדם; ועניי ביתו, קודמין לעניי עירו; ועניי עירו, קודמין לעניי עיר אחרת. שנאמר "לאחיך לענייך ולאביוןך בארצך" (דברים טו,יא).

Maimonides was a prolific medieval Sephardic Jewish philosopher and physician, who became one of the most influential Torah scholars of the Middle Ages.



TRY IT OUT

PRACTICAL TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Ideas for bringing the values of loving-kindness and generous giving, *chesed* and *tzedakah*, into your family life

For Yourself or with a Partner

- Check out the podcasts, videos, and articles on MomentumUnlimited.org
- Select a phrase that inspires you, write it on a card and place it where you'll see it. Repeat the phrase to yourself a few times each morning with enthusiasm. Phrases you could consider:
 - I give generously
 - Givers are happy people
 - Love is a verb
 - A family and the world is built through *chesed*
 - I focus on one's virtues and strengths, and that is how I identify myself and others.
 - I carry the broken and the whole
- Keep a journal of acts of *chesed* that you and others do.

- Reflect on ways you can increase self-care offering yourself tender *chesed* regularly. What might that look like for you?
- Reflect, perhaps with others close to you, about your financial and non-financial contributions. Set a place to document them and set goals.
- Aleph Beta Academy is an online library of videos offering in-depth Jewish learning based in text. To learn more about Shavuot, check out the video "Megillat Ruth as a Window onto Israel's Mission Statement," (56 minutes): <https://bit.ly/30paUTE>

For Families with Young Children

- Take your children to a dollar store or the like to assemble "*chesed* packages." If *chesed* is best described as a need anticipated... then let you and your kids be ready with the things that people need in a pinch. *Chesed* packs include Tylenol and Advil, Band-Aids, hand crème, a water bottle, a

protein bar, bus tokens, and gum or breath mints. Kids will love being the ones to have what people 'need.'

- Make your own *tzedakah* boxes: Whether you make your own or decorate others, this is an excellent craft activity with a learning opportunity. With smaller kids it is a chance to even learn some math skills! Teaching 10 percent is easy with ten pennies, ten dimes, ten quarters, ten dollar bills etc. (You could even teach them 20 percent while you are at it.) You'll even practice a little division and fractions all at the same time.
- Research has shown that the most important predictor of children who grow up with a strong sense of kindness and compassion is learning from parents who model the behavior. How can we bring these lessons into our everyday lives as a family to help our children develop these values?
- Watch this video from the site Bim Bam to learn ways to incorporate generosity into your family routines.
<https://bit.ly/2EJ0EKz>
- Give your children opportunities to be kind to others in a more "structured" way. Volunteer together at a soup kitchen, participate in a walk for a cause, or clean up in the park.
- Read (or retell) to children the story of kindness in the Book of Ruth. Like a treasure hunt, search for all the examples of kindness.
- For the weeks around Shavuot, create and fill a "Kindness Jar." Each time someone does something nice, put a "warm fuzzy" (craft pom pom) into the jar. Be sure to tell the person that you noticed their behavior, and you put a warm fuzzy in the jar for them. When the jar is full, have a family celebration (popcorn party, family movie night, etc.) to celebrate.
- This beautiful article from [kveller.com](https://www.kveller.com) explains how the story of Ruth teaches the values of generosity, loyalty, and kindness, and offers some suggestions about how to share the story with young children. <https://bit.ly/2HxHFFU>

- Talk about what the world would be like if there were no rules, and explain why rules are important. The book *No Rules for Michael* by Sylvia Rouss (a PJ Library selection) can be used to illustrate this concept.

For Families with Older Children

- Assemble 'homeless kits' and always have one in your car. You can include a pair of clean socks, a fruit and a protein bar, a hat (depending on the season baseball or woolens) gloves, a clean new t-shirt (size large always...nothing worse than a gift you can't return not fitting!). All this can be accomplished for under \$10. Your kids will on the lookout for whom to give to. Make this a family project!
- *Tzedakah* Research Projects: The Bar and Bat Mitzvah years need not be the only time for *chesed* and *tzedakah* projects. Have a family meeting and decide upon one or two charities that your family wants to support this year. Depending upon the age of the participants, this can include coloring and drawing, research, campaign ideas, etc., and each family member according to their best way. Include both money and time. Create scrapbooks documenting the family efforts and your kids will want to do the same with their own in years to come.
- On Shavuot there is a custom to decorate the insides of our synagogues and homes with beautiful flowers. Shavuot is also a wonderful opportunity to enjoy some time in nature.
- Collect wildflowers and other colorful flowers and fruit to make a centerpiece for your holiday meal.
- Take pictures of fruits and flowers and create a special Shavuot collage.
- One Shavuot tradition is the Tikkun Leil Shavuot – an all-night Torah study session. Enjoy the spirit of this tradition without staying up all night (unless you want to!) by having a Shavuot pajama party at home. Spread blankets and pillows on the living-room floor, wear your favorite PJs, and share stories

and games. Reading stories with a Jewish theme is a great way to incorporate the idea of Torah study in a kid-friendly way. Finish up with a make-your-own sundae bar for a Shavuot treat!

- Have kids come up with their own “Ten Commandments,” or work together to make a set of “commandments” for your home (“Treat each other nicely,” “Always share your toys,” etc.) Decorate your list and display it in a prominent place.
- Work together to provide a warm home for an animal or donate old towels and blankets to an animal shelter.
- Donate your gently used, outgrown clothing to a local family shelter.
- Vote on an organization to which you will donate the funds you've collected in your *tzedakah* box.
- Acts of *tzedakah* can sometimes come from surprising sources. Watch this youtube video of Bernie Marcus, Founder of Home Depot, sharing the extraordinary way he ran his

company, harnessing the power of *tzedakah* during times of tragedy. <https://bit.ly/2IRoDcY>

- Watch the two videos on the page titled “The Transforming Power of Acts of Kindness” with your middle school, high school or college children.
- As a family, sort the eight cut-out strips found in the activity “Sorting Levels of *Tzedakah*” at the end of the session. Together, compare them with the order suggested by Maimonides’ Ladder, which is given in the Facilitator’s guide.
- Watch a 11 minute Ted talk on fascinating research showing that people who give are happier than those who spend money on themselves: <https://bit.ly/198xPYP>



Use this chart to plan and track your progress regarding
Loving-kindness and generous giving, *chesed* and *tzedakah*

Acknowledgment (*Vidui*)

Where are you with the value of Loving-kindness and generous giving, *chesed* and *tzedakah*? What examples from your life come to mind? What have been strengths and challenges?

Vision (*Kavanah*)

How would you like it to be? What gets in the way and what can you do to reorient toward your best self?

Goals (*Kabbalah*)

What is one or more small, actionable step that you can do in your daily life, that is realistic and you could easily schedule, and will support you in growing toward your potential and vision in terms of Loving-kindness and generous giving, *chesed* and *tzedakah*?

Accountability

Who can help hold you accountable on your goals? How? When?
What evidence can you collect to know you are making progress?

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

The Gift of Giving, Loving-kindness and Generous Giving - *Shavuot*

In this session we explore the values of loving-kindness, *chesed* and generous giving, *tzedakah*.

The Guiding Questions in this unit are:

- *How can I better understand the needs of others?*
- *Where in your life have you seen giving that is also receiving and receiving that is also giving?*
- *Where in your life do you see kindness and generosity being contagious?*
- *What stories of generosity inspire you?*
- *Knowing that givers are happier people, how might you grow your generosity and share it with your children?*

Meaning-ful Vocabulary

Week	<i>shavua</i> , and weeks <i>Shavuot</i> (also the name of the holiday of the giving of the Torah, which is celebrated seven weeks after Passover).	שבוע שבועות
Loving-kindness	<i>chesed</i>	חסד
Giving money to those in need	<i>tzedakah</i>	צדקה
Justice	<i>tzedek</i>	צדק

Facilitating the Session

1. Seek Participant Input

In advance, invite a few sisters to take a small role in leading the session such as:

- Hosting the event, including serving traditional Shavuot foods.
- Planning an activity to accompany the study session (see Program Ideas for suggestions).
- Compiling a list of Shavuot celebrations in your area that participants might like to attend.
- Co-facilitating a discussion about generous giving in everyday life.
- Researching and presenting to the group about the State of Israel's acts of kindness throughout the world (See Soul Spark Activity: ***Spotlight on Israel Emergency Response***)
- Ask if one or more of the women would like to share a way she brought home the learning from your last gathering. to the Participant Input section

****Involving participants helps them take ownership over their learning, and prepares them to take the lead in their family and community!**



2. Choose Your Session Activities (in advance!)

You know what will best engage your participants and what are their personal and parenting goals for growth and development, so tailor the session to their interests and needs. **Soul Sparks** activities carry a particular power, and we encourage you to include them where possible.

3. Prep Your Space

Before the session begins, prepare the room by helping the hostess put out a spread of Shavuot foods. Arrange the space or seating to support connection. Think about what materials you will need and make sure you have everything prepared.

4. Welcome & Warm- Up

Make a ritual of transitioning your participants from their hectic, everyday lives to your safe space of learning and growth. Consider engaging your participants in a stretching exercise or a short guided visualization of giving or receiving *chesed*, or closing their eyes and doing a body scan meditation, offering tender loving attention to different parts of their body.

Reminder! Sisterhood Safe Space

Remind everyone that you are in your Sisterhood Safe Space. of confidentiality and compassionate listening, free of judgment and unsolicited advice.

5. Intro & Inspiration

Introduce the Hebrew word for loving-kindness, *chesed*. Inspire your participants by watching a video about two women's act of *chesed* during a baseball game: www.bit.ly/2ngGB2x, or by watching an inspirational video from Israel about God acting through human *chesed*, so to speak: www.tinyurl.com/hcjrww9.

Ask the women to share a *chesed* role model – a story of care for self or for others in ways that make the world better. After everyone has shared, think together about the themes, longings, and conflicts that emerged. Make a note for yourself about which of these themes is connected to this session, and which themes you would like to follow up on in future meetings.

6. Soul Sparks Activities



There are several different activities in the session that will encourage learning and growth; we suggest choosing one or two for your session. Below are some of our favorites:

What We Know About Givers

Read together this article, with contributions from Tal Ben Shachar, Adrienne Gold and Adam Grant, invite participants to underline one phrase the grabs their attention, and then to read it back “pop-corn style” one after another with a moment of

silent to each idea. Invite participants to dialogue about the ideas that struck them.

Generous Giving as a Spiritual Practice

Ask women, if generous giving could be a spiritual practice, what would they imagine as helpful ways of opening the heart to generosity?

Explore together the texts from Exodus, Ezekiel, Rabbi Salanter, Deuteronomy and Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz. Invite women to speak about what each text offers the vision of making *chesed* a spiritual practice.

In order to become givers, we need to practice. Split the women into pairs and encourage them to read through the practices; noticing needs, practicing small acts of giving, judging favorably, and *tzedakah*. Ask them to choose one or two that they would like to take on. Encourage the pairs to become “accountability partners” for one another and check up on each other through phone calls and texts to support their practices over the next month or longer.

Spotlight on Israel Emergency Response

Before the session, invite one or two of your participants to prepare to present to the group about the State of Israel's *chesed* in its emergency relief responses to disasters across the world.

The facilitators may wish to summarize the information in the session about Israel's emergency response or find videos to present instead (a quick Google search on “Israel international aid response” yields many hits). Talk about what it means to perform *chesed* on personal, communal, national and international scales. Ask your group, how can we become models of *chesed* in all these areas?

7. Reflection & Closing

Recall the main ideas explored in the session and create an opportunity for reflection.

Reflection Suggestion: Ask participants to reflect on the following: “What is one takeaway you'll be going home with after our session today?” or “A *chesed* or *tzedakah* idea or practice that I would like to begin with my family is . . .”

Invite them to respond to the prompt by writing, drawing, or thinking silently. After individual reflection time, you may ask your women to partner and share their reflections, which can be followed with group (voluntary) sharing.

Direct the women's attention to the “**Try It Out: Practical Tips and Resources for Families.**” These suggestions will help them bring the learning they have done today home to their families in interesting and fun ways. Encourage them to choose at least one

thing they will do with their families and come back next time and report on how it went. Give a brief overview of the rest of the unit. Give them an opportunity to schedule a time with their learning partner before they leave the session today. (See “**Learn With Your Sister, pages XX.**”) Let all the women know when you’ll be meeting again and what theme will be explored.

Extra! Program Ideas:

To enhance your session, you may consider a volunteer project to engage with as a group:

- Help in a school or hospital
- Volunteer for a local food kitchen, shelter, or Habitat for Humanity.
- Get involved on an issue such as hunger, child labor, women’s rights, trafficking, or another social-justice-cause that appeals to your group.
- Visit a Jewish senior home to socialize with residents. Most facilities offer volunteer programs and welcome new participants.
- Organize a Pop-Up Giving Circle
 - Amplifier’s quick start guide to planning a Pop-Up Giving Circle makes getting started easy and fun. Amplifier is a

network of more than 120 giving circles inspired by Jewish values, and they offer the Pop-Up guide and additional free resources [at *amplifiergiving.org*](https://amplifiergiving.org), amplifiergiving.org/popupcircle/ or you can get in touch at hello@amplifiergiving.org.

- Would you like to pay forward the experiences and inspiration you’ve gained from the Momentum? A great way to do so is through one of the impactful sponsorship opportunities listed here as the beneficiary of your Pop-Up Giving Circle or individual giving.
 - Sponsor one MOMentum class trip: \$1,000
 - Sponsor one MOMentum Shabbat concert: \$1800
 - Sponsor one MOMentum participant: \$3200
 - Sponsor a set of 7 MOMentum classes: \$7,000
 - Sponsor a new set of podcasts on the Momentum website \$8,000

Priorities in Giving

Have participants jot down some of their personal priorities in giving. Then explore Maimonides’ Ladder of Tzedakah by giving each pair of women slips of paper with each of the levels and inviting them to sort them and then to discuss with each other. Consider as a group the teaching from Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon and the following questions and writing activity.

SORTING LEVELS OF *TZEDAKAH*

With the following instructions below

The strips below show categories that Maimonides included in his ladder of *tzedakah*. Cut them out and consider how to sort them from lowest to highest.



The person who gives graciously, but less than one should.

The person who helps another to become self-supporting by a gift or a loan or by finding employment for the recipient.

The person who gives without making his or her identity known.

The person who gives reluctantly.

The person who gives without knowing to whom he or she gives. The recipient does not know from whom he or she receives.

The person who gives what one should, but only after being asked.

The person who gives without knowing to whom he or she gives, and the recipient knows the identity of the donor.

The person who gives before being asked.



The sales of Year of Growth are used entirely to cover costs of creating, producing, distributing, and supporting the successful use of this educational resource.

Momentum Unlimited
6101 Executive Blvd, Suite 240, Rockville, MD 20852
240-747-7080 | info@MomentumUnlimited.org



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