

ARE WE GENUINELY KIND?

By: Yosef Vogel

The first Jew was a kind man. When he looked for a wife for his son, he was looking first and foremost for a kind woman. Nothing was more important to him than being kind. For he believed that being kind was the lifeblood of civilisation and it was the only way to attract divine blessing into this world.

The question is: How does one know who is really kind. Sure, there are many people who are nice to others. The world is full of so much generosity and good deeds. Indeed, who amongst us believes that we are not kind.

You see, most human beings are primarily concerned with themselves. Whatever we do in life is primarily motivated by the benefit we anticipate for ourselves, as a result. So even when we are showing kindness to others, it might very well be a selfish type of kindness, where we are thinking primarily about ourselves.

The answer to this question is contained in this week's Torah portion. The verse tells us that, when Eliezer went in search for a wife for his master's son Isaac, he waits by the well for a girl who will show kindness to a complete stranger. Because he knows, that while there are many people who show kindness to others, very few people show kindness to strangers. It is only then that we know that it is genuine kindness.

We are all kind. We all help others. The torah is teaching us that we should be genuinely kind. Not to be kind to a person so that we can gain something in return. Not to be charitable so that people would think highly of us. Not even to be kind to others because it makes us feel good. But to be kind to others - even towards someone whom we have never met before and might not ever meet again - only because we really care about other people.

And if we show genuine kindness to others, we will be making our mother Rebecca smile down on us from heaven. And if she smiles down on us, we are sure to smile too.

9th November

Chayei - Sarah (Mevorachim Hachodesh)

Shabbat Begins: 4:05 pm

Shabbat Ends: 5:08 pm