

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's parsha Chukas, we read about the mysterious mitzvah of Parah Aduma, the red heifer. The procedure of the Parah Aduma involved the use of the ashes of a burned red cow to purify those who had been contaminated through contact with a dead body. The mystery of the power of the Parah Aduma to purify lays in the deepest level of understanding the Torah. Even the wisest of men Shlomo HaMelech, could not fathom the mitzvah of the red cow.

One lesson we can however learn from the mitzvah of the red cow, is a lesson in human relations. One irony of the red cow procedure is the following: it purified the impure; while at the same time, it made impure the Kohen who performed the procedure. After the procedure, the Kohen would himself have to undergo a ritual purification, albeit a less complicated procedure than the one who had touched a corpse. The lesson we learn from this irony is the following: We must do chesed - kindness for others, even when it causes us a loss of time or money, for example.

A survivor of the flames of the Holocaust, Shmuel Grunbaum left war-torn Europe and emigrated to America, hoping to rebuild a new life for himself. He made his home in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, among many other fellow Holocaust survivors. But they were all struggling for a livelihood. How would R' Shmuel support himself?

The hand of Hashem guided R' Shmuel. After various failed attempts to find a job, R' Shmuel found a position working in an egg store. It was a dependable job, but the salary was minimal. Reb Shmuel had to devise an additional means of income. Building on his current position, R' Shmuel began an innovative service: he would sell and deliver eggs directly to the customer.

Business began slowly, with an order here and an order there. Word of R' Shmuel's prompt and ethical business spread, and soon R' Shmuel received his first weekly customer. One afternoon, R' Shmuel was busy making his scheduled deliveries. He walked up the narrow flight of steps and carefully placed the carton of eggs on the doorstep of his one weekly customer.

R' Shmuel walked down the steps and began making his way down the street. Quite unexpectedly, he felt a tap on his shoulder. "Excuse me, can you help us make a minyan for minchah?" The man motioned toward the basement entrance of the building he had just left. "Certainly, I will join you." Within a few minutes, the afternoon davening commenced.

Their small minyan of ten grew as davening progressed. All proceeded normally until the middle of the chazan's recitation of the prayers. A sudden movement at one side of the shul caught R' Shmuel's attention.

A man was entering the low-ceilinged shul with a large carton in his hands. R' Shmuel had no trouble recognizing the carton—it contained the eggs he had just delivered! R' Shmuel watched in confusion as the man circulated the room. Each person took a few eggs from the carton and put them aside until the end of minchah.

When his turn came, R' Shmuel waved the man on, indicating that he had no need for eggs. He looked at the eggs in the man's hand, then stared around the shul. Each man there was now the proud possessor of one or two eggs. R' Shmuel was flabbergasted. What was the reason for this strange ritual?

When the davening was over, R' Shmuel approached the man with the now empty carton. "Tell me, where does this custom come from—to give out eggs by davening?" The man smiled at his puzzled expression. "This is the Skvere shtiebel (shul)" he explained.

"The Rebbetzin, who lives upstairs, wanted to support a fellow in the wholesale eggs business. She places a weekly order, but she doesn't really need so many eggs. So she asked me to give them out to the minyan so they won't go to waste. Understand? It is as simple as that."

R' Shmuel nodded thoughtfully. "Oh, yes," he said fervently, "I understand a lot better than you think." R' Shmuel thanked the man and ascended the stairs into the waning sunlight. His burden had been lightened by the discreet concern and chesed of the Rebbetzin of Skvere.

We can learn from this story to try always to do chesed - acts of kindness for others. The Mishna teaches that in fact, doing acts of kindness is one of the three foundations upon which the world rests. (Avos 1,2)

The Kohen sacrificed his own ritual purity for the benefit of another Jew. The same way, must we all sacrifice ourselves to do chesed for others. If we seek always to do kindness for others, then Hashem will surely do kindness with us, because, the mishnah in Sotah (1,7) teaches us that Hashem relates to us, based on the way we relate to others. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**