

Good Shabbos Everyone. *Continued from last Shabbos...* After their seder was over, the children of R' Shea respectfully approached their father. "We understand that you wanted to help the widow and her family," they began, "but what about your own family? We were kept waiting for hours! And besides, what about your own mother? She is an older woman, and she too is a widow! Why did you favor the widow there over the widow here?"

R' Shea understood that their questions were justified. Patiently he said to them, "My dear children, your questions are legitimate. I will answer them with a story that happened to me many years ago with the Chazon Ish."

This is the story he told them: Many years earlier, R' Shea and a group of friends were studying in yeshivos in Bnei Brak. One of the older fellows in their group was having a difficult time finding a shidduch (partner in marriage). One day a number of the young men in the group were told that the Chazon Ish wished to see them. Immediately they made their way to the home of the great sage.

After inquiring as to their own personal welfare, the Chazon Ish said to them, "As friends of this young man [with the shidduch problem], it is your obligation to work on his behalf as diligently as possible to find him a suitable partner in marriage."

The Chazon Ish stressed the importance of this mitzvah and encouraged them to do whatever they could. The young men obeyed his directive and dedicated themselves totally to the effort. They contacted everyone they knew, they made calls, they visited people, they spoke, they cajoled - and finally they were told about a girl who would be suitable for their friend. The young man was introduced to the young lady, and within a short time the two of them decided to marry.

The young men in the group were thrilled. They had accomplished what they had set out to do, and now they couldn't wait to tell the Chazon Ish. They ran to his home to announce that they had fulfilled their mission. The Chazon Ish was overjoyed. The boys informed the great sage that later that same evening there would be a t'na'im (official engagement) and they invited the Chazon Ish to come, for they assumed he would want to participate in this wonderful simchah. The Chazon Ish told them that indeed he would like to come, but that he was occupied at the time with certain matters; however, he asked that once all the people were assembled and the families were ready to make the t'na'im, they should please call for him and he would come.

That evening the families and friends got together, the chassan, and kallah made their entrance, and after some joyous singing, two young men (one of them was R' Shea) were sent to bring the Chazon Ish to the festivities. When R' Shea and his friend came to the home of the Chazon Ish the door to his room was open, so they knocked softly and walked in. They saw that he was involved in a detailed discussion with a man and a woman. The Chazon Ish realized that the young men had entered, but the two young men understood that they could not interrupt the Chazon Ish. They were sure that he would finish with the people shortly and then make his way with them to the t'na'im of the new chassan and kallah.

But the Chazon Ish was in no rush. The two people had a very long list of items written on a sheet of paper from which they were reading. The man would mention an item and the woman would say, "Should we buy this?" If the Chazon Ish said, "No," they would go to the next item. If he said, "Yes," one of them would ask, "How much should we pay for it? Is that the cheapest price we can get it for?" Over and over the same questions were asked for every single item on that sheet. Patiently and carefully the Chazon Ish thought about each item mentioned and then gave his opinion as to whether they should stock the item or not.

Finally, after more than an hour, the man and the woman rose to leave. They couldn't stop thanking the Chazon Ish for his valuable time. Only then did the Chazon Ish get up to go with the two young men. "You must be wondering," began the Chazon Ish, before the two young men could even ask, "why I kept you waiting so long, and what was so important about my discussion with those two people. Let me explain. You see, that husband and wife are survivors of the concentration camps. They recently came to Eretz Yisroel, hoping to rebuild their lives. They decided to open a store and they came to me for help. I couldn't help them with money, so the least I could do is help them with advice. Every shekel they invest is important for their future and so I tried, to the best of my ability, to help them decide what to purchase for their store. It is my mitzvah to assist them, but it is not only my mitzvah - it is your mitzvah as well- because by your waiting you also had a share in that mitzvah, as did all the people who were kept waiting at the t'na'im. We all had the obligation to help those two get started in business again so they could begin a new life."

"And that is the reason," said R' Shea to his children, late into the night, that Pesach, "why I went to the widow with the young children and helped them with their seder before coming home. Because all of us - myself, you, your mother and grandmother - as members of Klal Yisroel had the obligation to help her. By your waiting patiently for me to come back, you too shared in the mitzvah of helping that unfortunate family through this seder night."

The Talmud tells us that a Jew is distinguished by three character traits: Shyness, Mercifulness, and the tendency towards doing of acts of kindness. (Yevamos 79b) The Talmud goes so far as to say that someone who lacks one of these qualities must be checked out to make sure that he is really Jewish.

Let us use these weeks between Pesach and Shavuos to work on ourselves, especially in the area of helping others. The more desperate one is for our help, the bigger the mitzvah it is to help them. Sometimes we wonder in life how and why certain opportunities to do chesed (kindness) for others, materialize in our lives. The answer is, that Hashem is sending us a test, to see where we are holding in the midah (character trait) of kindness. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**