

These shall you abominate from among the birds, they may not be eaten - they are an abomination...the chasidah. (11:13,19)

One would think that with a name as impressive as *chasidah*, a derivative from *chesed*, kindness, this bird would rate a high standard of *kashrus*. Why is it included as a non-kosher fowl? Commenting on the *Talmud Chullin* 63a, Rashi attributes the name *chasidah* to the kindness it displays towards members of its species by sharing food with them. Yet, its comparison is not recognized. The *Chidushei Ha'Rim* explains that it directs its kindness only towards its own species / fellow. In other words, *chesed* is not a commodity that we control at our pleasure. If someone does not fit into our criteria for *chesed*, if he is not one of our fellows, then we do not perform *chesed* for them. That is not the *Torah's* perspective on giving. *Chesed* is a G-d-given mandate. Those whom Hashem has made fortunate enough to do *chesed* to benefit others, should view themselves as a conduit for helping all who are in need.

We may add another lesson to be derived herein. Performing *chesed* is not necessarily a sign of *kashrus*. The fowl must conform to the laws of *kashrus*, it must have the necessary signs that deem it kosher. Perhaps this might serve as a lesson for us. While performing humanitarian acts of kindness is certainly a valuable trait, it does not mitigate non-conformance to Jewish law. One will receive his due reward for his act of benevolence. Unfortunately, he will also have to answer for ignoring the rest of the *Torah*.