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Tell Your Children

The Humble & Stubborn Shamash

The holy R' Shmelke of Nikolsburg conducted himself in the path of Chassidut.

The townsfolk of Nikolsburg were not Chassidim and they disapproved of the seemingly odd behavior of their community Rabbi, Reb Shmelke, who was a Chassidic Rebbe. The most prominent members of the community, therefore, called a meeting and decided to dismiss him. They instructed the shamash (beadle) to inform the Rabbi of their decision.

This shamash was a simple fellow, though honest and upright. He asked them why they had suddenly decided to do such a thing?

"It's none of your business," they told him brusquely. "Your job is to do as you are told."

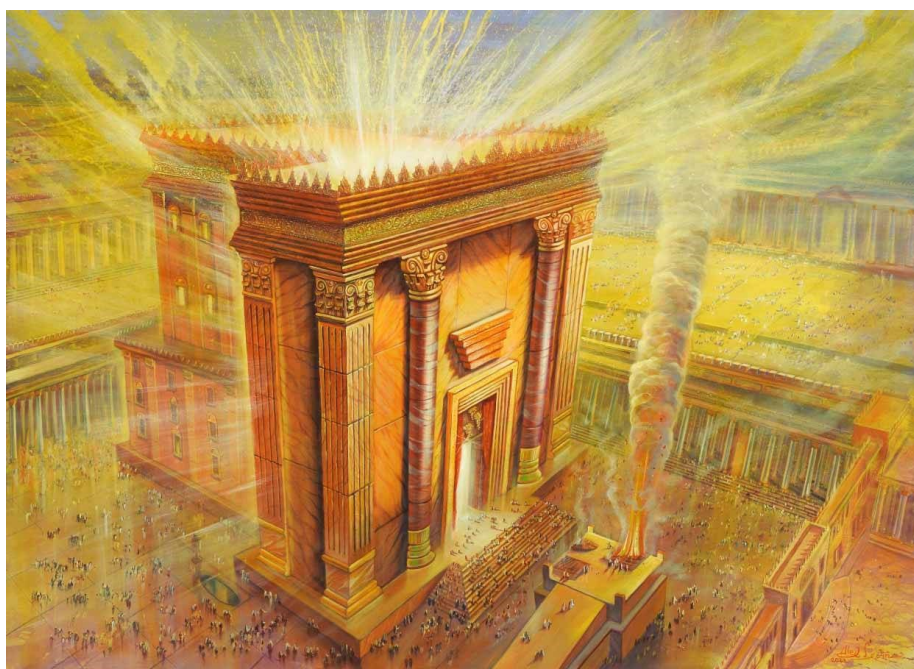
Not Giving Up

The shamash did not give up. He pleaded for an answer to his question, until they told him that Reb Shmelke's odd behavior made him unfit for the post of Rabbi of their city. The shamash was insistent – "I know for a fact that our Rabbi is a perfect tzaddik!" he exclaimed.

The important members of the community knew that their shamash was a truthful man and would not utter a lie so they asked him, "How do you know that he is a tzaddik?"

"Very well," he answered, "I will tell you. You know as well as I do that it is the custom in this city for someone to knock on the doors of all the Jewish townsfolk before dawn, to wake everyone up for the morning service of the Creator.

"Every night, as I go knocking on my rounds, I come to the Rabbi's house and I go in. I always find him sitting and studying Torah and next to him sits another man, whom I don't know. One day, I asked him who this was. He told me that it was Eliyahu the Prophet.



Painting by Alex Levin, artlevin.com

Two Guests

"Once it happened that, for some reason, I came around later than usual, and saw the Rabbi at the door of his house holding two candlesticks. Two men were with him; one was the one I see there always and the other wore a golden crown.

"The two men left and went on their way and the Rabbi went back inside his house. I asked him who was the visitor with the crown of gold? He told me that it was Menashe the son of Chizkiyahu, king of Judah. I asked the Rabbi what business brought Menashe ben Chizkiyahu to his home? He explained to me that he came to weigh in in reference to a question of Jewish law which our Rabbi received that very day from a certain Rabbi from a different city.

"In the city of that other Rabbi, there lived a chassid who had taken it upon himself to smash all the statues and images in the local church. He was handed over to the court and sentenced to death. Now in that city there is a welfare brotherhood whose task is to give financial support to poor widows whose husbands passed away and left them penniless.

"But when the widow of this poor chassid came to them and asked them for sustenance, they refused. They claimed their regulations only allow them to support the widows of men who have died a natural death, not widows of men who take their own lives. They told her that her husband, by doing what he did, was such a man.

The Deciding Factor

"Their dispute was brought to their local Rabbi and he referred the inquiry to Reb Shmelke here in Nikolsburg. Our Rabbi saw the possibility in both arguments and was not sure which way to respond.

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Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	7:04	8:26
Tel Aviv	7:27	8:28
Haifa	7:18	8:29
Beer Sheva	7:25	8:26
New York	8:05	9:11



Self-Sacrifice Beyond the Torah

Our Torah portion, Pinchas, opens with the reward that Hashem gave to Pinchas for his zealous act. Pinchas performed a dangerous act, risking both his body and his soul. Although the Torah states that for a sin like the one committed by Zimri ben Salu, “zealots may strike him,” there is no obligation to do so. In fact, if someone asks whether to carry out such an act, “he is not instructed to do so.” Yet Pinchas summoned the courage and took action.

The Jerusalem Talmud says that Pinchas’s act was “not with the consent of the Sages,” and they even “sought to excommunicate him.” They refrained from doing so only because “the spirit of holiness came upon him and declared: ‘And it shall be for him and for his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood.’” Hashem revealed that Pinchas’s deed was so beloved that He rewarded him with a remarkable gift — eternal priesthood.

To Save the People of Israel

From this we learn the greatness of Pinchas’s act. Before Hashem announced that Pinchas “turned back My wrath from the Children of Israel,” Pinchas knew that what he was doing was “not with the consent of the Sages.” He had learned Torah

from Moshe Rabbeinu, and just as he received from him the halachah of “zealots may strike him,” so too he knew the halachic detail that “he is not instructed to do so,” and that this act was “not with the Sages’ approval.” In other words, his act of zeal was both a physical self-sacrifice and a spiritual one — for he risked excommunication — and yet he still rose and acted zealously for Hashem.

Pinchas saw the dire spiritual state of the Jewish people — they had fallen into a terrible spirit of folly, committing severe sins that brought a devastating plague. Pinchas thought: What is the worth of my body and soul, if by sacrificing both I can turn back Hashem’s wrath and save the Jewish people?

From the Essence of the Soul

Such behavior — zealousness for Hashem and for the Jewish people, through true self-sacrifice — stems from the essence of the Jewish soul. The root of the soul is higher even than the Torah itself, and therefore self-sacrifice manifests in areas beyond the measured boundaries of Torah. The Torah does not *demand* this level of sacrifice — but the Jew, because of his essential bond with Hashem, gives himself over with no calculations.

This self-sacrifice brought Pinchas the

reward of “a covenant of eternal priesthood for him and his offspring after him.” This reward too is above Torah’s regular framework. According to Torah law, the priesthood is inherited from father to son. Pinchas himself was not a kohen and could not have passed on the priesthood. But since he acted with zeal for his G-d — with a zeal that transcended the boundaries of Torah — Hashem gave him priesthood “for him and his offspring,” in a way that also transcends Torah’s limitations.

To Go Out and Save

This teaches us a lesson for our generation: when we see the state of the Jewish people today, we must go out with self-sacrifice to influence and inspire other Jews to keep Torah and mitzvot. Even someone who still needs to learn and deepen their own understanding of Torah is still expected to put aside his own individual good in order to help save the Jews around them.

Through this kind of work, we merit the revelation of “*Pinchas is Eliyahu*” — the harbinger of the redemption — speedily, in our days.

(from the teachings of the Rebbe, Likkutei Sichot, vol. 18, translated from Sichot HaShevua)

From Our Sages

Sacrifices

"My offering, My bread" (Numbers 28:2).

The sacrifices are compared to bread. Just as food draws and brings life from the soul into the body, so too the service of the sacrifices draws Divine abundance into the worlds.

(Alter Rebbe, Likkutei Torah)

"The one lamb shall you offer in the morning, and the other lamb shall you offer in the afternoon" (Numbers 28:4).

Both in times of “morning” — times of joy, and in times of “afternoon” — difficult times, one must remain consistent in the sacrificial service, meaning, in striving to draw near to G-d and cleave to Him.

(the Rebbe)

“A continual burnt offering, as the one offered at Mount Sinai” (Numbers 28:6).

In the Talmud tractate Menachot we are taught: When the Temple no longer stands, one who reads the section of sacrifices is considered as if they offered a sacrifice. For this reason, we recite the tamid (daily sacrifice) passage every day.

This is hinted in the phrase “a continual burnt offering”—how can it be offered continually when there is no Temple? The verse continues: “as the one offered at Mount Sinai”—through Torah study, which was given at Sinai.

(Mikra Mefores)

Entirely for G-d

The tamid (daily) offering, which symbolizes all the sacrifices, was an olah (burnt offering)—completely consumed by fire, entirely for G-d. This teaches us that if we desire true closeness with G-d—korban (sacrifice) sharing the same Hebrew letters as kiruv (closeness)—we must serve Him in the manner of “entirely for G-d”, not in order to receive a reward.

(the Rebbe)

The Goal of Materiality

Chassidim sat with Rabbi Nachum Yisrael of Liphna and spoke of the many Jews who flock to tzaddikim, focusing mostly on material needs. The tzaddik responded:

“When a Jew asks for material things, his intention is for the sake of Heaven — so that he can fulfill mitzvot, do good deeds, and raise his children in the path of Torah and mitzvot.”

He added: “When the daughters of Tzeloachad came to Moshe and requested to receive their father’s inheritance, Moshe interpreted their intention as being for the sake of Heaven — that through wealth they could better serve Hashem. This is the meaning of the verse, ‘Moshe brought (the Hebrew word used “vayakrev” is similar to the work “kiruv” meaning, closeness) their case before Hashem’ — he ‘brought closer’ their request to Hashem and interpreted it as a desire for closeness to G-d.

“To this, Hashem responded: ‘The daughters of Tzeloachad speak rightly’ — indeed, that was their true intention.”

Chassidus Page



Building the Third Temple

Chassidut, with its focus on joy in the service of G-d, did not agree to turn the days of Bein HaMetzarim (the Three Weeks of mourning) into days of sadness and depression. Instead of focusing on mourning the destruction, the aim was to fill hearts with longing for the Redemption.

During the days of Bein HaMetzarim, Chassidic communities increase their focus on the topic of the Redemption and the anticipation of the rebuilding of the Third Temple. The Lubavitcher Rebbe called for studying during these days the sections of the Torah related to the Mishkan and the Temple: starting with the Written Torah (Terumah and Vayakhel-Pekudei; Ezekiel chapters 40–43), continuing with the Oral Torah (Tractate Middot), and on to halacha (Rambam's Laws of the Temple) and Chassidic teachings on the subject of the Temple.

In the Book of Ezekiel, G-d tells Ezekiel, "let them measure its design," which means that the Jewish people should actively delve into the study of the measurements and dimensions of the Temple. The Midrash tells us that Ezekiel said to G-d: "We are now in exile, let us first go out of exile and then we will learn the laws of the Temple."

G-d responded: Just because My children are in exile, does that mean that the building of My House should cease? That can't be! Let them learn the laws of the House and in this way, they will do them. The Midrash explains this as, "I will consider it as if they were dealing with the construction of the House." From here it is understood that, though the Third Temple will be built by G-d, still it is also through our efforts. Through learning about the Third Temple, we help build it.

In the year 5751 (1991), the Rebbe added: "Since we are standing on the threshold of the Redemption, which is coming immediately, it is understood that the study of the laws of the Temple this year must be in a completely different way:

"Firstly, the study is not due to intensified mourning or effort to correct the lack caused by the destruction of the Temple, but rather (even if there had been no destruction) it is driven by yearning and desire for the greatness and perfection of the Third Temple, about which it is said: 'The glory of this latter House will be greater than the first—a greatness that never existed before (not in the Second Temple, not in the First Temple, and not even in the Mishkan that Moses built)...

"More importantly, the learning must come with the absolute certainty that this is not just a (theoretical or academic study) "halacha for the Messianic era"—but a practical, actionable halacha, ready to be implemented in the very next moment. This is because the 'future Temple that we await is built and complete (already now Above) and will be revealed and descend from Heaven' in an instant!

"Just as we've recently spoken about the special increase in Torah study related to the Redemption and Moshiach—not (just) as a segulah (spiritual merit) to hasten the Redemption, but primarily as a way to begin actually *living* with the ideas of Moshiach and the Redemption, to 'live with the times' of the Messianic era... and to practically conduct ourselves—in thought, speech, and action—in a way that aligns with this special time, as we stand on the threshold of the Redemption and can point with our finger and say: '*Behold, he (the King Moshiach) is coming!*'"

Moshiach Now

Peace and Harmony

Our Sages identify Pinchas with Elijah the Prophet, the herald of the Redemption. They explain that Elijah's function will be more than that of a bearer of news. He will also help inspire love and harmony that will make Redemption a reality. Similarly, Maimonides writes that Elijah will come "solely to spawn peace." Spreading peace will encourage Moshiach's coming, creating a setting wherein he will desire to enter.

This also serves as a lesson to all of us. Working to generate harmony will serve as a catalyst for the ultimate harmony Moshiach will introduce in the world.

(from the teachings of the Rebbe, adapted from Keeping in Touch, with perm. from Sichos in English)

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The Humble & Stubborn Shamash

continued from page one:

"Then along came Menashe ben Chizkiyahu and told him that he had been reincarnated in that very chassid in order that he should be able to rectify the evil that he had done in his earlier life, when he had set up an image of an idol in the Temple. And now he had come to ask our Rabbi to see that the poor widow of that chassid should get her rightful help."

Understandably, after hearing these words from the shamash, the idea of the prominent men (to relieve the Rabbi of his post as Rabbi of their community) was totally shelved.

Great Humility

This story was told by Reb Simcha Bunem of Pshischah, who concluded with the following words:

"How great is the humility of that shamash! Night after night, Eliyahu the Prophet stood revealed before his eyes. Yet, it never occurred to him that he had any reason to be proud. All he did was to speak in praise of his Rabbi, telling the men, how Eliyahu came to their Rabbi and revealed to him the secrets of the Torah."

About Reb Shmelke: Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg, 1726-1778, was a student of the Maggid of Mezeritch. He was a Levite who traced his lineage to Shmuel HaNavi and passed away at the young age of 54 (exactly like Shmuel the Prophet). Though he was Rabbi in Nikolsburg for a few short years, he made a powerful impact there. The Yeshiva he opened there included his disciples who later became some of the most famous Chassidic Rebbes, such as the Chozeh of Lublin, Reb Menachem Mendel of Rymanov, Reb Yisrael of Koznitz, Reb Mordechai Banet and Reb Moshe Leib of Sassov. His published Torah insights can be found in Divrei Shmuel, Imrei Shmuel, Nazir Hashem, and Shemen Hatov.

Adapted from A Treasury of Chassidic Tales on the Torah by Uri Kaploun – story originally from Sippurei Chassidim by Rabbi S.Y. Zevin. Reprinted here from: melavamalkastories.com

Human Interest

A Dollar from the Rebbe

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House recently.

Netanyahu presented Trump a leather case containing a U.S. dollar bill—a dollar the Rebbe had handed out with a blessing for success.

Netanyahu has long been influenced by the Rebbe, having met several times. The Rebbe encouraged Netanyahu to stand strong in defense of the Land of Israel and its people. Trump, for his part, visited the Rebbe's Ohel in Queens during his reelection campaign.

The Rebbe's dollar came to Netanyahu through Meir Bar Lev, the Chabad-affiliated Deputy Mayor of Beitar Illit. Ahead of Netanyahu's diplomatic trip, Bar Lev gifted him a Rebbe dollar for success. Moved by



the gesture, Netanyahu asked for a second dollar to present to Trump.

Bar Lev returned to the source of the first dollar: Rabbi Chaim Greenberg, Director of Heichal Menachem in Beitar Illit. Rabbi Greenberg agreed to give another dollar from his collection—the one handed to Trump was originally received from the Rebbe on 29 Shevat 5746 (1986).

The dollar was placed in a leather case and the engraving read:

*To President Donald J. Trump
A true friend and partner of Israel
and the Jewish people, From Prime
Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.*

Bar Lev gave the gift to Netanyahu on behalf of Chabad. He also cited the first Rashi in the Torah, which explains the Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish People by Divine right, reinforcing the Rebbe's unwavering stance on the integrity of the land.

Netanyahu, who keeps a photo of himself with the Rebbe in his office, reaffirmed he continues to act with the Rebbe's guidance in mind in regards safeguarding Eretz Yisrael.

adapted from COLlive

Farbrengen



Question: I have a bad habit of watching television on my computer. I know there are better ways to spend my time, and I know it isn't helping my service of Hashem. But I live alone, and after a long day it's so tempting to relax in front of a screen. How can I stop?

Answer: The first step toward change is recognizing the issue and wanting to grow. You've already taken that step—you are on the right track. It is written in Tehillim (34:15), "Turn away from bad and do good..." This verse presents two complementary strategies: *sur m'ra* (turn away from bad) and *asei tov* (do good). Both are essential.

Sur M'ra – Creating Distance: Start by making the habit harder to access. You may not be able to get rid of your computer, but you can install a strong filter to block television and streaming sites. Use the "5-Minute Delay" rule—when you feel the urge to watch, wait 5 minutes before acting. During that time, do something else (e.g., stretch, drink water, daven, or learn a short piece). This small pause often reduces the craving. These may seem like small steps, but they create distance between you and the behavior, making it easier to resist. The hardest part is the beginning—after that, it gets easier.

Asei Tov: Light pushes away darkness. Filling your life with uplifting activities will naturally reduce the pull toward passive entertainment. Create a post-work schedule that includes meaningful goals: learning Torah (even just 15 minutes), joining a chevra, exercising, attending a shiur, reading a good book. Keep to your routine—the consistency builds new habits and fulfillment.

Pay attention to triggers—boredom, loneliness, a difficult day, etc. Often, the craving isn't for the show itself, but for escape or comfort. Like someone who drinks to relax, the desire fades when the underlying tension is addressed. Identifying and resolving those triggers helps reduce the urge altogether.

The *Sefer HaChinuch* teaches that the heart follows the actions—a person is shaped by their actions. Change the behavior, and your thoughts and feelings will begin to shift as well. Over time, you'll not only lose the desire—you'll gain a stronger, deeper connection to a more meaningful life.

Aharon Schmidt, marriage & individual counseling: www.aharonschmidt.com.

**To receive periodic ideas on navigating marriage and personal growth, reach out to aharonschmidt@gmail.com*

Cooking Tip of the Week

Wiped out but need a side? This one saved the day. I tossed unpeeled sweet potatoes into a pan, roasted them whole at 200°C for an hour—zero prep, zero fuss. Once cooled and sliced, they were caramelized, creamy, and completely stole the show. Effortless and unforgettable.

*Alizah Hochstead
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Halacha Corner – Reminder of the Destruction of the Temple

There is a halachah in Shulchan Aruch that there should be a reminder of the destruction of the Temple at every joyous occasion in one's life. One application of this halachah is when one is building or renovating a house or apartment they should leave an unfinished area measuring an amah by an amah (approx. 1.5 ft x 1.5 ft) which can be seen right when one walks into the house; this area should not be newly plastered, painted, nor wallpapered.

There are some halachic authorities who are lenient and say that the unplastered area may be covered, and others who say it may not. Some say that this should be done in every room of the house, but the consensus among poskim is that leaving an unfinished area near the entrance is sufficient.

Adapted from Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita, member of the Badatz of Crown Heights; One Minute Halacha, # 344, crownheightsconnect.com



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