



The Community

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Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

Goodness for Goodness Sake

"Shammai (-[Link](#)) would say: Make your Torah study a permanent fixture of your life. Say little and do much. And receive every man with a pleasant countenance" (-Ethics of Our Fathers, Chapter 1, Mishna 15). Simply speaking, Shammai is teaching (a) our main occupation should be Torah-study, and only when exhausted from Torah-study should we go work, (b) commit to a little, while actually do a lot (as we find by Abraham (-Genesis 18:3, 5 & 6), "And he said... And I will take a morsel of bread, and sustain your hearts," only at the end to, "and he took a calf, tender and good."), and (c) as Maimonides writes (-Laws of Gifts to the Poor, Chapter 10, Law 4), "Whenever a person gives charity to a poor person with an unpleasant countenance and with his face buried in the earth, he loses and destroys his merit even if he gives him 1000 gold pieces." However, this cannot be the full meaning of Shammai's teaching, for this is a teaching in *Ethics of Our Fathers*, which is not a book of laws, but specifically a book of Beyond the Letter of the Law, known as *Milsa D'Chassidusa*, the ways of a *chassid*, hence, we must take a deeper look into what Shammai is truly teaching us.

Shammai is furthering the teaching of a previous *mishna* (-[Link](#); -Mishna 2), "The world stands on three things: Torah (study), the service of G-d (sacrifices; Prayer), and deeds of kindness." However, not everyone can focus on all three, and therefore, must select one as the main ("permanent fixture"), while the other two are lesser so. Now, even though one can choose any of these as their *permanent fixture*, comes along Shammai to teach us, that from the perspective of, "*Milsa D'Chassidusa*," one should specifically choose Torah-study as his, "*permanent fixture*." Meaning, that even one who from a quantitative perspective cannot make Torah-study his *permanent fixture*, and can only study at set times, before and after work, nevertheless, from a qualitative perspective, Torah-study should be his *permanent fixture*!

And with this, Shammai goes on to say that the purpose of Torah-study should not be for the purpose of giving Torah-rulings, rather, "Say little," in giving Torah-rulings, and instead, study Torah for the sake of Torah-study in itself. If so, that Torah-study is not for the sake of rulings or for the sake of, "Great is Torah-study, for it brings to action," hence, the other two pillars (*service of G-d and deeds of kindness*), does not have to be a main focus in our lives?! Therefore, Shammai continues with, "Do much!" But, nevertheless, one may say, that if Torah-study is the primary (even if *service of G-d and deeds of kindness* are necessary), and Torah-study, as in all intellectual pursuits, demands to diminish one's social interactions, or at least deal only with those who will help further our Torah-study, therefore, Shammai continues with, "And receive every man with a pleasant countenance."

However, how can one person embrace all of these three antithetical pillars, in which one (*Torah-study*) demands isolation, while the others (*deeds of kindness and even service of G-d*) demand social engagement?! Hence, we are taught that name of the teacher of this teaching is *Shammai*, which comes from the teaching (-Talmud, Moed Kattan 5a) on the verse in Psalms (-50:23), "And to him who orders (*vesam*) his way, I will show the salvation of G-d," "... *Do not read vesam* (who orders), rather, (as) *vesham*, (and appraises)." Hence, Shammai (*vesham* -and appraises) is telling us that if we honestly appraise the powers that G-d has given each of us, we will see that we are each capable of performing the antithetical services, of while making *Torah-study* our *permanent fixture*, and nevertheless, we can engage with *service of G-d and deeds of goodness*.

Deeper yet, Shammai is telling us that each of these three pillars must be for no other sake than for itself: *Torah-study* solely for the sake of studying Torah, *Do much*, solely for the sake of doing G-d's will, and *Receive every man with a pleasant countenance*, solely because they may need an emotional uplifting. For (-Zohar Vol III, 73a), "Israel, Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are all one," and just like G-d is not a *conduit* for any *ulterior motives*, G-d forbid, so too, Torah, Mitzvot, and (the behaviors of) Israel are not for any *ulterior motives*. Rather, each of our services of the *Three Pillars* are to be solely for the sake of *Goodness for Goodness Sake*. And ultimately, through our actions of, "receive every man with a pleasant countenance," G-d will receive us with His pleasant countenance, with *Moshiach* ushering in the final redemption!

This Week...

THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2022 * ז' ניסן תשפ"ב

Make an [Eruv Tavshilin](#) · Holiday Candle Lighting: North Miami: 7:29 PM · Mincha: 7:15 PM

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2022 * כ' ניסן תשפ"ב

TORAH READING: [Passover](#) (Exodus 13:17-15:26) & [Maftir](#) (Numbers 28:19-25) · HAFTORAH: [Samuel II](#) 22:1-51

SEVENTH DAY OF PASSOVER: Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Mincha: 7:15 PM

Shabbat/Holiday Candle Lighting: North Miami: before 7:29 PM -See [THE PASSOVER GUIDE](#)

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2022 * כב' ניסן תשפ"ב

TORAH READING: [Passover](#) (Deut. 15:19-16:17) & [Maftir](#) (Num. 28:19-25) · HAFTORAH: [Isaiah](#) 10:32-12:6

Last Day of Passover · Shacharit: 9:30 AM · YIZKOR SERVICES: 11:00 AM · Mincha: 7:00 PM

Moshiach's Seudah: 7:20 PM · Holiday Ends: North Miami: 8:24 -See [THE PASSOVER GUIDE](#)