

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

Captivating stories full of Yiras Shamayim taken from Shmuessin that Reb Kalman Krohn z'tl gave in Adelpia Yeshiva

Rebbe Reb Elimelech- Busha

The *rebbe* Reb Elimelech and the *rebbe* Reb Zusha were brothers, and they were tremendous *tzaddikim*. They were so elevated, that to others, they were almost angels. People would comment that the only reason they were in a physical body was so that others should see them and learn from their greatness.

At one point in their lives, the *rebbe* Reb Elimelech and the *rebbe* Reb Zusha decided to go into exile. Like many other exalted *yidden* throughout the generations, they wanted the humiliation and suffering that comes along with *galus* to serve as an atonement for their sins. They went into exile together, and would walk from town to town, two dusty, anonymous paupers with no roof of their own. Their meals consisted of dry crusts of bread and maybe some shriveled onion which they received from kindly Jews and ate on benches in local shuls.

They suffered a lot through their travels. In addition to the strenuous traveling conditions, they were at the mercy of the elements, and they

were forced to depend on the largesse of others for their daily bread. It was not unusual for stones to be thrown their way, or for them to be addressed in unflattering terms.

After one especially exhausting day, they felt that they could go on no longer and dragged their feet to the nearest inn. The innkeeper inquired if they had money to pay him, and they showed him the few pennies that they had collected. They begged to be allowed to stay for the night despite the inadequacy of the sum they were offering. The innkeeper was in a good mood, and he agreed to allow them to stay. "There is being a wedding here tonight," He told them. "You are invited to come."

The *chassan* and *kallah* were simple, common people and the wedding simple and common as well. Guests arrived dressed in their best Shabbos clothing, and the *chuppah* took place. After a modest meal, there was lively dancing.

The *rebbe* Reb Elimelech and the *rebbe* Reb Zusha sat side by side, watching the proceedings. Having walked tens of miles in the course of the previous few days, they were thoroughly fatigued, and they dozed off in their seats.

During the dancing, the guests divided into two groups facing each other, with one man between them. As the music played, each of the groups would playfully push the man in the middle toward the other group, while he had to retain his balance. They were having a great time, with many volunteers taking their turn in the middle.

Suddenly, someone spotted the two holy *rebbe*s dozing off on the side. "Hey, see those beggars?" He pointed to his friends. "Let's put one of them in the middle!"

They walked over to Reb Zusha and pushed him into the middle. The music was blaring, the guests were singing, and they pushed Reb Zusha from side to side. The children joined in the fun,

kicking and pushing as Reb Zusha struggled to retain his footing.

Reb Elimelech, dozing off in his chair, suddenly noticed that his brother was not with him. Straightening up, he was shocked to see Reb Zusha being pushed around the center of the crowd like a soccer ball. However, since he knew that his brother had opted to go into *galus* in order to receive atonement through humiliation, he stayed on the side and did not interfere.

Despite the physical pain and the disgrace, Reb Zusha remained silent throughout the entire ordeal. When they finished with him, they dragged him ceremoniously back to his seat, entertaining themselves at his expense. The *rebbe* Reb Elimelech's heart ached for his brother's degradation, and he positioned his chair in front of Reb Zusha to protect him from the mocking crowds.

"Hey, what happened to the beggar?" A young man asked, suddenly noticing that the object of their amusement was no longer in middle of the circle. "Let's bring him back!"

"There are two beggars over there," Someone noted. "Why should we always use the one in the front? Let the guy hiding in the back come into the circle this time."

They walked over to the two great brothers and grabbed hold of Reb Zusha a second time. Despite Reb Elimelech's desire to spare his brother, it was only Reb Zusha who was made to suffer in the middle of the circle of dancers.

When Reb Zusha finally returned to his seat after the second humiliating round, he remarked to his brother, "I'm sorry. I know you wanted to suffer the humiliation for a *kapparah*. For some reason, Hashem didn't allow it, and only I merited to suffer."

Embarrassment is one of the worst feelings in the world, and we should all be spared humiliation. However, if someone does get shamed publically, he should recognize that he received a tremendous atonement, and that is something that not everyone merits to achieve. These great men understood the true power of *bushah*, to the extent that they were dismayed when they didn't merit to receive it.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we must be meticulously careful in ensuring that we are never the cause of someone else's shame or degradation- a feeling terrible enough to serve as atonement for grave sins.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

This story is taken from tape # A38

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