

# LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE: STEPPING INTO THE SHAMASH ROLE



We light candles for each night of Hanukkah, starting with one on the first night and progressing to eight on the last night. The shamash is hugely important; without it, the other candles cannot fulfill their mitzvah. The shamash lifts up the other candles, bringing them to wholeness and holiness.

## SHAMASH

On Hanukkah, we use a special candle called the shamash to light the rest of the candles on our hanukkiah (a menorah with nine candlesticks used specifically for Hanukkah).

Each of us can be a shamash in our own lives. The middah (Jewish value) of tikkun olam (repairing the world) tells us it is our responsibility to help uplift and heal our communities and the world.

Leadership is a service role; it does not necessarily mean being the best. There is a Jewish midrash that explains Moses was picked to be the leader of the Jewish people because he cared about each and every sheep in his flock.

When it comes to mental well-being, we all have a connection. Whether you struggle with your own mental health, have a loved one who does or are part of the Jewish community, creating a kehillah kedoshah (a sacred community) helps each member (or candle!) shine their brightest.

**This Hanukkah, think about how you care for others and what it means to step into the shamash role as a leader.**

What is one special strength I have to offer my community?  
(If you struggle to think of a strength, ask yourself what you frequently get thanked for?)

What's one time I used compassion or empathy this past month?

Choose one person: how can you lift them up or support them in something they care about?

What is one way to search for the good in others?

What's one thing I can do to be inclusive and invite others to the table?

What's one issue facing my community that I'd like to get involved with?

What's one resource I know about and love that I could share with others?

What's one thing I can do this week to make someone feel celebrated?



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