



KINDER TORAH®

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Ki Sisa



Shabbos

"The Children of Israel will observe the Shabbos, to make it an eternal covenant for generations. Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever, that in six days Hashem made the heaven and earth and on the seventh day He rested and relaxed" (Shemos 31:16-17). Listen to this story about the importance of Shabbos.

It was the Jewish wedding of the century, the daughter of Rabbi Chaim Elazar Schapiro, the illustrious Munkatzcer Rebbe, was to marry the son of the Rebbe of Partzov. Both Chassidic dynasties were royal, aristocratic, and majestic. The ceremony was to be equally regal. The bride and groom would ride in opulent carriages, drawn by four white horses. The wedding meal was so large that every needy member of the community would be allowed to partake.

There was so much excitement that a news crew came to film the wedding. The film would be sent to Jewish communities worldwide. "Imagine!" thought the reporters. "This would attract hundreds of Jewish people who had roots in Europe!" The difficult part was to convince the Munkatzcer Rebbe to speak for the cameras. The Rebbe vehemently opposed the frivolities and wanton ideas of the cinema, and would not participate in a film. The producer assured the Rebbe that only his voice, not his face (an assurance that proved to be false), would be presented to the large audiences. "Rebbe, this is a wonderful opportunity for you to talk about the Hassidic court of Munkatzc! Imagine how many Jews would be fascinated by your life's work. It would also be a wonderful opportunity to send personal wishes to all your followers who have left Europe."

Finally, the Rebbe consented. The film caught the Rebbe speaking for the microphones. He was very brief. Tearfully, he repeated his message a few times and then turned his head and stopped talking. The American crew was excited. They were going to present the wedding with its entire

mystique and majesty to the audiences. However, when the wedding film was shown in theatres the scene of the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony was a stark contrast to the interview with the Rebbe. They did not see a jubilant Rabbi Schapiro toasting the large audience upon the joyous occasion. Instead, they saw Rabbi Schapiro pleading tearfully on the silver screen. "Yidden heet der Shabbos!" "Jewish Brothers! Keep the Shabbos!" He then turned his face and wept. Those were the only words that the Rebbe chose to speak.

Kinderlach . . .

The Rebbe knew the importance of Shabbos. Of all of the messages that he could have sent to world Jewry, he chose to warn them about Shabbos. Why? Shabbos distinguishes the Jewish people from the other nations. It is our testimony that Hashem created the world. It is a day of total holiness, a bit of the "world to come." The halachos (Torah laws) regarding the observance of Shabbos are many and sometimes complex. It is very important to set aside time to learn them. If we do not know what is permitted or forbidden, we will not be able to keep Shabbos properly. Shabbos is the "source of berach (blessing)", the day that brings blessing to the rest of the week. Learn the halochos. Keep Shabbos properly. Let Hashem shower His blessings upon you.

Don't Panic

Let us try to imagine that we lived in the generation that left Egypt. We experienced the miracles of the *Eser Makkos*, *Kriyas Yam Suf*, *Har Sinai*, and *Kaballas HaTorah*. These were wondrous events; each one alone would have been enough to inspire a person for a lifetime (as we say in the *Pesach Haggadah*, *dayeinu*.) How could we have fallen so quickly to commit the *Chet HaEgel*, (Sin of the Golden Calf), just forty days after receiving the Torah? Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l in *Sichos Mussar* explains the *Chet HaEgel* as follows. The Jewish people had grown to trust and depend upon Moshe Rabbeinu. He was leading them through every

facet of their miraculous deliverance from the time they were slaves in Egypt. Now, suddenly, he did not descend from the mountain at the expected time. The Satan tricked them into thinking that their beloved leader had died. The prospect of continuing without him made the Jewish people frightened and panicky. In this type of environment, the Satan was able to convince them to commit the *Chet HaEgel*. He would never have been able to accomplish this under normal calm circumstances. It all began with panic. Rav Eliyahu Dessler zt"l, explains the prayer *Al Chet* that we say on Yom Kippur when confessing our sins. The first sin mentioned is *ones* (a sin committed under duress). Rav Dessler explains that due to the pressure, we are likely to be overly lenient in our mitzvah observance. We thought the situation warranted a *heter*, (leniency) when in reality our tension biased our judgment.

Kinderlach . . .

How many times does it happen that someone takes our toy away from us? What should we do? Should we panic and grab it back, or should we ask nicely? What happens when they give out candy or goodies in shul? We should not get excited and misbehave. We have to behave nicely even in these situations. Remember that Hashem is really deciding who gets the treats. If He wants us to get one then we will. And if we don't is it really so terrible? It is much worse to display bad middos (character traits). Whenever we feel that we are under pressure, we have to stop ourselves and say that we will not let this ruin our behavior.

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