



Part Of Something Big

Dear Parents,

As self-awareness progresses in a developing child, first comes the realization that he is a being separate from his mother. As the child continues to develop and his sense of individuality grows, he begins to realize that he is part of something larger than himself, namely his family. At a further stage he becomes aware of extended family, neighbors, classmates and community. **Around the age of chinuch - 5, 6 years old, he becomes aware that he is a part of Klal Yisroel.**

How important is that awareness? In *Sefer Oznam Al HaTorah*, Rav Zalman Sorotzkin zt'l points out (*Shemos 35:1*) that *Shabbos* and the *Mishkan* are *mitzvos* for *Klal Yisroel*. It is clear that the *Mishkan* is a communal effort, constructing a center for serving *Hashem* is achieved through the combined efforts of a community of people. *Shabbos*, however, is not so obvious. We delight in *Shabbos* within the confines of our home, extend our time *Davening* in shul and spend more time with family, friends and neighbors. How does it reach beyond our local surroundings?

Rav Sorotzkin points out that it is precisely to bring home the point that *Shabbos* is a shared observance of all *Klal Yisroel*, that this week's *Parsha* tells us that *Moshe* taught the mitzvah of *Shabbos* to the Jews *ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל* by gathering all of the congregation of Israel. **It was in the presence of 600,000 Jews that Moshe instructed about Shabbos.** There is clearly an individual obligation to guard the *Shabbos* but there is also a component that touches and unites all of *Klal Yisrael*. Furthermore, we are taught that *Hashem* told the *Shabbos* - *Klal Yisroel* will be your זוג, your partner. Not an individual Jew, but the nation of the Jews.

When a Jew desecrates the *Shabbos* r'l, it impinges on everyone else's observance of

Shabbos, because *Klal Yisroel* has to fulfill its obligations to *Shabbos*. Just as a limb of a person that is hurting causes pain to the entire body, one Jew who fails to keep *Shabbos* dulls the observance of the rest of *Klal Yisroel*. It therefore should arouse everyone to stand up and try to counter the profound negative effect of a Jew not keeping *Shabbos* properly. When our observance and appreciation increase, it inspires us and creates spiritual waves that raise the *Kovod Shabbos* and inspires our family and *Klal Yisroel*.

Understanding our role as individuals who are part of the entire nation of Jews is not an easy concept for a child to grasp. It is something that has to be taught. Parents should make a point of showing how great *Klal Yisroel* is, what a privilege and blessing it is to be part of the Chosen People. **It is important that our children understand they are part of a great people** and that they take great pride in being a member of *Klal Yisroel*.

We all worry about our children's self-esteem and self-confidence. We look for ways to bolster their self-image and give them more confidence. An impactful place to begin is to help them realize the incredibly good fortune that we each have by being one part of the greatest people ever to walk on this earth. Our pride goes way beyond whatever skills and talents Jews possess or accomplishments our nation may have achieved. Our pride stems from our inner essence - that we are one of those that *Hashem* has chosen to be His special legion.

Have a wonderful *Shabbos* for yourself and for all of *Klal Yisroel*,



Rabbi Kalman Baumann
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