



Come My Beloved
Parshas Ki Sisah

The Thursday evening meeting was crucial, my father, Rabbi Yisrael Grossman, was in Johannesburg, SA, serving as an emissary of the Lelover Rebbe, and he was at a meeting with a potential supporter.

My father spoke at various events and institutions and held parlor meetings. The local Jewish newspapers reported that it was the first time that someone had come to give and not only to receive.

At this meeting my father found the potential benefactor studying Talmud. He invited my father and they studied together. After their study they discussed my father's mission, the host made his contribution and returned to his study.

The next day, on Shabbos eve, the congregation sang "Lecha Dodi".¹ My father was moved by zeal community's zeal, but the communal leader, a student of my father's, told him that the turnout was high now; but would not be so on Shabbos morning. Why? My father inquired. He answered that the community went to work on Shabbos. My father was deeply troubled by this, and thought of ways to change the situation.

My father spoke during the evening services. He began by telling them a short story. A young man was engaged to a woman who lived far away. They set a date for the wedding. The groom's family wanted to meet the bride and invite her. She received the invitation, prepared herself and made the journey excitedly. She was very disappointed when she reached her destination and realized no one was waiting for her. She returned home very upset, but thought there may have been some mistake. A few days later she received a second invitation. She traveled a second time, and was met by the same disappointment. She returned home again in great pain. The third time she received an invitation an apology was added to it. This time they promised to meet her at the station. Again she traveled, and

¹ A Jewish liturgical song recited Friday at dusk, usually at sundown, in synagogue to welcome *Shabbat* prior to the *Maariv*. It is part of the Kabbalat Shabbat ("acceptance of Sabbath"). *Lecha Dodi* means "come my beloved".

again was disappointed when no one was at the station to meet her. She went to the groom's home, and when she got there she was greeted by a hail of stones coming from the roof of the home. She saw the groom himself was throwing the stones and fainted.

"You must know that the bride in the story is the Shabbos", my father continued. "We have just stood and called on her: "Come my beloved". She has arrived and wishes to spend time with us. And tomorrow morning? We take her and throw her out, casting stones at her on her way out, as we go to work and desecrate the Shabbos. Is there a greater insult?

Our weekly parsha states: "And you, speak to the children of Israel and say: 'Only keep My Shabbos! For it is a sign between Me and you for your generations, to know that I, the Lord, make you holy.'"² Our Sages teach us: "G-d told Moshe: I have a good gift in my treasury, Shabbat is its name, I wish to bestow it upon the Jewish People, go and tell them".³

"**Only** keep My Shabbos", my father empathized. He descended from the podium and wiped away his tears.

The next morning, as expected, only four people came to the morning prayers. My father prayed alone in pain, and after the prayers asked his host about the benefactor he met on Thursday. He answered that he had gone to work as well.

My father couldn't believe his ears and went to see him at work. They walked for about two hours to the benefactor's elegant offices in the center of town. They climbed to the fourth floor, and as the benefactor saw them he looked as if he wished the ground would swallow him. My father began to chastise him. "What are you doing? Remember your days as a yeshiva student." The benefactor began to weep. My father convinced him to send his children to study in Israel, hoping he would follow suit. Later on his children joined a Yeshiva in Israel; and their father followed them.

² Shmot 31, 13.

³ Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, 10b