



THE RABBI BINYAMIN KAMENETZKY
TORAH LEGACY FOUNDATION
לזכרון של הרב בנימין קמנצקי זצ"ל

אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאוצרו של
הגאון רב בנימן קמנצקי זצ"ל

*A Dvar Torah from the writings of Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l,
transcribed by his grandson, Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky*

5780 - Parshas Vayechi - Who's Calling?

In Parshas Vayechi, Yaakov Avinu gathers his children before his passing to bless them, and offer final guidance for them to utilize their individual uniqueness to build the Nation of Israel. He begins by attempting to reveal to them the date of the final redemption - before the shechina leaves him, and he is unable to tell them. The passuk tells us that he tells them, "Es asher yikrah eschem b'acharis hayamim - What will happen to you at the end of the days." The word "Yikrah - happen," is normally spelled with a "hey" at the end. However, over here, the passuk spells it with an "aleph" at the end, resulting in the word "Yirka", and meaning "calling."

Why is that?

Rav Eliyahu Meir Bloch zt"l and Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz zt"l, the son and son-in-law of the great Gaon and Rosh Yeshiva of Telz Yeshiva in Lithuania, Rav Yosef Leib Bloch zt"l, traveled together to America in the late 1930s. The subtle firestorm of war was already felt in Europe, and the future of the Jews was uncertain. Yet, Torah must continue to be learned, and funds were needed. So, the two great rabbis made the trip across the ocean to raise the necessary funds from their American brethren, for the famed Telz Yeshiva in city of Telsiai, Lithuania.

To their horror and disbelief, Rav Bloch and Rav Katz learned of the slaughter of the entire city of Telsiai, along with wives, children, relatives, and lifelong friends, and neighbors, on 20 Tammuz 5701 (July 1941).

The two great rabbis were shattered and heartbroken, but they knew they had work to do. Instead of turning to despair, they began, with supernatural strength, to rebuild their beloved yeshiva in America. After much effort, they gathered a group of students in the dining room of Mr. and Mrs. Yitzchok and Sarah Feigenbaum in Cleveland OH, and founded the new Telz Yeshiva, teaching their students that "Torah in America will be built with simcha! (happiness)" From that small group, blossomed a majesty of Torah. Over the next eighty years, another two branches of the yeshiva opened across the country, and thousands of students have learned, studied, and graduated the yeshiva, changing the Torah landscape of America.

How were they able to accomplish this feat? Shortly after Rav Bloch founded the new yeshiva in Cleveland, he spoke to a gathering of former students of Telz of Europe, in the Broadway Hotel in New York, and told them his secret. "Nothing in life just simply happens," he began. "If I was across the ocean when my family and beloved yeshiva was destroyed, it wasn't because I just happened to be there. Hashem sent me on a mission! A Jew is never lost, but rather, wherever he finds himself, he is there to fulfill the mission of Hashem. If I ended up in America after the war, safe and sound, it means that Hashem is calling me to plant the seeds of the living Torah on American soil!"

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained, that yes, the word "yikrah" means "happen." But Yaakov Avinu is telling his children another message as well. "yikra" with an aleph means "calling." There will be times when we won't know why certain events take place. Regardless of that, we must realize that these are not just events. They are callings.

One must know and internalize, that everything that happens is a calling from Hashem. Yes, sometimes there is a difficult task at hand, and sometimes it may be a great challenge. But it's not just a happening. It's a calling. Realize that, and you will always be answering Hashem's call.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky is the Director of Advancement at Yeshiva of South Shore - ישיבה תורת חיים - בית בנימן. He is currently compiling the vast storehouse of all the Torah thoughts from his grandfather. If you have any stories to share from his grandfather, you can email him at skamenetzky@yoss.org.