



אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאת רב בנימן קמנצקי זצ"ל
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*

Parshas Vayechi 5781 – Heaven Sent

In Parshas Vayechi, Yosef hears that his father, Yaakov is ill, and he comes to visit with his two sons, Menashe and Efrayim. Yosef asks Yaakov to bless them before he passes away. The passuk tells us, (48:14) “Yisroel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim’s head...” Interestingly, the Torah uses the term, Vayishlach.” – “and he sent,” highlighting Yaakov’s action of stretching his hand.

The Kohanim too, stretch their hands out to the congregation when they bless them on Yom Tov.

What is the significance of this motion? And why does the Torah deem it necessary to highlight it?

Rav Ahron Leib Steinman zt”l, Rosh Yeshiva of Ponevezh L’Tze’irim tells this story in his sefer, Ayeles Hashacher.

A number of yeshiva students visited the Chofetz Chaim to receive a unique blessing. They were scared that they would be drafted into the Russian army, a place notorious for its cruelty towards Jews, and they wanted the blessing of the tsaddik that they be exempted from the draft. The Chofetz Chaim blessed all of them that they would be saved, except for one, to whom he said, “You can accomplish a lot for the Jews in the army as well!”

The boys were all shocked to hear his words, but they accepted, and left.

Only a short time later, that specific teen was drafted to fight for the Russians. Among his travels with the army, he was stationed in a certain city where there was no kosher food available, and he was forced to either go hungry or eat the non-kosher meat served to him.

He ventured into the city, and was delighted when he discovered that there were a handful of Jews living there with their Rabbi. He made his way to the Rabbi, who told him that unfortunately, there was no kosher meat in town, and he is afraid that many of the residents eat non-kosher meat! This yeshiva student immediately called together a group of Jews from the town to the Rabbi’s house, and started planning with them. He trained one of them in the laws of shechita, helped him set up a small shop, and within a few days, the local Rabbi was supervising the new kosher butcher shop!

Not only did this Jewish soldier enable the town have kosher meat, but another 40 Jewish soldiers were able to eat kosher food as well.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, zt”l, observed and commented a fascinating insight. The righteous have a unique ability to bestow blessings on others. And as if listening to their command, Heaven complies. Why is that? The tzaddik has within him, a power of zchusim, merits, and he showers those merits on those who he blesses. This is symbolized by the tzaddik “sending” his hand – thus “sending” his merits upon the recipient.

That blessing can sometimes go further than the recipient. The Torah tells us that Yaakov “sent” his hand, and with that, he “sent” his bracha. Every tzaddik has that ability – and Yaakov Avinu showed us how it’s done.

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.