



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*

This week's Imrei Binyamin is sponsored
in memory of
Rabbi Mordechai Morad zt"l
Mordechai ben Chacham Rephael

5780 - Parshas Vayeshev - Exile Part 2

Parshas Vayeshev tells the story of Yosef. Yaakov Avinu showed him more love than the rest of his brothers; they became jealous and sold him down to Egypt. The rest, as they say, is history.

The passuk tells us, (37:3) "And Yaakov loved Yosef more than his brothers because he was a son of his old age." Rashi explains based on Onkelos's explanation, "He was a son of his wisdom. Whatever he (Yaakov) learned in the yeshiva of Shem and Eiver, he taught to Yosef."

As we explained in Parshas Vayeitzei, Yaakov spent 14 years studying in the yeshiva of Eiver. It was the Torah that he studied in those years which he taught specifically to Yosef. He did not teach it to the rest of his sons, and this sparked their jealousy.

What was so unique about this specific Torah which he learned at Shem and Eiver? And why did Yaakov only teach this special Torah to Yosef, and not to his brothers?

Rabbi Paysach Krohn, in his book "Around the Maggid's Table" (Artscroll, 1989) tells a story about Rav Yaakov Galinsky zt"l.

Rav Galinsky was once delivering a shiur in his yeshiva in Hadera, when he received an urgent summons to the police station. When he walked into the station, a man began screaming and berating him so wildly, that he could not even figure out what the man wanted!

After a few minutes, the Police Chief calmed the man down, and explained. "His son studies in your yeshiva, and he insists that you kidnapped and brainwashed him. He wants his son to return home, and never go back to your yeshiva."

Rav Galinsky was taken aback, for he knew that the boy entered the yeshiva with his own free will. He grew up in an irreligious home, and after becoming friends with some religious boys, visited the yeshiva, loved it, and stayed. Rav Galinsky tried explaining to the father that he does not hold anyone in yeshiva against their will and his son can leave whenever he wants, but the man was not convinced.

To calm him down, Rav Galinsky started talking to him about his family. It turns out that this man grew up as a son of a Sokolover Chosid, but abandoned his rich heritage and moved to a kibbutz, in pursuit of a materialistic life. "I want my son to follow in my ways," he said. "Now please return my son to me!"

Rav Galinsky, knowing that the boy would remain in the yeshiva, replied to him, "Your son is following in your ways! You rebelled against your father, and he is doing the same exact thing. Like you, he is also rebelling against his father!"

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l, would repeat the explanation of his father, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l. Shem and Eiver lived together with evildoers. Shem lived in the generation of The Flood, and Eiver lived in the generation of the Tower of Bavel. They master the "Torah of Exile," and knew exactly how to remain a devout Jew in the most hostile environment. Before Yaakov went into exile in the house of Lavan, he had to study this specific Torah to guide him through his journey into exile. The Torah which he learned from his father and grandfather was not sufficient.

Yaakov knew that Yosef would go alone into exile in the land of gentiles. He is the one to whom Hashem referred, when He spoke to Avraham, "Your children will be a stranger in a land which does not belong to them." Yosef would ultimately prepare a place in Egypt to which his brothers will arrive, and prosper.

For this reason, Yaakov had to learn with Yosef the "Torah of the Exile." The brothers did not understand this, and they thought that Yaakov singled out Yosef to learn, for he alone would receive the Torah at Sinai. Therefore, they were jealous.

In truth, Yaakov was paving the way for his children and grandchildren to remain true to the Torah, even in the darkest of places.

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.