



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

אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאתרו 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 Devorim – Call to Order

In Parshas Devorim, Moshe Rabeinu rebukes the Jews for many of their mistakes in their 40 year trek through the desert – among them, the sin of sending the spies to Israel. Moshe tells them, (1:22) “Then all of you came to me and said, ‘Let us send men...’”

Rashi explains that when “all of you” came, they came in a crowd – “Young ones pushing the elderly, and the elderly pushing the heads of tribes.”

It is true that this is not proper etiquette, but why does Moshe include this wrongdoing in his criticism of the Jews’ sin of the spies?

The story is told of a student of the Mussar movement, a talmid chocham and a pious individual, who, at the turn of the century, sent his son off to a different city to learn in yeshiva. Weeks and months went by, but he did not hear from his son. Although he mailed his son numerous letters, he received no reply, nor did he receive any telegrams or regards from travelers.

Although he did trust his son and the Rabbeim at the yeshiva, he was anxious to know if his son was indeed being successful in his learning and general growth.

He decided that he has no choice but to travel there and see for himself.

He embarked on the journey. He travelled a full day and night by train and coach, and finally arrived at the yeshiva. As he approached the building, he realized that it was during “seder” – the morning study session. Not wanting to disturb his son’s studies, he asked a student to direct him to his son’s room. He entered the room, and saw his son’s neatly made bed, his clothing in order, and the area was neat and clean.

Without hesitating, he turned around, and headed back to take a coach back to the train station.

The student asked him, “You came all the way here to see your son. Why don’t you want to see him?”

He answered, “I came to see if my son is learning well. Judging by his neat room, I can tell that he is excelling in his studies, and he is sharpening his exemplary middos as well!”

With that, he turned and headed home without even seeing his son.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt”l would repeat the explanation given by his father, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt”l, printed in his Sefer Emes L’Yaakov.

The Jews’ sin of sending spies was based upon their lack of a firm belief that Hashem will protect them and ensure their safety as they entered the Land of Israel.

Had they approached Moshe in an orderly fashion, with a calm demeanor and a respectful request, Moshe would have had a different approach to their request. He would have seen a true level of belief, with a calculated and strategic plan to send spies, just to confirm that their slight hesitations were non-issues.

However, that wasn’t the case. They came in a panic. They pushed and shoved, and ran to Moshe in complete chaos. Moshe saw this and realized that this is all part of the sin. They did not have full belief in Hashem, and their panic was based on a real fear that they would indeed be in danger in the Land of Israel. They did not believe that Hashem would protect them, and this was the root of their panic.

When he rebuked them, he put it all together, and called them out on their lack of belief.

One must have true belief in Hashem, and take every difficult situation in stride – with firm belief, sans panic.

Good Shabbos!

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