



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*

5779 - Parsha Vayechi - Collective Individualism

Yaakov Avinu, sensing that his end was near, gathered his children at his bedside and blessed them. **He blessed every one of his twelve children with a specific bracha, unique to his personality and inner strengths.**

When Yaakov is finished blessing his children, the passuk tells us, "*Ish asher kibirchaso berach osam*" "Each man according to his blessing, he blessed them." (49:38). The wording of the passuk is troubling. The passuk begins in the singular, "Each man according to his blessing," and ends in the plural, "He blessed them." **Shouldn't the passuk end with a singular expression also, "He blessed him"?**

The Menahel of Yeshiva of South Shore, Rav Chanina Herzberg zt"l, who passed away this week, was a master educator, who sought out the individual talent and strengths in every single child under his tutelage.

There was once a boy in the yeshiva who was a fair student, until he started acting out of line. While he was in the upper elementary grades, his mode of dress and behavior started to shift slightly towards the rebellious side. He grew his hair longer, and wore clothing which were less refined than the other boys. As time passed, his behavior was bordering on disrespectful, and his rabbeim were beginning to label him as a troubled teen.

One day, he came to yeshiva with his top two buttons of his shirt open, wearing a golden chain on his neck. This was simply too much for his rebbe, who after commenting to the talmid how he is dressed inappropriately for yeshiva, went to Rabbi Herzberg and pressured him to suspend the boy from yeshiva. Rabbi Herzberg, in his keen understanding of youth, and with his loving and accepting philosophy which he absorbed from his rebbe, Rav Shlomo Freifeld zt"l, asked the rebbe, "Did you ever watch this boy daven?" The rebbe, surprised by the question, responded in the negative. "Watch how he davens." Rabbi Herzberg responded. "Watch how he stands and davens shemoneh esrei - eyes closed, with deep concentration. Then come back and tell me if you still want him sent away from the yeshiva."

Indeed, Rabbi Herzberg's prescient patience and vision paid off, as this boy is a fine young man Torah, who spent many years in Kollel and now has a respectable position in the community. His davening is still paradigm.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explains the above quandary: Yaakov Avinu understood that every shevet is unique. He wanted everyone to be unique. **The greatest blessing to all of them collectively is that each shevet received a focused blessing according to their strength.** Thus, "Each man according to his blessing (individually), he blessed them (collectively)."

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.