



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

אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאנצרו 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 - Parshas Shemini - Truly Good

Parshas Shemini begins with Moshe Rabbeinu instructing Ahron to bring sacrifices in the Mishkan on his first day serving as Kohen Gadol. When Ahron concludes the service of those korbanos, the passuk tells us, "And Aaron lifted his hands to the nation and he blessed them." It is unclear what his blessing was. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud) states, "**He seemingly blessed them with a general blessing, but we have yet to hear what his blessing was?**" The passuk explains to us that he used the priestly blessing, "Hashem should bless you and watch over you etc."

This passage of the Talmud Yerushalmi seems troubling. **What exactly is the discussion of the Talmudic sages?** Why do they wonder aloud what Ahron's blessing could have possibly been, before finally concluding that Ahron blessed the Jews with the priestly blessing?

My grandfather would often tell over a series of heavenly orchestrated events which led to the survival of his family.

When his father, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l was the rabbi in the Lithuanian small village of Tzitivyan, he was struggling to survive financially, barely making ends meet. The small town of 60 families was poverty stricken. Most residents could not even afford a small piece of meat for Shabbos, surely were unable to properly support their rabbi. As the years passed, his family grew and his salary decreased, until he decided that he must seek out a higher paying position in a larger city.

After researching a few options, Rav Yaakov attempted to secure the position of Rav of Wilkomir. With a Jewish population of 8,000, it was the third largest Jewish city in Lithuania. The city leaders were extremely impressed by Rav Yaakov, and he was assured by a few insiders that the position was his. He returned to Tzitivyan with the good news, and his entire household rejoiced with their newfound salvation from their pressing circumstances.

Only three weeks later, the happiness of the Kamenetzky's turned to mourning when they heard that the position in Wilkomir was given to Rav Yosef Zusmanovitch, a brilliant scholar, a famed orator, and the son-in-law of Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, Rosh Yeshiva of Slabodka.

Seeing that he had no more options in Europe, Rav Yaakov had no choice but to seek a position in America, where he eventually landed a position as Rav in Toronto. His family followed him to Canada in 1938, just in time to flee the inferno in Europe.

Tragically, Rav Zusmanovitch and the entire town of Wilkomir, along with almost the entire Jewish population of Lithuania, were murdered by the Nazi beasts and their local accomplices.

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained. The Talmud Yerushalmi does not just wonder what Ahron's blessing was. The question is deeper. **Which blessing is possible for a human to give? How can a mortal, who sees only one dimension, give a truly good blessing?** How does he know what is the best for a specific individual, or in this case, a nation?

The Yerushalmi answers that Aaron did not give his own blessing. Rather he gave them the blessing of God's blessing. For even though a man may think he knows what is good, only Hashem Himself can bless man with true goodness. **Ahron blessed them with the ultimate good - that Hashem himself should bless them.**

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@yooss.org.