



אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאת צדו 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 Tazria/Metzorah - In and Out

Parshas Tazria discusses the intricate laws of tzora'as - a spiritual form of leprosy afflicting one who sins in various ways. Interestingly, it comes on the heels of Parshas Shemini, which, after teaching about the celebration of the inauguration of the Mishkan and the tragic deaths of Nadav and Avihu, discusses the laws of kosher animals, fish and birds.

Parshas Shemini ends with the words, "To distinguish between... the creature that may be eaten and the creature which may not be eaten."

Is there perhaps a connection between the end of Parshas Shemini and the beginning of Parshas Tazria?

Rabbi Paysach Krohn, in his book, "The Maggid Speaks," writes this story in the name of my great-grandfather, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l.

The Chofetz Chaim, Rav Yisroel Meir Kagan, zt"l was once traveling with another esteemed Polish Rabbi, and they stayed overnight in a Jewish-owned inn. After they ate a hearty dinner, the woman who owned the inn, humbled and honored to have such distinguished guests, came over to their table to ask how they enjoyed their meal. "It was delicious," began the Polish rabbi, "but the soup could have used some more salt."

The Chofetz Chaim's face turned white. "All my life I have been careful not to speak lashon hara (evil tongue/gossip)! I don't know why Hashem caused me to hear your comment!

The rabbi was bewildered, "I did not say anything wrong! In fact, I complimented the food! I just mentioned that it needs some more salt!"

The Chofetz Chaim answered, "Think about the power of your words. The cook is probably a poor woman who desperately needs her job. The innkeeper is probably in the kitchen right now, and berating the cook for preparing a sub-par meal for her guests. In fact, she is probably firing her from her job!"

"Your words may have brought an entire family to the brink of poverty!"

The Chofetz Chaim then led the rabbi to the door of the kitchen. To their dismay, that exact scene was playing out at that precise moment!

The Rabbi immediately ran over to the innkeeper and apologized, insisting that the food was indeed perfect, and pleaded with the owner to allow the cook to remain.

The innkeeper was a kind woman, and indeed heeded his request, but not before the Polish rabbi learned an invaluable lesson from the Chofetz Chaim.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, zt"l would always repeat a lesson taught by Rav Yisroel Lipkin of Salant, the father of the "mussar movement." Many God-fearing Jews are extremely careful about the food which goes into their mouths, and rightfully so. They ensure that there is a quality kashrus agency which supervises every product that they allow into their homes, and they only eat in a food establishment which has an impeccable record and reputation for the highest standards.

Yet not as many people are careful with what they say. They can sometimes thoughtlessly comment, criticize, and sometimes even embarrass others with words (and more recently, clicks and shares).

Parshas Tazria immediately follows Parshas Shemini to tell us, that not only must one be careful is with what goes into his mouth, but he must also be careful with what comes out of his mouth.

Good Shabbos!

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