



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*

In memory of
Rabbi Yitzchok (Isadore) Klien
Rav Yitzchok ben Peretz
Yahrtzeit - 17 Shevat

5780 - Parshas Yisro - Opposite Reaction

Parshas Yisro begins with the story of Yisro and his bold move to convert and join the Jewish Nation. Noting the catalyst of his inspiration, the Torah tells us, "And Yisro heard all that Hashem did to the Egyptians etc."

Interestingly, Yisro was not the only gentile who heard about the miraculous events of the Jews' exodus from Egypt. At the end of the previous Parsha, Parshas Beshalach, the Torah tells us about another group of gentiles who heard as well - the nation of Amalek. Yet they took a different route - and immediately waged war on the Jews.

What is the lesson to be gleaned from here?

Rav Matisyahu Solomon tells over the following story. Sam was not a Shabbos observer. For years, his rabbi would try to encourage, convince and prod him to close his business on our holy day, and spend time with his family rejoicing on the Shabbos. But his efforts were in vain.

"Rabbi," he would say, "If I close my business, I won't have enough money to live!"

"Don't worry Sam," his rabbi assured him. "If you keep Shabbos, G-d will provide you with more than enough money!" Sam would not oblige, and the rabbi would not give up. Sam eventually fell ill and was lying in a hospital bed, when his Rabbi came to visit.

Thinking that this was a perfect opportunity to convince Sam to repent, he sat down next to him. "You know Sam, what do you think G-d is trying to tell you now?"

"I don't know!" Sam snapped back. "But I'll tell you this! It's a good thing I always worked on Shabbos. If I would have kept Shabbos all those years, how would I have enough money to pay my medical bills?"

Every situation and occurrence triggers a reaction. My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained, that the way we react to something can make all the difference in the world. Our cause-and-effect behaviors vary, depending on our outlook on life, our principles, and our drive to make the right choices.

Yisro and Amalek both saw the same thing. Yet Yisro took the high road and Amalek took the low road. Amalek's reprehensible actions led them to be shunned forever, and we are commanded to wipe away their memory from the face of the Earth.

Yisro, however, did just the opposite. He embraced what he saw and joined the Chosen Nation. He is remembered forever as one who merited a Parsha named for him.

For every action, there is a reaction. Think long and hard before you choose your reaction. It may shape your future - forever.

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.