



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*

Parshas Vayishlach 5781 – Camping Out

Parshas Vayishlach discusses Yaakov's departure from Lavan and his journey back home, with various challenges along the way. There were places along the way which he settled for periods of time – among them, "Succos," and Shechem. The passuk tells us, (33:17-18) "And Yaakov journeyed on to Succos, and built a house for himself... Yaakov arrived safe in the city of Shechem... and he encamped before the city."

Seemingly, by the fact that these two verses are right next to each other, there may be a connection.

My great grandfather, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l, lost his wife prematurely, and remarried after a few years. A short time later, a few young rabbis came to his home to speak with him. His new Rebbitzen, welcoming her new role as a hostess to rabbinic guests, brought out various refreshments to the table – coffee with some dairy pastries she baked.

As soon as she returned to the kitchen, Rav Yaakov turned to his guests and apologized.

"Before we continue talking," he began, "I have to ask you for a favor. I need to make 'hataras nedarim.' (a process to nullify a vow or a custom – which is done in front of a 'court' of three people) My family has a long standing custom to refrain from eating dairy on Friday. Apparently I neglected to mention this custom to my new wife.

"I would rather break my long-standing family custom and nullify my 'vow,' than insult my new wife by not eating what she served"

By the time the Rebbitzen Kamenetzky returned, Rav Yaakov and the visiting rabbis were already enjoying her dairy pastries.

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained. The passuk uses the term, "Vayichan – and he camped" to describe his dwelling in Shechem. However, the root of the word is "chen," meaning favor. Additionally, the word "chen" is the root of "menucha" - rest and tranquility.

One can achieve permanence in building a house and settling, only when one is tranquil, peaceful, and able to find favor in the eyes of others. However, a home which is built in midst of confusion and friction, will not last.

Yaakov Avinu was only able to build his home in Shechem, as he "camped" - with tranquility.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky is the Director of Advancement at Yeshiva of South Shore - 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.