



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

אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאתגרו 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 Korach Patience

Parshas Korach tells the unfortunate tale of Korach and his 250 followers who rebelled against Moshe and Aharon. Through their unquenchable thirst for power and greed, they smeared Moshe and Aharon, claiming that they performed all the miracles in Egypt for their own honor - to hoard the high positions of Leader and High Priest, leaving the entire nation as mere subjects.

In an attempt to settle the matter, Moshe tries to engage Korach in conversation, and give him an opportunity to reconcile. Korach responds, "Even if you would gouge out the eyes of those men we shall not go up!" Many commentaries extract a lesson from here as to the power of machlokes (a fight). One can be so distorted and set his own path to destruction, as Korach did.

But perhaps one can take a positive lesson from her as well.

There are countless stories describing the virtue of patience from a rebbe to a student. Rav Preida, who would repeat his lesson 400 times to one student who was unable to understand it (Eiruvin 54b) may have been the most famous, but I want to share a story which I myself witnessed. Sholom, a boy in sixth grade, had a very hard time in class. He had a non-existent attention span, and when he took a short break from his doodling, he would disrupt the class with silly comments and outright chutzpah. His rebbe tried everything, from hard discipline to incentives, but nothing seemed to work.

The rebbe wanted the boy out of his class, but the menahel would not hear of it. "Just wait," he said. "You'll see. One day he will shine!"

And wait he did. But Sholom showed no signs of improvement.

One day, the rebbe noticed that Sholom was doodling in class. Instead of taking away his paper, the rebbe took a closer look, and realized that Sholom was a natural artist! The rebbe acted upon his new discovery, and immediately offered Sholom to come to the front of the room, and draw a diagram of the lesson he was in middle of teaching. He also asked him to draw some more illustrations of the Beis Hamikdash - detailing the complex vessels and various rooms contained within.

Sholom was more than happy to comply, and only a few days later, Sholom's attitude started to slowly change. He was no longer bitter or disruptive. Over the next few years, Sholom grew into a true ben Torah, and is today a successful yeshiva student known for his extreme diligence and clear understanding of the gemara - and for his artistic talent.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained. A spiritual leader is not just a teacher - one who mastered Talmudical and Halachic subjects. Rather he must also be the epitome of exemplary middos (character traits). Moshe Rabbeinu was just that. Under the threat of death, he pleaded with Pharaoh to let the Jews out of Egypt. He performed miracle after miracle to lead the Jews out, and he begged Hashem on more than one occasion to spare the Jews after they sinned in the desert.

Imagine how he should have responded when he heard the blatant disrespect and heresy of Korach, Dasan and Aviram! Could any other person have given them time and patience? Yet Moshe did. He was patient and forgiving, and did not take their rebellion personal, rather he left it up to Hashem to punish them. Even when they cursed him to his face, and refused to talk to him with the most ridiculous comments, Moshe stood patient and tolerant- ready to accept their repentance should they so choose to do so.

If there is a silver lining in this tragedy, this is it. In the face of one of the most brazen rebellions our history, Moshe stands out as the true selfless and humble leader, setting an example for thousands to emulate.

Good Shabbos!

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