



אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאוצרו 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 Shemos - With Who?

Sefer Shemos begins with the Torah listing the children of Yaakov who came down to Mitzrayim. The passuk tells us, "And these are the names of the children of Yisroel who were coming to Egypt, with Yaakov, each man and his household came."

Let's examine these words carefully. Technically, it was the shevatim themselves who were going down to Egypt, after they found out the truth about Yosef. They came back to Israel to bring Yaakov with them. Why then does the Passuk say that the shevatim went with Yaakov, if in reality, Yaakov went with them?

I recently heard a fascinating story from Rabbi Dovid Bedil, Rosh Kollel of the Vienna Kollel.

When the Ponovezher Rav, Rav Yosef Shalom Kahaneman was a child, his kehillah presented their local Rav with a precious gift: a brand-new Shas, with the newest and clearest print available at the time, and a box of candles. Previously, the dim oil lamps the Rav used, would drip onto the brittle pages of his old Shas, smudging the print and making it extremely difficult to learn in the evening. Rav Kahaneman was only seven years old at the time, and he was chosen to be one of the children who carried the precious heavy volumes to their Rav's house. When the local Rav opened the door and saw his new gift, he burst into tears, lovingly kissed each of the 20 volumes, and proclaimed, "Now I know what Olam Haba is! A clear printed Shas, and clear light! Now I can learn!"

Rav Kahaneman said about himself, that at that moment, after he saw his own Rav euphoric over the opportunity to learn better, he developed his own drive to master the entire Shas!

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l, would repeat the Chofetz Chaim's answer to this question. The shevatim were about to leave Eretz Yisroel. They knew that the long exile of Egypt was about to begin. They knew that the spiritual state of Egypt was terrible, and they were scared to go. They were scared of slipping down the slope of idolatry and adultery, as the culture of Egyptian society would slowly seep in to their camp. But they knew they had to go.

They took a look at Yaakov - their father, their Rebbe, and their link to our holy grandfather Avraham, and they were comforted. With Yaakov at the center of their community, they would be safe. He would be the role model, and he would teach them and their children. They would draw inspiration from him, and he would lift them up. And then they went.

Indeed, the brothers did only go - with Yaakov.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky is the Director of Advancement at Yeshiva of South Shore - ישיבה תורת חיים - בית בנימין. 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.