



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

אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאתרו 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 Pinchos - In Action

Parshas Pinchos, which begins with Hashem detailing the eternal reward for Pinchos, comes on the heels of Parshas Balak, detailing Balak's scheme and its dismal failure.

The actions of Pinchos are a response to Balak's "Plan B," to incite the Jews to commit sins with the daughters of Moav, thereby causing the Jews' downfall. Pinchos, in a brave and unprecedented move, stepped up and killed Zimri, the nasi of Shevet Shimon, who publicly desecrated the name of Hashem. The plague then stopped, and Hashem gave Pinchos his reward.

Perhaps there is a deeper connection between these two parshios.

My father tells this story he heard from his rebbe at the Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia, Reb Mendel Kaplan zt"l. Rav Kaplan used to give an early morning shiur in Daas Chachma U'Mussar, the magnum opus of his Rebbe, Rabbi Yeruchum Levovitz, the Mashgiach of the Mirrer Yeshiva, zt"l. Each day the group would meet before Shacharis and listen to their elderly Rebbe discuss deep philosophical ideas concerning the nature of man and the profound eternal struggle he faces.

One night a heavy snow covered the streets of Philadelphia. As the bocurim trudged into the shiur room they were dazzled by the view of the dawn breaking over the white blanket that softly covered the frozen ground. But an even more amazing sight beheld then inside the classroom. Rav Mendel was at sitting at his desk wearing his boots, gloves, and an overcoat that was as warm as his expression.

"Close your seforim. We are not having shiur. Today we will learn the real Mussar." he smiled. "Don't take off your boots and coats." He closed the sefer on his desk and pointed to six shovels neatly stacked in the corner of the classroom.

With that, he took a shovel, walked outside, and began to lead the boys in shoveling a path from the dormitories to the Bais Medrash where the entire yeshiva would soon be davening shacharis.

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained, that indeed there is an obvious contrast between Balak and Pinchos.

Balak was scared of the Jews's success, and he wanted to rid the world of us. But he was not willing to risk it all, and lead from the front. Instead, he remained behind, strategized and schemed, but ultimately outsourced the hard work to Bilam.

Pinchos however, took his role more seriously. He realized that Zimri was violated a law deserving of death. As Rashi tells us, he did not wait for someone else to carry it out. When he asked Moshe if this is indeed the law, Moshe replied, "You are the one who read the letter, you should be the one to carry it out!" He, with his zealously and drive, stepped up to the front line and executed the halacha.

The action of doing the action makes us great and deserving of reward.

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.