



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*

Dedicated in memory of
Joseph Heller
R' Yoel Noson ben R' Chaim Halevi , a"h
9 Tammuz
By Ben and Beth Heller

5779 - Parsha Chukas - Save me a Seat

Parshas Chukas discusses one of the most complex and problematic occurrences in the Torah - the story of Moshe Rabbeinu hitting the rock. After Miriam passed away, the well, in her merit, dried up, leaving the Jews without water. The Jews quarreled with Moshe, saying "If only we had died like our brothers, who were punished by a plague! Why did G-d bring us to this barren desert to die of thirst?"

Moshe then beseeched Hashem, who instructed him to take his stick and talk to the rock, and it will bring forth its water.

The question remains. Earlier, in Parshas Beshalach, Hashem instructed Moshe to hit the rock. Why does Hashem tell Moshe now to talk to the rock?

Silas Aaron Haroon, a wealthy Jewish businessman, lived in Shanghai China at the turn of the century. The story is told that his father came to him in a dream and instructed him to build a synagogue for the Jews of Shanghai. He embraced this project, and in 1927, he completed the construction of a massive edifice, the Beth Ahron Synagogue, named for his father. The sanctuary was so large, that its 400 seats dwarfed the community it served, and the building was underused for some time.

In 1941, through a miraculous string of events, the Mir Yeshiva, along with some small groups from other yeshivos, were able to escape Europe, and after a stop in Kobe, Japan, settled in Shanghai, China. (The entire string of events and the heroes, both Jewish and gentile, who risked their lives to ensure the safety of the yeshiva, is a subject of an entire volume.) When they arrived, they sought a place of worship to house the hundreds of students and faculty. They settled into the Beth Ahron Synagogue, and realized the divine planning of the building, as the 400 scholars filled every seat in its great sanctuary!

Mt grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky would quote an explanation from Rabbi Samson Rephael Hirsch, zt"l. The Jews complained to Moshe as if Hashem had taken them out of Egypt and led them into a desert without a plan of survival! They actually claimed that G-d brought them into the desert to kill them, as there was no water in the desert since the well had dried up.

Hitting a rock is a sever action. This would be naturally interpreted by the Jews that the rock was dry until now, and Moshe would actually produce water from the rock, solidifying their theory, that G-d did not have a plan to properly hydrate His nation!

Thus Hashem commanded Moshe to speak to the rock. Speaking would portray the reality of the situation. Hashem had everything planned and prepared. The water was already there, waiting to gush forth. All Moshe had to do was talk, and it will come. Moshe missed this opportunity, and the Jews did not properly learn this lesson.

We must remember that although sometimes the situation looks bleak, but Hashem has the solution prepared beforehand - even to make sure there's enough seats.

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.