



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*

5780 - Parshas Vayeira - Time for Life

Parshas Vayerah begins with the story of Avraham Avinu welcoming the three angels into his tent. After he feeds them, one of the guests gives him the great news, "Shov ashuv eilecha ka'eis chaya..." "I will surely return to you at this time next year and behold Sarah your wife will have a son."

When referring to "next year," the malach uses the term "ka'eis chaya" which can also mean "at the time of life." This expression is usually not used in the context of "next year." What is the hidden message of the malach?

Rabbi Paysach Krohn, in one of his fabulous books filled with stories of inspiration, tells a story the occurred a few decades ago to Boruch, a New York businessman. One winter day, before heading on a long trip to check on his properties upstate, he walked into a local luncheonette, and met a downtrodden Jew. After greeting him with a smile, Boruch asked him to join him for a meal. The man was hesitant, but agreed. Boruch encouraged the man to order a meal, and after some cajoling, his companion ordered take two baked apples and a glass of tea. Boruch spent the next half hour schmoozing and giving much needed chizzuk to his new friend, then wished him well and went on his way.

As Boruch was navigating the narrow and lonely roads upstate New York, an unexpected snowstorm began. The driving conditions slowly worsened, and before long, the roads were treacherous. As he was rounding a turn in the road, Boruch lost control of his vehicle, and to his horror, his car spun around uncontrollably and smashed into a tree, shattering his windshield. Boruch was shaken and bruised, cold and alone, on the side of the road, yet thankful that he was alive! He slowly made his way out of the car, and waiting for someone to pass. Eventually, someone stopped, and drove to get help. After a short exam, it was determined that Boruch miraculously survived the incident unharmed!

The passerby offered to drive Boruch to a local hotel, where he could spend the night. As Boruch entered the property, the manager, another religious Jew, came out to greet him. "You must be shaken and cold from your accident!" he exclaimed. "Come inside and I'll bring you something to warm up!" He reappeared a few minutes later. "I don't have much to offer you now," he apologized, "But this is left over from dinner," he said. He then placed in front of Boruch, a tray with two baked apples and a glass of tea.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l quoted Rav Doniel Moshovitz zt"l hy"d, the saintly mashgiach of the Talmud Torah of Kelm, who explained these words of the angel. A person's obligation to repay a kindness requires him to go to great lengths, as we learn from the navi Elisha, who went so far as to bring the child of the Shunammite woman back to life to repay her kindness! But not only is one obligated to return a favor with life, but one who does any life-giving favor will also get repayed with life.

The malach, by saying, "ka'eis chaya - at the time of life," is telling Avraham and Sarah, "At this time, that you have revived and refreshed my soul in the blistering heat of the desert, so too, you will be repaid with life." For not only were Avraham and Sarah blessed with a new life, but they were blessed with life itself.

The gemara (Nedarim 64b) tells us that one who does not have children is considered dead. Not only did the malach bestow his blessing to Avraham for another life, but he repaid Avraham and Sarah measure for measure, by giving life to Avraham and Sarah as well!

When one give even something small to another man, he may be saving his own life as well!

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.