



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

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 Lech Lecha - A Matzoh Moment

Dedicated in memory of our grandfather
Rav Yacov ben Rav Binyamin Halevi Lipschutz zt"l
A man who lived by the ideals of his ancestors and Rabbeim, among them
Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l, taught Torah and mastered halacha, and
nurtured his family and congregants with the unadulterated mesorah of the
giants of the great Lithuanian Torah empire.

Parshas Lech Lecha tells the story of the four kings who defeated the five. Among the captives they took, was Lot, Avraham's nephew, who left to seek out greener pastures in the fertile, yet spiritually barren city of Sedom.

The passuk tells us of a man who came to tell Avraham the news that his nephew had been captured, "Vayavo hapalit..." "And the fugitive came and told Avraham..." (14:13) The Midrash tells us that this "fugitive" was Og, the giant who later attempted to kill the Jews by throwing a mountain down on their camp.

"Why is he called 'Og'?" asks the Midrash, "Because he came to inform Avraham Avinu while he was baking matzos, which are called 'Ugos'". (As mentioned at the end of the Pesach Seder, this story of Lot occurred on the night of Pesach.)

This seems puzzling. Surely there are more appropriate nicknames for Og, an infamous rasha. Why does the Torah name him after this seemingly insignificant occurrence at the time of his encounter with Avraham?

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l would tell the story of Rav Shimon Galei, a renown tzaddik in Eretz Yisroel, who was once involved in an automobile accident. As he lay injured on the side of the road, a few people ran to help him, among them a secular police officer. "How can I help you, rabbi?" the officer asked, as he tried to assess the rav's injuries. Rav Galei, noticing the absence of a kipa on the officer's head, did not hesitate for a moment. Putting his own painful leg injury aside, he pleaded with the officer, "If you really want to help me, please start observing Shabbos!"

The next day, a couple came to the hospital to visit Rav Galei. With tears in her eyes, the woman started speaking. "We witnessed your accident yesterday and ran over to help. We watched as the officer tried to help you, but you refused his help, and only begged him to start observing Shabbos. We were not religious until yesterday. But when we saw how devoted you are to G-d, and how important Shabbos is to you, we decided that we too will start to observe Shabbos!"

My grandfather explains that every interaction with a tzaddik is a moment to capture. One can gain inspiration for a lifetime, or one continue on and lose it.

Og met Avraham, and observed him doing a mitzvah. He took this moment and was inspired to save a life! Hashem rewarded Og for this good deed, and his name is etched into eternity as testimony to testify that an encounter with a tzaddik and a moment of inspiration can change the world for the good.

Good Shabbos!

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