



אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאתגרו 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 Beha'aloscha – Yearn to Learn

In this week's parsha, a few men approached Moshe Rabbeinu with a request. They were tamei (ritually impure) during the time of the sacrificing of the Korban Pesach, thereby unable to partake. Now, they wanted to have their chance to bring their own Korban Pesach.

Moshe does not know the answer offhand, and goes to ask Hashem.

Interestingly, there are four times in the Torah that Moshe was at a loss about a law. Moshe did not know the answer when the daughters of Tzelafchad asked him if they could inherit their father who died without sons. Similarly, when a man gathered wood on Shabbos (Bamidbar 15:32) and when a man blasphemed Hashem (Vayikra 24:11), Moshe did not know with which capital punishment to kill them.

However, only in this week's parsha, and by the inquiry of the daughters of Tzelafchad, does the Torah record that Moshe himself ask Hashem. Why is that?

Rabbi Dov Berish Weidenfeld zt"l was the Rav in Tshebin, Poland, who settled in Yerushalayim after World War II. He was a beloved leader of the Jewish World, the founder and Rosh Yeshiva Yeshiva Kochav M'yaakov, and the author of "Sefer Dovev Meisharim". He spent long days in intense learning and prayer, and he devoted many hours to his students and many others who sought his sage counsel. Despite his tiring days, even in his later years, he would not rest on Shabbos Afternoon.

One of his students asked him the reason for this custom, to which he replied with a story.

"I was resting one Shabbos afternoon, when there was a persistent knock on my door. I opened the door to find a young child there. 'Good Shabbos!' the child began, 'Can I ask the Rebbe a question on a gemara I am learning?'

"He then proceeded to ask me the question. After answering the boy and schmoozing with him for a few minutes, I softly suggested to him that it is not proper derech erez (fine manners) to knock persistently on a Rav's door on Shabbos afternoon. Very possibly, the Rav is resting.

The boy had a startled look on his face, 'I did not think for a moment a great Rav such as yourself would rest on a Shabbos! I thought for sure the Rav is spending the day learning at home!'

"After hearing that from the boy, do you think I can rest again on Shabbos afternoon?!"

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained in the name of Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l, Rav in Boston and Rosh Yeshiva of RIETS. Moshe noticed the problem that his disciples were facing, but more importantly, he saw how they addressed it.

When one blasphemed Hashem and one desecrated the Shabbos, no one was eager to kill them. Everyone saw the tragedy unfold, and begrudgingly came to Moshe to ask his direction. Notwithstanding the fact that it was indeed Moshe who asked Hashem what to do, the Torah does not record that detail.

However, the men who were tamei, as well as the daughters of Tzelafchad were pained that were unable to serve Hashem in the ideal fashion. They wanted a connection to kedusha – a portion in the Holy land, and the opportunity to bring the Korban Pesach. They came and pleaded with Moshe to help them! Moshe responded in kind, and took their cue. He went to Hashem, and asked how he can help them.

A true leader will take initiative from his pupils, when he senses their enthusiasm for growth!

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@yooss.org.