



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

אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאת צדו 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*

5779 - Parshas Shelach - Optical Delusion

Parshas Shelach discusses the tragic story of the twelve meraglim. The spies, each one a leader of his shevet, scouted the land of Israel and returned with a grim report. **This incident comes on the heels of another sad occurrence.** The previous parsha ends with the story of how Miriam, the brother of Moshe and Ahron, spoke wrongly about her brother Moshe, and was punished with tzora'as.

Rashi explains that the Torah tells us the story of the spies immediately following the story of Miriam, to teach us where the spies went wrong. Miriam was punished for her bad speech, yet "These evil ones (the spies) **saw and did not take a lesson.**"

Why is there an emphasis on the spies "seeing" Miriam?

Dan, a lab technician in a hospital had forgotten to check some sort of mechanism on a piece of expensive equipment he used, causing it to malfunction and break. The cost of the repair was a hefty sum of \$250,000!

The next day, Dan's boss called him in to talk about the incident. Dan walked nervously into his boss's office, prepared to be fired. His boss looked at him solemnly, and asked, "Why didn't you check the equipment before you used it?" Dan, embarrassed and nervous, just gently apologized.

His boss then looked up at him, and sent him back to work. Dan asked him "Am I not getting fired? I was almost sure that's what this was about." His boss answered. "I just spent \$250,000 teaching you a lesson you'll never forget. Why would I fire you now?"

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained. We are not perfect. We all sin. Many times, we simply don't realize the severity of what we are doing wrong. Sometimes we don't even realize that what we are doing is wrong! But the Torah is teaching us that these meraglim made a much graver mistake. They just witnessed the severity of bad speech, but their heart did not internalize it. The occurrence of Miriam happened clearly in front of their eyes, yet they chose not to learn from that.

Not always does someone see an open punishment from G-d when someone sins. But in this case, they actually saw Miriam suffer the consequences of slander, yet they allowed their hearts to be immune to that. Thus, their sin was truly grave, and they sadly, went down in history as reshaim - evil ones.

May we all take a positive lesson, and do just the opposite. Let us learn how to be inspired when we witness the greatness all around us!

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.