



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*

5779 - Parsha Yisro – On Your Mind

Hashem gave the Torah to the Jews, and with a thunderous voice, called out the first of the Ten Commandments, "I am Hashem your G-d who has taken you out of Egypt!"

The century-old question is asked by a variety of commentators. "Why did the Almighty attribute his power over the world with this particular fact?

Why not declare, 'I am Hashem who created Heaven and Earth, along with everything in it!'"

The Gerrer Rebbe, Rav Yisroel Alter, known as the "Beis Yisroel," had a chassid who came to him to bid farewell and receive his blessing before he departed on a business trip to France. The Rebbe gave him his blessing and wished him much success, and then asked of him an unusual request. "In France," the Rebbe said, "There is a unique brand of cigars that is sold. Please find out where they sell those cigars, and bring me back a box." The Rebbe then described exactly which cigars he wanted.

The chassid, although taken aback by the Rebbe's strange request, readily accepted his mission, and promised the Rebbe that he will do his best to bring back those cigars.'

When he arrived in France, he tried to locate those cigars, yet he was unsuccessful. He went from store to store, and even traveled to a few different towns to find those cigars, yet no one carried them. He even skipped a few scheduled meetings in order to spend more time fulfilling his Rebbe's request, yet he was still unsuccessful.

After spending two weeks in France, the majority of his time and efforts on locating those said cigars, he was forced to return home, disappointed that he had nothing to bring his Rebbe.

Upon his return, he went back into the Rebbe, and cried out, "Rebbe! I looked all over, and even searched in many towns, yet I don't have the cigars! I'm terribly sorry!"

Rav Yisroel looked at his chassid, and asked him, "Do you think I needed those cigars? I don't need those cigars. But I knew that you are entering into a foreign country where their values contradict the values of the Torah. I was afraid that during your stay in France, you may be influenced by the temptations that await you there. So I told you to look for those cigars, and I knew that you would be thinking about your Rebbe the entire time! That is what saved you from spiritual downfall!"

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l would often quote the answer of Rav Aaron Baskt zt"l, (known as "Rav Archik") the Rav of Shavel, a small village in Lithuania near the town where he, as a young student, attended yeshiva. Rav Binyamin would eat a weekly meal at the home of the Rav Archik, and would often talk about his brilliance in Talmudic knowledge, his kindness, and distinguished and saintly way of life.

Rav Bakst answered the question with a parable. A father teaches his son to walk and holds on to him, lest he fall and hurt himself. As the son adapts to his newfound abilities, his father lets go of him, yet he remains close to watch and ensure that the child remains safe. The child in turn, gains confidence in his own abilities, **while trusting that his father is still protecting him, albeit from afar.**

Hashem treated the Jews in Egypt like infants. They were, indeed, a newborn nation. Hashem held on to them, showing them open miracles, one after another, enabling them to completely feel his presence. But as the Jewish nation traveled to their own destiny, they matured as a nation Hashem "loosened his grip" and no longer allowed his miracles to be unrestricted and easily noticed. **Despite that, the Jewish Nation is expected to know and to feel the presence of Hashem, through the disguise of nature.** He is watching us and every move we make, ensuring our safety.

Hashem taught us this lesson at Sinai. The generation of yetzias Mitzrayim was not alive at the creation of the world, and therefore could not connect to it to relive that inspiration. **Yet they all remembered the miracles of the exodus.** Hashem wanted to remind them of those great miracles as a lesson for us all in the future. For down the road of life, we will always need to look back at those miracles which we experienced, in order to realize and appreciate the small miracles. **Those small miracles are the hints of Divine intervention in our lives, about which we must think about constantly.**

Good Shabbos!

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