



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*

5779 - Parsha Shemos - The Power of Shabbos

After the Jewish nation began their enslavement, Hashem appeared to Moshe Rabbeinu and instructed him to go down to the Jews and relay a message. Hashem had not forgotten them, and would ultimately take them out of Egypt. The passuk tells us, "The nation believed him, and they heard that Hashem has remembered the Jews, and has seen their plight." (Shemos 4:31) **There was hope, and they were uplifted.**

Later on, however, Moshe went to Pharoh, and Pharoh responded with a harsh command, "Make the work harder for the Jews, and let them not talk about falsehood!"

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky would often repeat a question asked by his father, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l. When Moshe came back to the Jews after this, their response was astounding. "They did not listen to Moshe because of their shortness of breath and hard labor." What happened? **Why did they listen the first time but not the second?**

At the recent Torah Umesorah Presidents Conference, Mr. Gary Torgow, chairman of Talmer Bancorp, and noted champion of Jewish education, delivered the keynote address. He told this story.

A number of years ago, a ring of highly sophisticated phishing experts broke into his private email, and after studying his style and language, waited for him to travel overseas to strike. The sent a highly sensitive, confidential email to the wire department in his bank, using his exact expression and style. The email read, "I am travelling overseas, and I need you to wire \$7,000,000 to the international account I have set up. Even though I normally would conform this over the phone, I will be traveling at the exact time I need the transfer executed and will not be accessible via telephone. Please make sure to wire the money on Monday at precisely 8:30 am."

Juanita, the wire clerk, received the email, and studied it carefully. Seemingly, it was legit, but she was unsure. She called her supervisor to approve the transfer, yet voiced her hesitation as to the legitimacy of the email. Her supervisor studied it and analyzed it, and after a few minutes, confirmed that yes, this is indeed from Gary. All i's are dotted and all t's are crossed. "Go ahead with the transfer" she confirmed.

However, Juanita was not convinced. At 8:27, she still could not bring herself to send \$7M into an overseas account. Sensing her hesitation, her supervisor asked Juanita, "What are you nervous about? I told you to go ahead with the wire!" Juanita took a deep breath and firmly responded, "I know this is a fraud. It cannot possibly be from Gary." Her supervisor raised an eyebrow as Juanita continued. "Gary is a strict Shabbos observer. This email was sent to me at 10:00 Saturday morning!"

Rav Binyamin would emphasize Rav Yaakov's approach to this problem. The Midrash tells us that in the beginning of their enslavement, **Pharoh gave the Jews a day off. Shabbos, the day of rest, was theirs.**

After Moshe pleaded to Pharoh, vindictively, Pharoh took away their Shabbos and increased their workload, not allowing them to spend Shabbos properly. **They no longer had their weekly inspiration and weekly charge of energy. They were lost and dejected.** Even When Moshe came to them with promises of redemption, they could not hear it.

As long as they observed Shabbos, they would read "megillos," verses from Iyov and tehilim, that would energize them spiritually and physically, enabling them to keep their hopes and dreams alive. **Shabbos gave them life and gave them purpose. And Shabbos gave them the ability to believe in miracles.**

Rav Binyamin zt"l would always repeat that Shabbos is the source of blessing, hope, and life. Use it well, and you will see blessing in your life!

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.