



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 Toldos - Grabbing Growth**

Parshas Toldos tells the story of the birth of Yaakov and Eisav. The Torah's description of their birth, a yearly highlight for children to repeat, is unique. The passuk tells us that when Yaakov was born, "V'yado ochezes ba'akeiv Eisav" - "After that his brother emerged with his hand grasping on the heel of Eisav."

It is interesting to note that the Torah describes this action of Yaakov grasping Eisav's heel. What is its significance?

*In the early 1800's, two yeshiva students traveled together across Europe to Pressburg, Hungary, to the yeshiva of Rav Moshe Sofer (known as the "Chasam Sofer"), a world renown Torah institution. One boy was known for his brilliant mind and quick grasp of his studies, and his reputation preceded him wherever he went. The other was also studious, and a budding scholar, but clearly not of the same stature as the first.*

*It was only a few days after Succos, and they arrived in time to take the entrance exam for the long winter "zman" (semester). Both boys spent time individually with the rosh yeshiva, Rav Moshe Sofer, as he thoroughly tested the boys on their knowledge of Gemara and its many commentaries.*

*The faculty and students of the yeshiva were shocked to hear that the Chasam Sofer accepted the second boy into his prestigious yeshiva, but not the first! One rebbi in the yeshiva approached him and asked him why.*

*"As these two boys walked towards the yeshiva," The Chasam Sofer explained, "I watched them through a window in my. There was some loose schach left from Succos lying on the side of the road. The first boy carelessly stepped on the schach and trampled it, as he walked a straight path. The second boy however, out of sensitivity for the mitzvah, took a slight detour, and walked around the schach. A tamid who is missing the sensitivity for a mitzvah, no matter how bright he is, will not fit here in this yeshiva!" \**

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l quotes the Abarbanel to shed light on this incident. Eisav held some ideals close to his heart and pursued them greatly. Physical strength and mastery at hunting were his passions, and he pursued them, along with the three cardinal sins - idolatry, adultery and murder. Yet service of Hashem and spiritual pursuit were "crushed under his heel." (The passuk in parshas Eikev uses this expression to describe one who does not have the proper regard for mitzvos.)

This is precisely where Yaakov entered. When Yaakov saw a mitzvah, or an opportunity to grow, he grabbed it. As he emerged from Rivka's womb, he was already grabbing those opportunities which Eisav left behind. He grabbed the heel to show that every small opportunity for growth, even the ones crushed under the heel of the scoffers, is important.

The Torah is telling us the secret to spiritual growth. Where other may take a shortcut and trample on the mitzvah, don't follow. Rather take another moment and realize the gift of a mitzvah. Grab it and grow.

**Good Shabbos!**

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