



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*

5780 - Parshas Mishpatim – Crash But Don't Burn

Parshas Mishpatim discusses many monetary laws which Moshe taught the Jews after the Torah was given. Interestingly, these laws are juxtaposed immediately following select laws of the Mizbeach, (Alter) which are at the conclusion of the previous pasha, Parshas Yisro.

Rashi, noting this, offers a reason. "Why are the monetary laws placed after the laws of the Mizbeach? To teach us that you shall place the Sanhedrin, (Supreme Rabbinical Court) next to the Mizbeach."

But what exactly is the significance of the Sanhedrin being placed next to the Mizbeach?

This past week, the 62nd Daytona 500 Race not only started with a bang, as President Trump honored the race with his presence in the air and on the ground, but it ended with a bang as well. During the final lap, just seconds before the finish line, the crowd watched in horror as a terrifying crash happened right before their eyes. As the pack of cars were fighting for first place, Ryan Blaney's No. 12 Ford hit Ryan Newman's No. 6 Ford, causing it to lose control and slam head-on into the outer retaining wall at a speed of approximately 200 MPH.

Newman's car continued sliding along the track where it was hit again and sent airborne, landing on its roof and bursting into flames. Onlookers watched in horror as Ryan Newman, trapped in a burning hunk of mangled metal resembling an upside-down racecar, slid down the track at extreme speeds, finally coming to a halt on the side of the track.

As the emergency crews worked hastily to extinguish the flames and extricate Newman from his pulverized racecar, many were already envisioning the aftermath of this horrific tragedy with a memorial service and ceremony.

Miraculously, Ryan survived the crash with serious, but non-life threatening injuries, and was rushed to Halifax Medical Center. Only two days later, to the delight of millions, he walked out of the hospital on his own two feet, holding onto his daughters' hands.

Experts have explained that the only reason for Newman's miraculous survival was the improved safety features that NASCAR has implemented. The retaining wall of the track, the new HANS restraints on the helmets, and improved protection in the cars, were all factors to enable Newman to survive the extreme impact, defying all odds.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l explained, that the Mizbeach was meant to bring Jews closer to Hashem through korbanos (sacrifices). A Jew who sinned would repent and bring a korban, renewing his pledge to become close again to Hashem.

The Sanhedrin, as leaders of the Jews, had the same responsibility. There will be times when Jews will sin, either as individuals, or as a group. They will be battered and bruised, bent out of shape, and yes, sometimes even pulverized and flipped upside down in a spiritual fireball of sin, engulfing their bodies and souls.

But our leaders are there to offer protection and guidance. They are the ones who place precautionary boundaries. They are the ones to come to the aid of the failing Jew, offering him assistance through proper teshuvah, and they are the ones who will guide every Jew back to the true path.

Just as the mizbeach guaranteed that Jews can renew their closeness to Hashem, the Sanherin, who sit adjacent, do the same. They ensure that every Jew who is shaken to the core with severe spiritual wounds, can still walk away tall and proud - on his own two feet.

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.