



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

5780 - Parshas Re'eh – Groups of One

“You are children to Hashem your G-d. Do not gash yourselves...” (14:1) However, the gemara (Yevamos 13b) explains this passuk in Parshas Re'eh to mean, “Do not form various groups” The Torah warns the Jews not to splinter into different assemblages, each one practicing their own set of laws.

But aren't there so many different types of Jews? There are so many customs even within each sect of Jews, as the saying goes, “two Jews- three opinions.”

How do we understand this halacha?

Someone once approached the Chofetz Chaim and asked him the following question.

“There are so many groups even within the Torah world. Some believe that we should get involved in politics, and some believe that we should stay far away. Some preach that we should stick to ourselves, while others advise us to go out and change the world.

“Every group has their leaders who spar with other leaders on many issues. How do I know who to follow and who not to?”

The Chofetz Chaim, in his classic simplicity and clarity, answered him, “I know one thing. When one comes to the next world after 120 years, they will not ask him which shul he davened in, nor will they ask him if he belonged to this chassidus, or the other chassidus. They will not ask him if he sang and danced in shul on Friday night, or if he davened quickly and spent the night learning. This is what the heavenly court will do. They will take out a Sefer Torah, and hold it up to him, and ask him, ‘Did you keep what it says in this Torah?’

If he answers ‘Yes,’ he will go to Gan Eden. If he answers ‘No,’ they will direct him to gehinum”

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l would often quote the Chofetz Chaim, and explain. In an army, there are many types of soldiers. There are airmen, seamen, foot soldiers, and cavalry. No one questions why we need them all, because they are all fighting the same war!

Klal Yisroel is also fighting a war - a war against the Satan, who is constantly trying to trip us up with sin and prosecute us. We need all types of soldiers to fight on many fronts, with various tactics. Some can fight with deep sessions of mussar, and some fight with songs and joy. Some fight with chessed, and some fight with extreme meticulousness in halacha. Of course, the study of Torah is the source for all Jews' strength, but if you can use your individual strong point to fight for the cause, then do that, and win.

But when the soldiers start fighting against each other, or against various unknown enemies, they are no longer one army. They are many groups fighting a disoriented, disjointed battle. That is what the Torah warns against. Stay focused on the enemy, fight strong, and remember that you are part of an army of one.

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.