



אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאתצרו 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 Shoftim - United as One**

In Parshas Shoftim, the Torah gives instructions for when the Jews go to war. The kohein would get up and announce, (20:3) "Shema Yisroel" - "Hear, O Israel, today you are approaching the battle against your enemies. Let your hearts not be faint; you shall not be afraid, and you shall not be alarmed, and you shall not be terrified because of them."

Rashi explains that when the kohein tells the Jews, "Shema Yisroel - Hear o Israel," he is telling them that even if they only have the merit of the mitzvah of saying Krias Shema, that would be enough to earn them a victory. However, he continues, (20:8) "What man is there who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, that he should not cause the heart of his brothers to melt, as his heart." Rashi explains, that this man is fearful of his sins. He is unfit to fight in the Jewish army.

How do we explain these two seemingly contradictory concepts? How can the single merit of Shema be enough to score a victory for the Jews, is a single sin would disqualify a soldier?

***Anatoly Sharansky's trials and tribulations from the time of his arrest in March 1977 through his release in 1987 included the Soviet Union's most notorious prisons and labor camps. It was a tormenting journey, but along the arduous term there were many encouraging little reminders that the One Above was holding his hand.***

***One day during his trial, Sharansky's firmly requested to be allowed to select a lawyer of his own choosing rather than the stooge given to him by the Soviet authorities. The judge who presided over the kangaroo court reacted by declaring a brief recess and had Anatoly thrown into a tiny holding cell. There was hardly any light in the dank compartment, and there was nothing for Sharansky to do but wait for the proceedings to resume. To pass time he stared at the various curses and inscriptions scratched on the walls by prisoners who also sat and waited like he was for the decisions of their mortal fate.***

***However, Anatoly did not notice the curses etched by the previous men that once sat in that cell. Instead, he saw a message of hope and inspiration scratched on the wall. A Magen David etched in the wall, stood out proudly amongst all the other frivolities of frustration. The words "Chazak V'Ematz" (Be strong and fortify yourself) were energetically etched underneath it. It was signed "Asir Tziyon (Prisoner of Zion) Yosef Begun." Begun knew that like him others would pass this way and he engraved for them a mark of hope.***

***It was only through these calls of unity that the oppressed prisoners survived.***

My grandfather Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l would quote the Sefer Techeiles Mordechai who explained.

The merit of saying Shema is not just for the actual mitzvah of saying Krias Shema. In the shema, we say, "Hear Yisroel, Hashem our G-d, Hashem is One." We proclaim that Hashem in one G-d over us, hence unifying together under His jurisdiction.

We are all banded together as His nation. - One nation under One Hashem. Yes there may be sinners among us who feel dejected and unworthy of fighting. And yes, they are afraid. But when the entire Jewish Nation calls out together, "Hashem Echad," we are initiating a great merit, unifying and fortifying our army, and leading us to victory.

**Good Shabbos!**

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