



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 Va'aira – Listen Up!

This week, after Moshe pleads to Pharaoh to free the Jews, and Pharaoh refuses to let them go, Hashem reinforces his promise of redemption. He instructs Moshe to go back to his people and redeliver his message of redemption. Yet, the Jewish People seemed to have given up. **They no longer want to hear from him, and no longer believed his message.** The Torah tells us "They did not listen to Moshe, from shortness of breath and from hard labor."

One can understand that they did not believe Moshe and his words of hope. But the Torah stresses something else. They did not listen. The Torah should tell us that the Jews did not believe Moshe. **Why does the Torah attribute the Jews neglect of Moshe's message to their lack of listening?**

I heard the following story from a successful principal. After seeing many boys return from recess with their shirts sloppily untucked, he decided that in order to maintain proper decorum in the school during the periods following recess, rules must be enforced.

He spoke to the boys very strongly about the importance of tucking their shirts in, and looking presentable for class.

Due to the severity of the enforcement, any boy who would break these rules and walk around the halls with an untucked shirt would suffer a consequence. One day, he saw a boy, who was usually a good student, walking in the hallway brazenly with his shirt untucked. The principal stopped him and asked "Are you aware that your shirt is untucked?" "Yes," replied the child.

The principal continued, "Are you aware that there is a rule that you must tuck in your shirt?"

"Yes."

"Are you aware that if you break the rule, you will receive a consequence?"

"Yes," the student replied for the third time.

The principal, understanding that there was a deeper problem, paused for a moment. He then bent down and lowered his voice, "OK. So please tell me, what's bothering you?"

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l, would often quote the passuk in Yeshaya, "*Hatu aznechem ulichu alai, shimu usichi nafshechem* - **Turn your ear and come to me. Listen and your soul will live.**"

Listening is always half the answer. One can gain tremendous insight into any problem, if one would listen and internalize the issues and messages.

The Torah is alluding to this lesson. **The Bnei Yisroel, due to their tremendous distress of the labor, were unable to appreciate their own savior!** They did not listen with a complete ear. They could not focus and thereby missed this message of hope. One can hear without listening. And sometimes, one can merely hear words, without understanding the deeper message.

Sometimes, the Almighty is talking to you. **Listen well, and you will hear it!**

Good Shabbos!

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