



אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאת רב בנימן קמנצקי זצ"ל  
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 Beshalach – What is it?

The sojourn of the B'nai Yisrael through the desert was replete with miracles. Hashem rained down the manna, heavenly food, for them to eat.

The Torah tells us that the manna was a shaped like coriander which resembled crystals. The Jews named it "*muhn*," a word that the Rashbam explains, simply means "what". The Torah explains why. "They said to one another, it is *muhn*, because they did not know what it was" (Shmos 16:15).

Something seems strange. If there was a significant reason for a name to this food, one can understand the Torah telling us the reason. But why would the Torah tells us this seemingly insufficient reason to call this miraculous food "manna"? Is the etymology of this particular name so important?

***My father related to me an incident which occurred some decades ago which he still remembers. His brother, Rabbi Zvi Kamenetzky of Toronto, came home from school one day with a sly smile on his face. He ran over to his father, my grandfather Rav Binyamin, and proudly and boldly declared, "Did you hear that there is a horse that just broke a record for its speed on the racetrack, and it is now the frontrunner in the upcoming race in Belmont?" My grandfather oohed and aahed at his young son's enthusiastic comments, but Zvi was not finished. "Aba," he continued, "What is the horse's name." My grandfather smiled and responded, "I don't know the horse's name. I'm sorry that I can't help you." But Zvi was persistent, and repeated, "Aba, What is his name." My grandfather looked at his young son and with puzzlement and responded yet again, "I did not even hear of this horse three minutes ago. How should I know his name?"***

***Young Zvi, hardly containing his laughter, exclaimed "No Aba! You don't understand! I'm am not asking you a question! I am telling you a fact! "What" is the name of the horse!***

The word "what" is not a simple word.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l would always teach that the manna symbolizes one's livelihood. As the Jews travelled the dessert, they had no one to turn to for sustenance, but to the Almighty Himself. Our Sages teach us, that one must always realize that all his own efforts and skills are merely his own obligation of "*hishtadlus*" - doing his part. Ultimately, it is Hashem, and He Himself who provides for us all.

The Torah tells this to us as a valuable lesson for eternity. The Jews called it manna because they did not know what it was. One must always view his own efforts as efforts alone. We do not own our successes, and we do not know what they are. We should not attribute success to anything but Hashem Himself, because sometimes, "what" is not a question, but the only answer.

### **Good Shabbos!**

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