



THE RABBI BINYAMIN KAMENETZKY  
TORAH LEGACY FOUNDATION  
לזכרון של הרב בנימין קמנצקי זצ"ל

אמרי בנימן

דברי תורה, מחשבה וסיפורים מאוצרו 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 Noach - Flood of the Unknown**

Parshas Noach tell the story of the mabul, the flood which Hashem brought on the world. Hashem brought rain for 40 days and nights, and the waters continued to strengthen for 150 days. The floodwaters, under command from Hashem, became a death trap not only for the people, but for every living organism on the face of the Earth. When the time came for the waters to subside, the passuk says, "And Hashem caused a spirit to pass over the Earth and the waters subsided."

Seemingly, if Hashem wanted the flood waters to be strong for 150 days, why did He need to pass over the Earth with a spirit in order to calm the waters? Once the mission of the water was fulfilled, the water should have automatically ceased strengthening, and thereby, automatically subsided?

***Rabbi Raphael Pelcovitz zt"l, the longtime rov of Congregation Kneseth Israel, the White Shul, in Far Rockaway, NY, was a talmid of Rav Shlomo Heiman and Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz at Yeshiva Torah Vodaas. All his life, Rav Pelcovitz followed their ideals, values and hashkofos unwaveringly.***

***After the petirah of his sister, Rabbi Pelcovitz, who was otherwise clean-shaven, grew a beard during the period of mourning. A grandson later remarked that Rabbi Pelcovitz appeared so nice and stately in a beard. Why hadn't he grown a beard during all his years as a rov? As a son of a rov and as a respected rabbi himself, certainly he'd consider having a beard.***

***"The reason I haven't grown a beard all these years," Rabbi Pelcovitz explained, "is because when I first entered the rabbinate, my rebbi, Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, told me that I'd be able to influence a more diverse number of people if I did not have a beard. So I followed his directive."***

***"But Saba," asked the grandson, "it is now so many years later. Times have changed. Surely now you can grow a beard and it wouldn't impact your ability to be mashpiah on others."***

***Rabbi Pelcovitz's response was enlightening. "You're right," he said. "Times have changed. But that was the direction that I received from my rebbi, and my rebbi is no longer here to tell me otherwise, so I am bound by his guidance."***

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l, would quote the Ohr Hachayim who offers a fascinating explanation. When Hashem gives a command, one must listen and follow. The waters followed their command, and did not make calculations as to the purpose and the extent of their mission. Even though the waters knew that their mission, to destroy every living organism on the planet, had already been fulfilled, they kept strengthening, exactly as Hashem told them to do, some 150 days earlier.

The only way they would cease strengthening, is with another command to stop. For without that, they would never fail to serve Hashem continuously.

Among our confessions this past Yom Kippur, we mentioned, "Al cheit shechatanu lefanecha b'yod'im u'velo yod'im" "We have sinned before You with knowledge and without knowledge." Perhaps we can understand this confession in a new light. We have sinned with knowledge, because we thought we understood what Hashem wants from us, and we have made excess calculation which minimized our accomplishments and cause us to fall short on our duties.

On that, we confess. We should not make our own calculations and distort the true will of Hashem.

For sometimes, we are flooded with ideas and calculations, but we are better off in the unknown.

### **Good Shabbos!**

*Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky is the Director of Advancement at Yeshiva of South Shore - ביית בנימן - ישיבה תורת חיים. 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](mailto:skamenetzky@yoss.org).*