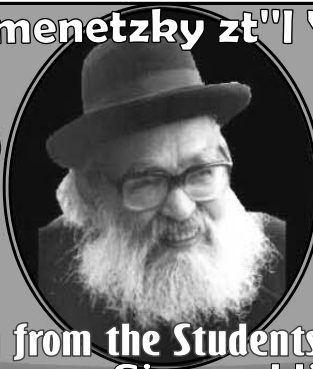


השבוע



עפרת

לז"נ שרה שינדל בת אריה משה

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת פקודי
פרשת שקלים
ראש חודש אדר ב' תשס"ה
March 12, 2005

Candle Lighting:	5:40
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:33
Second זמן קריאת שמע:	9:08
Latest שחרית:	10:07
Earliest הבדלה:	6:42

This week's edition of
ATERES HASHAVUA
Is sponsored by
Mark & Barbara Silber and family
in commemoration of
Mr. Silber's father's
first yahrtzeit
לז"נ אברהם בן יהודה

NINETEEN YEARS OF REFLECTION

Rabbi Binyomin Kamenetzky shilt"l,
Rosh Yeshiva Emeritus

This past Thursday was the *yahrtzeit* of my beloved father zt"l. Each year at this time over the past nineteen years holds special significance in the lives of those dearest ones. The thoughts that pass through my mind every year is another lesson from the significant and colorful life that my father zt"l lived. I perhaps remember him the longest in my family, and can never forget his constant *hasmadah*. Every time I saw my father as a child, I was enthused and inspired to see he was always learning and writing. Many people are remembered by the many different qualities they processed, and I am personally inspired by the fact that I never saw him idle.

There are many *mitzvos* that require *zechirah* (remembrance). When Moshe Rabbeinu tells us **זכר ימות עולם**, *remember the days of old*, he further ends the same *pasuk* with the words, **בינו שנות דר ודר**, *understand the years of every generation*. The lessons that my father zt"l taught us are a continued process that will never come to an end.

Chazal tell us, **צדיקים במיתתן קרויין חיים**, *The righteous even in their death are called alive*, as they continue to bring us new perspectives in our daily lives. This concept goes with the verity that the Torah is a *Toras Chaim*, as it is given

to us for the purpose of living through it - as the *pasuk* says **ושמרתם את המצות**. The *Chiddushei Har'im* explains that this means that all our *chiyus* comes from the Torah and the *kiyum hamitzvos*. He explains that we are to do all the *mitzvos* with life and with enthusiasm, in a manner that will bring

(Continued on page 3)

This week's edition of
ATERES HASHAVUA
Is sponsored by
RABBI & REBBETZIN
MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY
In honor of the Marriage
of their son Yehudah Baruch
to Shoshi Kurfeld

תתן אמת ליעקב

Ephraim Weiss, 11th Grade

ושמת שם את ארון העדות וסכת על הארן את הפרכת ומג
And you should put there the *aron* of testimony,
and you should cover the *aron* with the *kapores*

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l explains the reason for the letter "ה" at the beginning of the word "העדות." When there is a noun that is made up of two words, the second word always begins with the letter "ה." This is called the "ה הידיעה." When the first word of the phrase is a noun and the second word is an adjective that describes the noun, the extra "ה" is not used. In this case, the full name for the *aron* is either **ארון העדות**, *The aron of testimony*, or **ארון הברית**, *The aron of the treaty*. Both expressions refer to the fact that the *aron* was used as a storage place for the *luchos*, which represented the treaty between Hashem and *Bnei Yisroel* that was sealed at the time of *matan Torah*. The fact that the *luchos* were inside is not a description of the *aron*, but rather defines the very essence of the *aron*. The *aron* existed only to serve as a holder for the *luchos*, and without the *luchos* the *aron* itself was superfluous. As such, the reference to the *luchos* through the word "עדות" is not a description of the *aron*, but rather a part of the existence of the *aron*, and it is therefore connected to the word *aron* with the "ה הידיעה."

Rav Yaakov uses this concept to explain several other difficulties. We find several places throughout Tanach where the *aron* is referred to using a feminine conjugation. [שמואל א' ד:יז & דברי הימים ב' ח:יא]

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Nineteen Years of Reflection</i>	1
<i>Emes L'Yaakov</i>	1
<i>Focus on Reb Yaakov</i>	2
<i>Gematria</i>	4

This week's edition of
ATERES HASHAVUA
Is sponsored in honor of
the Bar Mitzvah of
Daniel Levenson

Stories of Tzidkus. . . Tales of Greatness. . . Focus on Reb Yaakov

Personal accounts of
Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky *zt'l*
from those who knew him well
or simply encountered him by chance

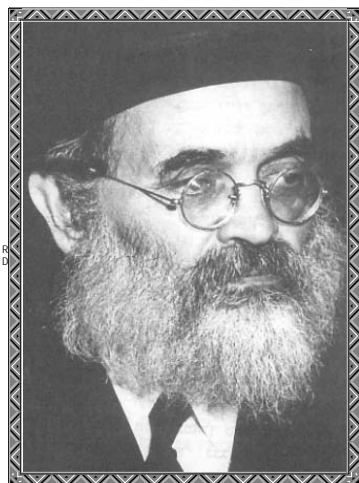
by Avi Lieberman

• Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky *zt'l* once told over something that he witnessed on his way to shul one Shabbos. When he lived on Bedford Avenue, Reb Yaakov used to pass a *shteibel* on his way to Yeshiva Torah Vodaath. As he walked passed the *shteibel* that day, he noticed a *tallis* lying on the floor, while a father who was screaming at his young son stood over it. When this took place over forty years ago, there was no such thing as an *eiruv*, and it was common for some people to allow their young sons to carry their *talleism* to shul Shabbos morning. Apparently, the young child didn't want to carry on Shabbos, and threw down the *tallis* in protest. The father was berating his child for this behavior.

When Reb Yaakov saw this, he softly asked the man, "How can you berate your son for not wanting to be *mechalel Shabbos*?" The man was taken aback by Reb Yaakov's inquiry, and replied, "But rebbe, my *tallis* is now ruined, and I can't even pick it up to brush it off – I myself am helpless to do anything!"

Reb Yaakov heard the retort, and then responded, "If you're upset about your son ruining your *tallis*, you can take him to a *Beis Din* (Jewish Court System) after Shabbos. But can you berate your child for not wanting to desecrate the holy Shabbos?" We see here how Reb Yaakov was able to clearly define the importance of *chinnuch* and priorities one must have when guiding children in their youth.

• As a young *bachur*, Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe; Menahel of our Mesivta used to learn in a yeshiva in Miami. During his time there, he was privileged to see Reb Yaakov *zt'l* on almost a daily basis, as Reb Yaakov used to come into the yeshiva to learn in the back room of the Beis Medrash. Reb Yaakov was always careful to leave the yeshiva before the daily *shuir klali* began, so as not to cause those learning to stand up when he would leave. There were in fact a few times when Reb Yaakov would be ready to leave after the *shuir* had already



commenced, and in effect stayed in the Beis Medrash until the *shuir* was over.

On one particular day, Rabbi Yaffe was coming from the Beis Medrash to the Rosh Yeshiva's office with a *chumash*, as he had a private learning *sefer* together with him. As he walked down the hallway, he encountered Reb Yaakov at the doorway on his way out of the

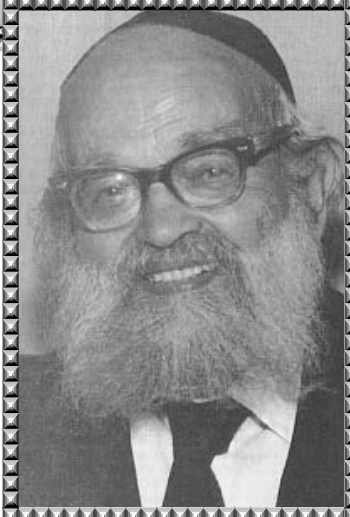
yeshiva. Rabbi Yaffe was excited at this apparent opportunity, and quickly pulled the door open and stood at a halt as he waited for Reb Yaakov to walk through. Reb Yaakov, however, stopped short and slowly lifted his head up to face Rabbi Yaffe's. With a stern face and a low tone, Reb Yaakov stated in Yiddish, "Nu, You are going with a *sefer*."

Reb Yaakov was implying that since Rabbi Yaffe was carrying a *chumash*, he should go through the doorway before him. When Rabbi Yaffe looked down at the *chumash* in his hand and realized what Reb Yaakov meant, he shuddered at the thought and replied, "But I can't!" Rabbi Yaffe couldn't imagine going in front of Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky!

Reb Yaakov stated again with the same solemn face, "Nu, You are going with a *sefer*." Rabbi Yaffe still couldn't bring himself to walk in front of Reb Yaakov, and replied once again, "But I can't do that!"

Reb Yaakov heard Rabbi Yaffe's response, and suddenly took both hands and pushed Rabbi Yaffe through the doorway! As Rabbi Yaffe recovered from this reaction, he looked up from the ground, just in time to see Reb Yaakov break out into his famous beaming smile. That is a moment Rabbi Yaffe will never forget, and a lesson that will be treasured for a lifetime.

• Rabbi Joseph Grunblatt, *Morah D'Asrah* of the Queens Jewish Center in Forest Hills, NY, was already learning *Yoreh Deah* when Reb Yaakov *zt'l* came to Yeshiva Torah Vodaath. He learned under Reb Yaakov for only a few months, and still today recalls his utter ease and simplistic approach to all matters.



(continued on page 3)

more *kavod shomayim* (honor of Heaven) and *ahavas Hashem* (love of G-d). It is important to become attached to the *mitzvos* commanded to us, and it is just as vital to be connected to the *Gedolei Yisroel* and learn from their ways; especially in the areas of *bein odom lachaveiro* (actions of man between man), where it is best reflected in being *mekadesh shem shomayim* (sanctifying the name of Heaven). In this manner, one can and will rise to the pinnacle of having proper fear of Heaven, and hopefully the *zechuyos* of my father *zt'l* will bring blessings and praises to all. תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים



EMES L'YAAKOV (continued from page 1)

The word *aron*, according to the rules of *dikduk*, should be considered masculine. However, as we explained, the full name for the *aron* is either "ארון העדות," or "ארון הברית." As such, whenever the *aron* is referred to as such, it changes to a feminine word, as both the word "עדות" and the word "ברית" are feminine.

Using this concept, we can also understand why during the period of the second *Beis HaMikdash* there was no *aron*. It is known that the *aron* from the first *Beis HaMikdash* was lost, but wasn't it possible to construct a new one? Rav Yaakov answers that yes, it was possible to assemble a new *aron*, but to do so would have been superfluous. When the *aron* was lost after the *churban*, the *luchos* that were inside were lost as well. The *luchos*, which were written by Hashem Himself could obviously not be replaced. The *aron* without the *luchos* served no purpose, and as such, a new *aron* was never built.

FOCUS ON REB YAAKOV (continued from page 2)

Rabbi Grunblatt felt that Reb Yaakov was someone that a person could be comfortable discussing any topic with, as he made himself someone that people could easily relate to in conversation.

While in his *shiur*, Rabbi Grunblatt would describe Reb Yaakov's *mehalech* of learning as the '*limud HaRasha"sh*'. The *Rasha"sh* is a commentary found in the back of most *gemaros*, which rather than bringing out complex concepts from the *gemara*, discusses the *dikduk* (grammar) of the words found in the *sugyos* in attempt to explain the essential dialogue at hand. "So too," explains Rabbi Grunblatt, "Reb Yaakov's approach to the *gemara* was to develop the main points of the *gemara*, rather than get involved in big *drashos* and conflicts in conventional areas of the *sugya*."

Rabbi Grunblatt recalls how he was once at a wedding of one of his congregants, where he



Reb Yaakov *zt'l* together with the Baba Sali *zt'l* being given this honor over the Rosh Yeshiva. Reb Yaakov, however, thought nothing of it and

greatly encouraged and impressed upon Rabbi Grunblatt to accept the *kibud*. With his sweet demeanor and encouraging words, how could anyone disagree with Reb Yaakov's wishes?

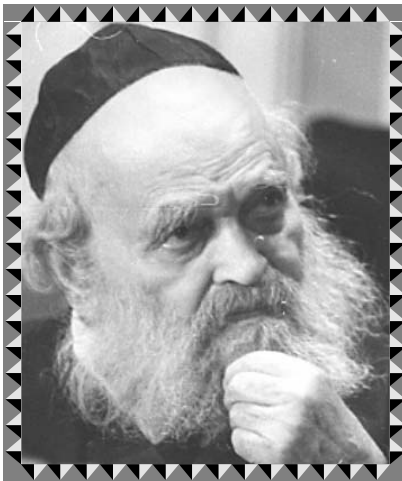
• Rabbi Chanina Herzberg, Menahel of Yeshiva Toras Chaim, once went up to Camp Ohr Shraga together with a rebbe in the yeshiva to speak with Reb Yaakov *zt'l*. Rabbi Herzberg enjoyed a close relationship with Reb Yaakov that allowed him to discuss many different important matters with him, and this time's reason for a visit warranted the same guidance. There was a certain boy in the yeshiva who was a big troublemaker; always playing tricks and being malevolent to fellow classmates, as well as being disrespectful to his rabbeim. This rebbe accompanying Rabbi Herzberg was nervous that such a boy in his class for the upcoming year would disrupt the flow of the learning and cause much damage. Therefore, Rabbi Herzberg went along with this rebbe to Reb Yaakov to seek guidance in possibly taking this boy out of the yeshiva.

When they discussed this situation with Reb Yaakov, he was able to steer the possible expulsion towards further guidance and regulation while still keeping a firm hand on the child's behavior. With private tutors along with direct control and assistance, Reb Yaakov concluded with different *eitzas* (solutions) on how to save the child without damaging the flow of the classroom.

As Rabbi Herzberg and the rebbe with him were preparing to leave the camp, they were

(continued on page 4)

called back to Reb Yaakov. When they returned, Reb Yaakov looked at Rabbi Herzberg and said, "I must ask - were you *mispallel* for the boy? Did you daven for him?" Rabbi Herzberg was taken aback by this question, and softly replied, "No."



Reb Yaakov then turned to the other rebbe and asked, "Throughout your time as a *mechanech*, did you daven for your talmidim? Do you have them in mind when in the midst of tefillah?" The rebbe as well softly replied, "No, I have not."

Reb Yaakov looked at both of them seriously and replied, "Fifty percent of being a *mechanech* is to be *mispallel* for one's talmidim. One must always have them in mind during davening and always pray for their success."

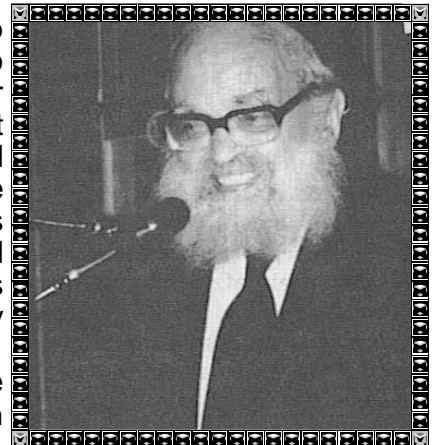
Rabbi Herzberg recalls this message until today as a lesson of importance in being a teacher to children. A teacher must never forget to daven to Hashem for assistance and guidance in leading children through the *Derech HaTorah*.

- On one occasion during his time learning in Eretz Yisroel, Rabbi Manoach Gelbfish, a rebbe in our Mesivta, heard that Reb Yaakov *zt'l* was leaving from a certain airport to return back to America. With this being a great opportunity to see off the *gadol hador*, Rabbi Gelbfish got all necessary information and made his way to the airport just in time to see Reb Yaakov arrive. Rather than there being throngs of people to see off the Rosh Yeshiva, the only ones there were immediate family - and Rabbi Gelbfish. As Reb Yaakov was preparing to board the plane, he turned to each family member and gave them

each an endearing kiss. But why should Rabbi Gelbfish be left out?! Reb Yaakov just as serenely and lovingly walked over to Rabbi Gelbfish and gave him a kiss as well.

On another occasion, Rabbi Gelbfish arrived at the house of his rebbe, Reb Shlomo Wolbe just as he was on his way out. Feeling terrible that his beloved talmid had made the trek to his home for naught, Reb Wolbe invited Rabbi Gelbfish to join him as went to visit Reb Yaakov. Rabbi Gelbfish was honored and excited to join his rebbe to visit Reb Yaakov, especially since Reb Yaakov was already much older and had stopped seeing people as regularly as he used to. Rabbi Gelbfish happily accepted the invitation.

When they came to Reb Yaakov, who was staying by his son Reb Avraham's house in Brooklyn, they sat down with him and began talking. By that time in his life, Reb Yaakov rarely talked and quietly listened to everyone present as they discussed various different topics. Something apparently sparked interest, since completely unexpectedly, Reb Yaakov began to speak! He told over something that not many people had known - that he had many years ago been treated for cancer and was still there that day to tell the tale.



The conversation eventually ended, and Reb Wolbe together with Rabbi Gelbfish rose to leave. As they exited the house, Reb Wolbe turned to Rabbi Gelbfish and stated, "Don't think that Reb Yaakov can no longer talk. He is in constant preparation for the *Yom HaMohves* (The Day of Death), and articulates only what he needs to say."

(continued on page 6)

ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה [לה:ב]

by Tzadok Picker

YOU WILL DO WORK FOR SIX DAYS

The Baal HaTurim points out that the *gematria* of the word ששת is equal to that of the words 'ארבעים חסר אחת', 40 minus 1, alluding to the thirty-nine *melachos* that are forbidden to do on Shabbos. The Baal HaTurim then explains something that depicts the awesomeness of Shabbos, by bringing our attention to the last word of 'פסוק ג' and the first of 'פסוק ד'; 'השבת ויאמר'. If one were to take the first and last letters of both words, the word תורה is spelled, asserting that resting from the thirty-nine *melachos* permits the true learning of Hashem's Torah to be done. May we truly take advantage of this opportunity afforded to us.



The Life of HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

21 Adar 5651/1891 - 29 Adar I 5746/1986

- After his birth, Reb Yaakov's family moved to the tiny village of Dolhinov.

~ Elderly Jews would walk against the snow banks to permit the eight-year-old "illui (genius) of Dolhinov" to pass through the narrow street path dug through the drifts, so he could keep his daily schedule of study with the Rav.

- At the age of eleven, he left his home to learn in the yeshiva of Minsk.

~ Although he passed the entry exam, the Rosh Yeshiva, Harav Shlomo Glovenchitz still doubted whether he should accept Reb Yaakov due to his young age. "You are not even bar mitzvah yet," he commented.

"I came here to learn, not to be the tenth man of a *minyán*." the young Yaakov replied.

- After some time, the Kamenetzky household moved to Minsk where they housed the friends of Reb Yaakov, amongst them Rav Reuven Grozovsky, zt"l, and the young Reb Aaron Kotler, zt"l.

- Shortly after Pesach in 5665/1905, Reb Yaakov and Reb Aaron traveled to Slobodka to learn under the supervision of the Alter of Slobodka, HoRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l. Reb Yaakov also learned in the Yeshivos of Slutsk, Krinik and Moltsh.

- During WWI he took refuge in Lomza in the yeshiva of Rav Yechiel Michel Gordon zt"l.

- On 22 Sivan 5679 (1919) he married Ita Ettel, daughter of the Mashgiach Reb Ber Hirsch Heller zt"l.

- On 11 Av 5697 (1937), Reb Yaakov left for America. He was appointed Rav in Toronto.

- In 5705/1945, he accepted the request of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz zt"l, that he take up the position of Rosh Yeshiva in Mesivta Torah Vodaath.

- Reb Yaakov's first rebbetzin passed away in 1954. At her funeral, Reb Yaakov spoke of her dedication to caring for all their household needs so that he could devote himself entirely to Torah.

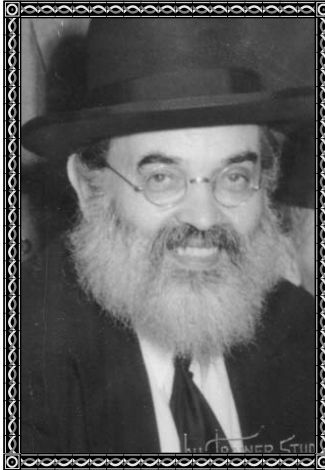
- Four years later, Reb Yaakov married Mrs. Chana Urman.

~ Like his first marriage, this was a model of *Shalom Bayis*. For instance, when the rebbetzin went shopping, Reb Yaakov would listen attentively for the car pulling up the driveway so he could go out and help her with the groceries. Very often Reb Yaakov would step out of meetings of the *Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah* to call and remind her to take her medication.

- Reb Yaakov spent his last few months mostly in the home of his daughter and son-in-law, Rabbi and Mrs. Hirsch Diskind. By that time Reb Yaakov was very rarely speaking.

- Reb Yaakov treated everyone with the utmost respect. A talmid at Torah Vodaath recalled that he would speak with the yeshiva's elderly Jewish custodian "as if he were the *gadol hador*."

~ When he was sixty-five years old, Reb Yaakov stayed up the entire night to keep an early morning appointment, rather



than set his alarm for dawn since it might disturb the sleep of a non-Jewish neighbor who returned from his job at 3 a.m.

- Reb Yaakov was known for his truthfulness. From the age of awareness, Reb Yaakov according to his own testimony never told a lie. When asked for his secret of longevity, he often responded, "I never said a *sheker*."

~ While learning in Slabodka, Reb Yaakov was invited to spend Pesach with a certain family, but declined the invitation on the grounds that it was his custom not to eat *gebroks*. Actually, it was the *minhag* of Reb Yaakov's family to eat *gebroks* and until that year, Reb Yaakov himself ate *gebroks*. Yet from the time he uttered the words "I don't eat *gebroks*"

throughout the rest of his life, Reb Yaakov never again ate *gebroks*, although he permitted his family to do so.

- Reb Yaakov was a model rebbi, teaching not only *gemara* but *how* to learn *gemara*. From watching Reb Yaakov, his *talmidim* learned countless lessons in the way a *ben Torah* conducts himself.

~ Even in his nineties, when he learned alone or with a *chavrusa*, he still chanted the words of the *gemara* with the enthusiasm of a young yeshiva boy. He once told someone that it was the joy that he experienced while learning which often caused him to hum a tune as he studied.

- His humility was amazing for a man of his stature, and his exceptional concern for the dignity and feelings of others showed itself in many ways.

~ It never occurred to Reb Yaakov that it was beneath his dignity to crawl under a car to retrieve a child's ball. During his winters in Florida, Reb Yaakov would spend his mornings in a local Yeshiva, and would practically run through the *beis medrash* to avoid making anyone stand up for him.

~ He was once diagnosed as suffering from a pinched nerve for which the prescribed cure was total rest. The doctor said, "Rabbi, no studying for the time being." After returning home, Reb Yaakov sat down to rest while a close *talmid* who was attending to him went to bring him a drink. The *talmid* was dismayed when a few minutes later he found Reb Yaakov learning. The *talmid* mustered his courage and said, "Please excuse me, but I am concerned for the Rosh Yeshiva's health; didn't the doctor say that there should be no learning for now. . .?" Reb Yaakov replied, "And if the doctor would say I should not breathe for the time being, will I also be required to listen to him?"

- On the 29th day of Adar 5746, the pure soul of Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky left this world. As requested, he was buried in Brooklyn because, as he said, "My children and grandchildren may wish to pour out their hearts at my grave, and they might not be able to afford the trip to Eretz Yisroel, so I must be near them." Since his passing, Reb Yaakov's *kever* has been a place of tefilla not only for his family but for countless others as well.

