

# עֵפֶרֶת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

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

## פרשת ויקהל

מברכים חודש אדר ב'

כ"ד אדר א' תשס"ה

March 5, 2005

Candle Lighting:	5:32
First קריאת שמע:	8:40
Second קריאת שמע:	9:15
Latest שחרית:	10:12
Earliest הבדלה:	6:35

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in honor of their  
50th Wedding Anniversary

## WITH A ZEALOUS PASSION

Motti Widroff, 10th Grade

In this week's parsha we find many people who want to help in the building of the *mishkan* and all its segments. One of these people was Betzalel, who worked hard and vigorously on the full construction of the *mishkan* along with all its *keilim* (vessels). In fact, Rashi points out that even though all of Klal Yisroel worked on the *aron kodesh*, Betzalel is the one given credit. While all the other *keilim* don't mention a specific name, by the *aron* the Torah states the name of Betzalel.

Another group involved was the *Nessiim*, who had almost lost out on donating to the *mishkan* altogether. Although they had good intentions in mind, the *Nessiim* procrastinated in donating to this worthy occasion. In the end, all that they got to donate was the stones of the *choshen*. Rashi tells us that the *Nessiim* wanted to donate last, so Bnei Yisroel would be able to give whatever they wanted. Yet when the time came, everything was given and taken care of – all that was left was the stones. In reality, they couldn't have predicted this would happen, but they should have jumped at the opportunity and donated as soon as possible.

These two circumstances can be compared to the children's parable, the tortoise and the hare. Although the hare had the advantage, and felt he could to procrastinate, he wasn't able to catch up in the end. Yet the tortoise

was vigorous and didn't give up. . . and won the race.

In essence, the *Nessiim* had it easier, since they had more money and resources at their disposal. Yet Betzalel didn't have all these funds and assets, but he put in the effort and donated whatever he was able to for the cause. This is why it was Betzalel who received credit for building the *aron* compared to anyone else, because he used whatever assets he had available to him and worked with devotion and care.

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## THE SAME DIFFERENCE

Moshe Golombeck, 9th Grade

והנשאם הביאו את אבני השהם ואת אבני המלאים לאפוד ולחשן (לה: כז)

AND THE *NESSIIM* BROUGHT THE SHOHAM STONES AND THE FILLING STONES TO BE SET FOR THE EPHOD AND THE CHOSHEN

Rashi quotes a Medrash that elaborates on this pasuk. The *Nessiim* brought nothing besides these stones, since the rest of Bnei Yisrael had already brought everything necessary to build the entire Mishkan. Therefore, nothing was left for the *Nessiim* to give, except the stones for the *choshen*.

Why is it that the *Nessiim* gave first at the dedication of the Mishkan, but when it came to the actual construction they did the opposite? The answer is that the *Nessiim* decided to let the congregation give what they will give, and whatever remains, the *Nessiim* will give. The nation then brought everything that was needed, so with this being the case, all that was left were the precious stones. This is the reason they gave first when it came time to dedicate the Mishkan – they didn't want to make the same mistake twice.

Imagine a congregation building a new shul today. What would happen if a donor offered to "finish the job" after the other congregants had contributed whatever they wished? Obviously, the board would jump for joy. The shul would be built! In fact, this would most likely inspire a more relaxed or lazy attitude on the part of the fundraiser and the other congregants. After all, the money was as good as theirs, due to the generous person who pledged to compensate the rest. Nevertheless, according to the Medrash, it was the *Nessiim* who were guilty of laziness and perhaps they underestimated the dedication of the people at large.

The Bnei Yisroel did not want to give up the opportunity to be part of the Mishkan. They didn't hold

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# FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Ariel Charnowitz

Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam *zt'l*  
The Klausenburger Rebbe

5565 / 1905 - 9 Tammuz 5754 / June 18 1994

- Rav Yekusiel was born in 5565 in the town of Rudnik, Galicia.
- His father, Harav Tzvi Hirsh was the son of Harav Baruch of Gorlitz, and the grandson of the Divrei Chaim; the renowned Sanzer Rav.
- When he was young he was known as an *iluy* who had a rare measure of diligence in Torah study.
- At the young age of 13 Yekusiel's father passed away. At the *leviyah*, young Yekusiel gave a three-hour *hesped*.
- At the age of 16 he studied in Warsaw for a six year period under the Brisker Rav, Rav Velvel Soloveitchick *zt'l*.
- Rav Yekusiel received *semicha* from some of the greatest Gedolei Hador, including the Ostrovitz Rav and Harav Meir Arik.
- In the year 5681 (1921), Rav Yekusiel married the daughter of the *Aztei Chaim*, the Rav of Sighet.
- After his marriage, Rav Yekusiel remained in Sighet for five more years to continue his *limud haTorah*.
- In 5686 (1926), Rav Yekusiel was chosen to be rav of Khal Yereim in Klausenburg, and for 18 years led his Kehilla with the highest Torah standards until the horrible day when the Jews were deported to Auschwitz.



- While under those dreadful conditions, Rav Yekusiel continued to try to do every *mitzvah* - even if it meant his life. Countless stories are told of his pure *mesiras nefesh* to continue in his *avodah*.
- After the liberation, Rav Yekusiel was left without his beloved wife and eleven children. Nevertheless, he set out on a vast rehabilitation project for the Holocaust survivors.
- The Rebbe arrived in America in 5707 (1947), and established a comprehensive educational network and a broad-based community.
- After nine years in America, Rav Yekusiel immigrated to Eretz Yisrael and established an idyllic Torah town; Kiryat Sanz, on the outskirts of Netanya.
- A big part of his masterworks are published in the *sefarim Shefa Chaim* and *Divrei Yetziv*, which cover the complete spectrum of Torah thought. These responsa cover a wide range of fascinating topics and display his mastery of halacha and *nigla*. His mastery of Chassidic thought and of Kaballah is legendary as well.
- He passed away on Shabbos, 9 Tammuz, 5754 (1994). His sons continue to lead the Klausenburg-Sanz communities in Eretz Yisrael and America.

Lieutenant Meyer Birnbaum is best known for his service throughout the Holocaust as one who labored heroically to save lives and bring comfort to the starving survivors. He describes how during his first *Yom Noro'im* after WWII, he went to the various minyanim set up in Feldafing. "Yom Kippur, I davened Kol Nidrei and Maariv with the Klausenburger Rebbe *zt'l* and survivors from Hungary, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. Shacharis and Mussaf, I davened with the small Litvishe minyan, and for Minchah and Ne'ilah, I was with the Polisher minyan.

After Kol Nidrei, the Klausenburger Rebbe got up to speak. I had never heard so powerful a speech in my life, and I never will again. When he had finished, more than two hours later, I was both emotionally drained and inspired for the best davening of my life.

The Rebbe stood there with his *machzor* in his hand, flipping through its pages. Periodically, he would ask rhetorically, "*Wehr haht das geshriben* - Who wrote this? Does this apply to us? Are we guilty of the sins enumerated here?" One by one, he went through each of the sins listed in the '*Ashamnu* prayer' and then the *al cheits* and concluded that those sins had little to do with those who had survived the camps.

*Ashamnu*; We have become guilty - Does this apply to us? Have we sinned against Hashem or man? I doubt it. Let's go on.

*Bagadnu*; We have betrayed - Have we been ungrateful for the good Hashem has done us? Are we disloyal to Hashem? Have we betrayed our loved ones? No. *Bagadnu* does not apply to us.

*Gazalnu*; We have stolen - Form whom could we have stolen? Definitely this does not apply to us. There was no such thing as theft in the camps. There was nothing to steal. This does not apply to us!

"Wait," jumped the Rebbe. "*Gazalnu* does apply to me. I have to *klop chatasi* (beat my chest to atone) for *gazalnu*. One day I came in from work and lay down on the wooden slats to rest. While I was sleeping, my skin got caught between two of the slats. I wiggled one way and another, but I could not free myself from the boards. When I did, some skin ripped off and I started bleeding. As I freed myself, I called 'Oy. I thought I had only groaned softly, but my cry was enough to wake up one of the fellow prisoners. *Gezeilah*, I stole sleep from this man.

This is the only theft I remember for which I must *klop 'chatasi*'. There was nothing to steal. No one had anything to steal. Even if we had wanted to steal, we couldn't have."

The Klausenburger Rebbe continued on like this throughout all the pages concerning atonement. He then closed his *machzor* and I was sure he had finally finished.

But then he asked again, "Who wrote this *machzor*? I don't see anywhere the sins apply to us - except for the sins of having lost *emunah* (faith) and *bitachon* (belief.)

What is the proof that we have sinned in this fashion? How many times did we recite *Krias Shema* on our wood slats at night and think to ourselves: 'Ribbono Shel Olam, let this be my last *hamapil*. I can't carry on any longer. I'm so weak. I have no

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MOTTI WIDROFF (continued from page 1)

The lesson we can learn from this is to always have *zerizus* (zeal) when performing mitzvos, and not to wait for someone else to lead the way. Many stories are told of people who lent effort to the task at hand, and raised the project to one of greatness. The story is told of a particular *gadol* who displayed superhuman effort in always being early to rise in the morning and being on time to davening. When asked what his reasoning was - especially since he wasn't a young man anymore - he replied that the beginning of Shulchan Aruch speaks of getting up in the morning with *zerizus* and fervor. "When I go up to heaven after 120 years and they open up the 'law book' to test me on my actions in life, is it smart to strike out on the first point?" Let us be strong in this area, and truly benefit from our worthy exertions in life, leading us to the building of the Shechina's ultimate resting place - the third Beis HaMikdash.

FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 2)

reason to carry on anymore. Is there no end to our suffering? Ribbono Shel Olam, please take my *neshamah* so that I don't have to repeat once more in the morning, "I'm thankful before You, Living King, who has returned my soul to me..." I don't need my soul, You can keep it."

How many of us went to sleep thinking that we couldn't exist another day, with all *bitachon* lost? And yet when the dawn broke in the morning, we once again had to say 'Modeh Ani' and thank HaShem for having returned our souls.

"None of us expected to survive. Yes, we tried to survive but none of us expected to. Every morning, we saw this one didn't move, that one didn't move, and we carried them out to their interment. We looked upon them with envy. Is that *emunah* in Hashem? Is that *bitachon* in Hashem?"

"Yes we have sinned. We have sinned and now we must 'klop al chait'. We must pray to get back the *emunah* and *bitachon* we once had; the *emunah* and *bitachon* that went to sleep these last few years in the camps. Now that we are freed, Ribbono Shel Olam, we beg you to forgive us, Forgive everyone here. Forgive every Jew in the world, Ribbono Shel Olam, our Father."

- Rabbi Paysach Krohn tells of the legendary compassion and strength Rav Yekusiel Halberstam *z"l* had in giving comfort to thousands of Jews who had suffered through the terrors of the Holocaust. The Rebbe himself lost his wife and eleven children, and would sometimes refer to the great loss he endured to help others with their bereavement with their bereavement.

One day, the Rebbe was told of a young boy named Meshulam who at the age of 16 was known as an exceptional *masmid* and scrupulous in his mitzvah observance. Now, having gone through the loss, privation and terrors of the Holocaust, the young boy abandoned Judaism and resisted any attempts to bring him back to observance.

The Rebbe asked that Meshulam be brought to him.

When the young boy entered the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe motioned for him to sit down next to him. "I am told you are the son of Reb Laibish, whom I knew," the Rebbe said.

"Yes," Meshulam answered. He was too pained and distressed to be pulled into a debate with the Rebbe on topics of *Yiddishkeit*. For him the world of religion ended in Auschwitz; there was nothing else to talk about.

"They say you were a diligent student back home. Is that so?" The Rebbe asked in a non-provoking tone.

Meshulam just nodded. He knew how important *talmud Torah* was to the Rebbe, and he didn't want to give him the satisfaction of saying he had done something so significant.

"But now you are angry?" asked the Rebbe gently.

"Of course, I'm angry," Meshulam blurted out, unable to contain himself any longer. "The best were taken away, the finest are lost forever."

The Rebbe extended his palm and touched the young boy's face and said, "You are so right. Look at me. They left me alive while my wife and eleven children were taken away. You're right," the Rebbe repeated again, "the best were taken away and looks what's left. . ." With that, the Rebbe burst into tears and began sobbing. Together, they cried along without stop on each other's shoulders.

Nothing else was said - nothing else *needed* to be said - for nothing *could* be said. Two tormented hearts joined together in a stream of tears.

An hour later, Meshulam left the Rebbe's house. That night when he was alone he recited *krias shema* for the first time in months. Within a few days he was wearing his yarmulke again.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn recently met Meshulam, now in his 70's, who told him, "There was nothing anyone could say to me, and the Rebbe understood that. Everyone else spoke to my head; the Rebbe touched my heart."



MOSHE GOLOMBECK (continued from page 1)

back, and wait to see what others would do. Nor did they rely on the *Nessiim's* guarantee. Each one said, "I want to participate". Each one saw an opportunity to give, to contribute to the benefit of all of Klal Yisrael, and did so. Not only that, they gave so much that there was extra. They gave so much that Moshe found it necessary to tell the people to stop giving, assuring us that had he not done so, they wouldn't have stopped for a good while longer.

The Chofetz Chaim notes that the Torah indicates the laziness of the *Nessiim* by dropping an optional letter 'yud' ordinarily found in the word *Nessiim*. By contrast, the Torah describes in full detail the gifts of each Prince at the dedication of the Mishkan, even though each of the twelve brought precisely the same gift as all the others. All of this, he explains, is to teach us the greatness of working together, with energy and dedication, rather than allowing feelings of superiority or jealousy to divide us. When people rush forward to work on behalf of the entire group instead of holding themselves above others, or looking out for their personal interests, then this is valued dearly by Hashem, the Torah, and by other people as well. Let us always feel encouraged to participate in such projects; ones that benefit the *kehilla* and bring merit to Klal Yisroel, bringing us closer to our redemption. May it come speedily in our day.

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

The Gemara in *Masseches Sanhedrin*, [כ:] states that *Bnei Yisroel* were commanded to fulfill three *mitzvos* upon their entrance to *Eretz Yisroel*. The three *mitzvos* were to establish a king, wipe out the nation of *Amalek*, and to build the *Beis Hamikdash*. It seems from this Gemara that the construction of the *Beis HaMikdash* was the last item on the agenda. However, we know that in actuality *Bnei Yisroel* were told to start work on this *mitzvah* right after they were forgiven for the *chet ha'egel*, through the assembly of the *mishkan*. Why did the fulfillment of this *mitzvah* start while *Bnei Yisroel* were still in the desert, as opposed to taking effect upon their entrance to *Eretz Yisroel*, as was originally intended?

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l offers two answers to this question. The *chet ha'egel* happened due to *Bnei Yisroel's* fear of losing their connection to Hashem. When *Bnei Yisroel* saw that Moshe was gone, they worried that they had lost their connection between the physical world and the world above. The *egel* was created to fill this void. In order to prevent this from occurring again, Hashem decided that the *mishkan* should be built right away. The *mishkan* served as a place in this world where the *shechinah* would rest. Whenever *Bnei Yisroel* would feel themselves losing their connection to Hashem, they could go to the *mishkan* in order to strengthen their *emunah*.

Rav Yaakov offers a second resolution



Rav Ephraim Wachmann *shlit"l* speaking at the Siyum HaShas

to this difficulty. At the time of *matan Torah* there was tremendous *achdus* amongst *Bnai Yisroel*. As Rashi in *parshas Yisro* tells us, when *Bnei Yisroel* camped at *Har Sinai* in anticipation of *matan Torah*, they camped "כאיש אחד בלב אחד, As one man with one heart." However, this *achdus* was lost as a result of the *chet ha'egel*. At the time of the *chet*, there was such great

disunion amongst the various *shevatim*, as the *Yerushalmi* in *Masseches Sanhedrin* relates, that each *shevet* made its own *egel*, as they could not agree what type to make. As such, *Bnei Yisroel* was given the *mitzvah* of building the *mishkan*, which would serve as a unifying force amongst *Bnei Yisroel*. Therefore when Moshe instructed *Bnei Yisroel* to build the *mishkan*, the Torah uses the word "ויקהל"; and he gathered." The purpose of the command to build the *mishkan* was to gather the various arguing segments of *Bnei Yisroel* into one unified nation.

In 1925 at Agudas Yisroel's first Knessia Gedolah, Rav Meir Shapiro proposed the idea of Daf Yomi to serve as a unifying force amongst *Klal Yisroel*. This concept fulfills the dictum of joining *Klal Yisroel* and combining the different factions, that makes us a beautiful nation and Hashem's people. May the *achdus* displayed by *Klal Yisroel* at this past week's Eleventh Siyum HaShas serve as a *zechus* towards the final redemption, and join all of *Bnei Yisroel* for the subsequent *Siyum HaShas* in *Eretz Yisroel* with *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* and the *geulah shleimah, bimheirah biyameinu amen*.

There was once a prince who rebelled against his father the king. Realizing that his son needed to be taught a lesson, the king banished him from the kingdom to a foreign land. As soon as the son would feel properly remorseful and want to repent and come home, his father would happily welcome him back. But alas, after a while the prince got very used to living among the other simple folk, and mostly forgot about what he was missing.

The father was enraged, but mostly pitied his son for his unwise choice. "How can I convince him that his home is in the kingdom?" the king wondered. Someone suggested the perhaps if the king were to make a banquet in honor of a local official and make sure that his son were there, the prince would surely be reminded of the even greater party waiting for him once he returns home to the palace. The king did just that, and when his son appeared at the party, he felt overwhelmed by the dignity and honor being accorded to this man. Suddenly, he realized the ultimate honor awaiting him - the prince - if he were to only want it! How foolish he had been to get comfortable in the land of his banishment! It was a small measure of what was waiting for him that encouraged the prince to return to his father the king.

Reb Ephraim Wachsmann *shlit"l* uses this parable to point out the beauty and power of the *Siyum HaShas*. This is probably the greatest gathering of Jews all over the world throughout exile, counting 73 locations around the globe - but this is just a banquet for enticement. This festive evening should be the ultimate encouragement to press us into a further desire for the redemption - and for many it has been an eye opener to what awaits us when we join together with our Father the King, and celebrate the arrival of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* and the *geulah shleimah*. May the *Siyum HaShas* which honors such a well deserved cause be the encouragement to ourselves, and focus of our prayers, to bring closer the final redemption.

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