

# עטרת השבוע



**HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל Yahrzeit Edition**

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

פרשת ויקהל-פקודי  
פרשת החודש  
כ"ז אדר תשע"ג  
March 9, 2013

Candle Lighting:	5:36
First קריאת שמע זמן:	8:34
Second קריאת שמע זמן:	9:10
First תפלה זמן:	9:45
Second תפלה זמן:	10:05
שקיעה	5:55
Earliest הבדלה:	6:45 <small>(50 minutes)</small>

*All times are for The Five Towns*

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## WORDS TO THE WISE

By Yonah Nisanov , 12th grade

”ויקרא משה אל בצלאל ואל אהליאב ואל כל איש חכם לב אשר נתן ה' חכמה בלבו כל אשר נשאו לבו לקרבה אל המלאכה לעשות אותה”

“Moshe summoned Betzalel, Oholiav, and every wise-hearted man whose heart Hashem had endowed with wisdom, everyone whose heart inspired him to approach the work, to do it.” (36:2)

If one looks at this pasuk, it seems very repetitive. It seems to mention the same idea three times. We know that not one word in the Torah is extra and therefore why does it seem that the Torah is redundant over here? And don't say that maybe it is talking about three different groups of people because then the pasuk should have separated it into three groups with a “ו”. However, since it didn't we see that it is talking about the same people.

Rav Yeruchum Levovitz, the famed Mir Yeshiva Mashgiach explains this pasuk based on the following Gemara in Brachos (55). Rav Yochanan says that Hashem only gives chachma to a person who already has chachma as the pasuk says, “יהב חכמתא לחכמין” - “Hashem gives chachma to smart people”. What does that mean? How can a person ever get smart if Hashem only gives chachma to smart people. A person would never able to get smart without  
*(continued on page 2)*

## MULTIPLE MOTIVATION

By Ezra Sturm, 10th grade

”ויאמר משה אל כל עדת בני ישראל לאמר זה הדבר אשר צוה ה' לאמר. קחו מאתכם תרומה לה' כל נדיב לבו יביאה את תרומת ה' זהב וכסף ונחשת”

“Moshe spoke to the entire assembly of the people of the children of Israel, saying: This is the word that Hashem has commanded, saying. Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem. Everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, as the gift for Hashem: gold, silver, copper.” (35:4-5)

There are a number of important questions to be asked on the wording of these two Pesukim. Firstly, the Torah repeats the word “לאמר” in the first Pasuk, which means “to tell to others.” If Moshe was speaking to all of Klal Yisrael at the time, what does the Torah mean that his message should be passed on to others? Also, when the Torah is speaking about the people who donated to the Mishkan, in this Pasuk it describes them by saying, “whose hearts inspired them,” and then later in the Parsha by saying, “whose spirits have made them generous.” Why does the Torah use two different descriptions to portray these people?

When the Torah uses the word “לאמר” twice, it is really referring to two separate sets of directions. The first “לאמר” is telling us that each and every individual of Klal Yisrael should contribute towards the building of the Mishkan, and the Torah uses this Lashon again to emphasize that not only should you help  
*(continued on page 2)*

## ATERES HASHAVUA

*Yonah Nisanov (continued from page 1)*

getting the chachma from Hashem and according to this Gemara one would only get chachma if one is already smart! Rav Yeruchum Levovitz answers that the Gemara means to say that if a person wants to be smart, Hashem will make him smart. In order for a person to acquire chachma a person needs to want it from Hashem.

Based on the way Rav Levovitz explains this Gemara in Brachos we can now explain the pasuk in our parsha. The pasuk says, “ואל כל איש חכם לב אשר נתן ה'”- Anyone that has wisdom in his heart; and who is that- that is someone that Hashem put chachma in his heart; and who is the person that Hashem put chachma in his heart- כל אשר נשאו לבו לקרבה אל ה' - “המלאכה לעשות אותה” -it is someone who brings himself close to the melacha who wants to serve Hashem.

A person will only become filled with chachma when he wants it from Hashem. Then and only then, Hashem will bestow it upon him. If a person however doesn't want to acquire the chachma, Hashem will not give it to him and he will never be able to acquire greatness in Torah. A person who really tries and asks Hashem to help him understand Torah will achieve greatness in Ruchniyus. Sometimes people ask, why don't I enjoy learning Torah? Really, the answer lies in what the person really wants. The person needs to ask if he really want to become closer to Hashem and to understand his Torah? The answer needs to be yes in order for him to become connected, understand, and to get chachma from Hashem. May we all want to get chachma from Hashem and may Hashem give the chachma to us.

*Ezra Sturm (continued from page 1)*

contribute towards the Mishkan, but that everyone should do their best to convince and encourage others around them to give as well. This also explains why the Torah uses two different descriptions when talking about donors of the Mishkan. When it first uses the phrase, “Every person whose heart inspired him,” it's speaking about one's personal donation, while the other phrase, “anyone whose spirit made him generous,” is referring to the encouragement they gave one another to donate.

Furthermore, why did Hashem have to order the Jews to convince each other to give to the Mishkan? We must realize that the purpose of the building of the Mishkan was so that Klal Yisrael would be forgiven for the sin of the golden calf. Chazal teach us that the symbolism of this forgiveness is the Shechinah's **descent** upon the Mishkan to dwell among Bnei Yisrael. In order for the Shechinah to come down, Hashem commanded that not only should they be concerned about their own welfare, but also to help make sure that everyone around them also receive forgiveness. This idea of being concerned for others spiritual welfare is what made Klal Yisrael fit for the Shechinah to dwell with them, and is why Hashem commanded the Bnei Yisrael to encourage others to contribute towards the building of the Mishkan. The lesson to learn from this Mitzvah is the significance of encouraging others to engage in a Mitzvah, and while it may have seemed that by persuading others to give to the Mishkan they were really losing out on a Mitzvah, they were really fulfilling the highest level of love and unity among Klal Yisrael.

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## In-Depth Stories of Tzaddikim

- 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 talleim 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 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 chinuch and priorities one must have when guiding children in their youth.
- 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 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."

# ATERES HASHAVUA

## Teachings of Rav Yaakov zt"l

As related by: Rav Yehoshua Balkany *shlit"a*

The *Gemara* in *Masseches Shaabos* says that Rav Yehuda was once sitting in front of his rebbe, Shmuel. They were learning together and suddenly the door flew open and a lady ran in and started screaming and wailing, that she needed help. The *Gemara* says that Shmuel continued his conversation with his *talmid*, Rav Yehuda as if the woman was not there. So Rav Yehuda said to his rebbe "there's a woman distraught, anguished, why aren't you responding to her?" Shmuel answered and said "I am not in charge, Mar Ukva is, he's the *av beis din*, I can't do anything."

The *Gemara* concludes with this statement, not providing any other details. However, HaRav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l points out that some illumination can be found from the *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* (בבבא) which says that one of the *Amorayim* ascended to heaven and when he came back down, the people wanted to know what he saw in heaven. He answered that he saw the people who in this world were seated up front and given all the respect were sitting in the back row, and the simpletons who never got any type of respect were sitting up front in the *Yeshiva Shel Mayeila*. *Tosefos* on this *Gemara* brings in the name of *Rabbeinu Chananel* in the name of the *Geonim* that this account was referring to the aforementioned story in *Masseches Shabbos* about Shmuel and Rav Yehudah. So the *Geonim* said that Rav Yehuda was sitting in the "rebbe's seat" and Shmuel who was the rebbe in *olam hazeh* was delegated to sit in the *talmid's* seat. The *Geonim* say that this was in response to Shmuel's reaction to the woman.

Rav Yaakov wonders: Shmuel was the rebbe of Rav Yehuda for eight years, imagine how much Torah Shmuel must have taught Rav Yehuda, and yet because of one account, Shmuel- the rebbe was delegated to the *talmid's* seat for eternity? This is most troubling for certainly one solitary action should not have over weighed such an abundance of Torah learning!?!

Therefore, suggests Rav Yaakov that Chazal

are attempting to relay an extremely important lesson. Certainly תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם, the *mitzvah* of Torah learning especially of the level and quality of Shmuel and Rav Yehudah is of the highest caliber, beyond comparison. Yet, still it doesn't approach the importance and stature of one individual *mitzvah-bein adam l'chaveiro*. However, a singular faulty approach to a *bein adam l'chaveiro*, outweighs multiple *mitzvos* of *bein adam l'Makom* of the greatest and most exalted nature.

The story is told of a man who lived in the vicinity of where Rav Yaakov davened. whom Rav Yaakov graciously greeted each and every Shabbos morning. He was a fine person, not having attained any special stature or position. The *kavod habriyos* that Rav Yaakov displayed to him was legendary. It was obvious that Rav Yaakov's reaction to him was based on Rav Yaakov's deep regard for the *bein adam l'chaveiro* involved, and for no other reason. This *vort* of Shmuel and Rav Yehuda was not just Rav Yaakov lecturing from a lectern or from a shtender, he epitomized it. When Rav Yaakov saw somebody who had been mistreated, it bothered him unbelievably.

Another telling example of this was when Rav Yaakov would send Rav Balkany to get a *bochur* from the *Bais Medrash*. One such *bochur* subsequently told Rav Balkany what transpired during his meeting with Rav Yaakov. The *bochur* related that he was at a *chasuna* five weeks before and Rav Yaakov had noticed that he was sitting and that there was somebody elderly standing near him and that he did not offer his seat to the elderly man. Rav Yaakov in his usual calm fashion had called him over five weeks later to ask him "is that the proper way of handling the situation?" Such was the unbelievable *bein adam l'chaveiro* that Rav Yaakov epitomized.

May we all be *zoche* to learn from the ways and lessons of Rav Yaakov, in particular we should focus on our *bein adam l'chaveiro*, so that all that we do including *bein adam l'Makom* is favorable in the eyes of Hashem.

# ATERES HASHAVUA

EMES L' YAAKOV

By Chezkie Glatt, Alumni

”ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל...”

“And Moshe gathered the entire congregation of the *Bnei Yisroel*...” (ל”ה:א)

By the *Chait HaEgel*, the Sin of the Golden Calf, the way the people acted differed from during the time of *Matan Torah*, when we received the Torah on *Har Sinai*. The pasuk says by *Matan Torah* that “And there *Bnei Yisroel* camped...” using the word “camped” in singular form. This was to show us that we were on such a high level of brotherhood, part of such a close fraternity, that we were as if but one person, instead of an entire nation. However, just a few days later, by the *Chait HaEgel*, we were separated and lowered from this lofty height. As the *Gemara* in the *Yerushalmi* says (although Rav Yaakov points out some say it was the *Bavli*), there were twelve separate *Egalim*.



Rav Binyomin Kamenetzky at the kever of Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks a question on this. We find by all the other nations of the world at that time, that they each had other gods besides Hashem, true, but each still had only one! For example, the pasuk might mention “the god of the Pelishtim,” but it never says the gods of the Pelishtim! So why in the world would the *Bnei Yisroel* make 12 different gods?! Why not copy their gentile neighbors and create a false god, and only one false god?! Rav Yaakov answers beautifully with a brilliant answer. Each *shevet* had its own idol! Why? Because originally, they were all fighting which god they should claim as their own. So in the end, they decided that each *shevet* could have its own deity to serve. (Alternatively, Rabbi Kamenetzky says that it could also be that they first chose twelve

gods, and then would have some sort of contest to see which one they should choose). That is also why the pasuk changes the *Bnei Yisroel*'s togetherness from *Matan Torah* until this sin. At first, by the giving of our Torah, they acted like one man, with one heart. Here, however, they fought and bickered as to which god to choose, so that was why Moshe had to “re-gather” the *Bnei Yisroel* together, to unify them as brothers once again which will unify them back to the one true G-d, Hashem.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky gives another *p'shat* and explanation on this pasuk. He starts off by quoting the explanation of Rashi on this pasuk. Rashi says that: “This was on the day that was after Yom Kippur, which was when Moshe came down from upon the mountain...”

Rav Yaakov continues by stating a *Gemara* in *Masseches Sanhedrin* which says that there were three *mitzvos* given to the *Bnei Yisroel* in regards to the conquering of *Eretz Yisroel*: 1. they should appoint a king 2. they should conquer Amalek 3. they should build the *Bais HaMikdash/ Mishkan*. When the Jews actually entered *Eretz Yisroel*, we see that they did indeed do these three in order. However, after the sin of the Golden Calf, we see that they built the *Mishkan*. Why would they not follow in the exact order that they were commanded to follow in?

Therefore, Rabbi Kamenetzky says that there was an important reason that made this difference needed. This was that right after the *Chait HaEgel*, the *Bnei Yisroel* desperately needed something that would raise them somewhat to their previous lofty level of *kedusha*. The building of the *Mishkan* now was this necessary antidote. Regardless that they would be fulfilling these three commandments out of order, it was imperative and vital that they get a *yeshuah*, and fast! Therefore, they were given permission to construct the *Mishkan* before establishing a king and wiping out Amalek.

## 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 minyan." 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 Reb Aaron Kotler zt"l.
- Shortly after Pesach in 5665/1905, Reb Yaakov and Reb Aaron traveled to Slobodka to learn under the Alter, Rav Nossan 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.  
~ 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 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 *gebros*. Actually, it was the *minhag* of Reb Yaakov's family to eat *gebros* and until that year, Reb Yaakov himself ate *gebros*. Yet from the time he uttered the words "I don't eat *gebros*" throughout the rest of his life, Reb Yaakov never again ate *gebros*, although he permitted his family to do so.

• Reb Yaakov was a model rebbe, 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.

• 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.

~ 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 with a close *talmid* nearby to attend to his needs. 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 29<sup>th</sup> day of Adar I 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.



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