



ACQUIRING SEFORIM

Bayis Maleh Seforim

Even as an eight-year-old child, the Rebbe Maharash would buy *seforim* with the coins he received as prizes for his tests and as a weekly allowance. In the month of Elul 1845 (תרי"ה), Reb Noach Baruch Moicher Seforim visited the village of Lubavitch. He generally came for Shavuos and Chanuka, and this time, too, as always, he brought a list of the new *seforim* for the Tzemach Tzedek to choose from. Eager to buy some himself, the Rebbe Maharash asked his father for thirty rubles from the money that was being held for him.

"First become familiar with the *seforim* you already have," his father said, "then you can buy more."

At that point, Reb Chaim Dov the *meshares* joined them and notified the Tzemach Tzedek that they had set up the new *seforim* in the new bookcase that had just been brought by Yosef Dovid the carpenter. The Tzemach Tzedek already had five bookcases of *seforim*, two locked bookcases of *kisvei yad* (manuscripts) in his room, and another six bookcases in the entrance room.

Accompanying his father to see the new *seforim* in the newly-built bookcase and the additional *seforim* on the side, waiting to be bound, the Rebbe Maharash was bothered. He turned to his father and asked: "You just told me that one should first know the *seforim* that one has before buying more. Are you knowledgeable in all the *seforim* you have?"

The Tzemach Tzedek responded, "I am generally fluent in the *seforim* that I have. Here, take out a *sefer* and we'll see."

Without much thought, the Rebbe Maharash ran towards one of the bookshelves and took out the first *sefer* that he chanced upon. It was a *sefer* on *dikduk*, and the Tzemach Tzedek freely quoted passages from the introduction and then from the body of the *sefer*, word for word. The Rebbe Maharash chose another *sefer*, also on *dikduk*, then a *sefer* of Kabbala, and finally some scholar's account of his travels. The Tzemach Tzedek was able to cite them all verbatim. The Rebbe Maharash was truly

amazed by his father's knowledge, especially in the area of *dikduk*.

Seeing this, the Tzemach Tzedek explained that although generally chassidim are not particular about following the exact rules of *dikduk* while *davening*, the words of *Shema* and *Kerias HaTorah* must be pronounced precisely. He then gave his son the amount he had requested and added another ten rubles as a gift, enabling him to satisfy his thirst for even more *seforim*.

(ס' התולדות מוהר"ש ע' 14 בשילוב סה"ש תרצ"ו ע' 52)

At the beginning of 1972 (תשל"ג) the Rebbe urged his listeners to make *seforim* more available, and encouraged them to open new libraries wherever possible, thus enabling Yidden to study Torah there and also to take *seforim* home. Two months later, on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe further encouraged everyone to have numerous *seforim* in their own home, to make the learning of Torah even more accessible. The Rebbe added that this would not replace the need for libraries, as not everyone would own every single *sefer*.

In particular, the Rebbe entrusted this mission to the womenfolk, who oversee the furnishings of the home, to make sure there are *seforim* on hand that direct the life of the home.

"Just as a pleasantly furnished home 'broadens the mind,'" the Rebbe advised, "so too *mitzvos* should be tastefully decorated. The *seforim* should be given a central location, so that whoever enters can immediately sense the pleasant tone of a home that houses holy *seforim*. This planning should be thought out carefully, and not merely to fulfill an obligation. However, unlike the care commonly devoted to keeping furniture in its best condition, the family's *seforim* should be used so much until they are worn out, faded, and torn, to the point that they have to be replaced!"

(שיחיו"ק תשל"ג ח"א)

Two years later, on Simchas Torah (תשל"ה 1974), the Rebbe connected this *mitvza* to the concept of *Yavneh veChachomeha*, a central gathering of *tannaim* that had existed in *Yavneh*, and encouraged people to establish *yeshivos* wherever Yidden live. From then on, the *mitvza*

was known as *Bayis Maleh Seforim* – *Yavneh veChachomeha*.

The Rebbe explained that both of these aspects were an extension of *mitvza* Torah, the earlier campaign to utilize every means possible to increase the study of Torah.

(מענה באגרות מלך ע' 90)

Learning from the Seforim

In connection with the victory of the *seforim* on *Hei Teves*, 1987 (תשמ"ז), the Rebbe said that we must ask the *seforim* themselves how to celebrate their victory – and the *seforim* declare that we should use them until they wear out... This is contrary to the worldly perception according to which precious items should be put away in a safe place and left untouched.

On another occasion the Rebbe emphasized: The victory of the *seforim* has a purpose – that it should prompt people to increase their study of Torah. Even a child understands that his parents buy him a *sefer* in order that he should learn from it, not only to show it respect. Those who would like to celebrate in other ways should do so not during study time, but during the times of eating and sleeping.

(תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 172, ח"א ע' 558)

The Rebbe also said that the way to expedite the return of the other *seforim* of the Rebbeim still held in captivity is to buy additional *seforim*, something which is very easy in our times.

(סה"ש תשנ"ב ח"א ע' 226)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Should one purchase *seforim* if he hasn't yet mastered the ones that he already owns?
- What is the benefit of having a 'home full of *seforim*'?



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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Hora'ah Rechovot

Baby Rattle

May I shake a rattle to calm my baby on Shabbos?

- Chazal prohibited playing music with instruments on Shabbos¹ in case one may come to fix or adjust them. Poskim discuss whether instruments such as a rattle which are not intended for music, but can generate a musical sound or beat, are included in this prohibition.²
- Some say that since a baby rattle is intended to make noise to get the baby's attention, not to play music, it is permissible to rattle (as long as one does not create a beat). Likewise, ringing a (mechanical) doorbell is permissible since one does not intend to create music.³ Others argue that although normal knocking on a door is permissible, the prohibition against making music extends to all noisemaking items, even ones that aren't specifically musical. The Alter Rebbe records that the custom is to follow the latter opinion except when necessary for a sick person or a *mitzvah* purpose.⁴
- Some consider the rattle *muktza* since it may not be used.⁵ However, others point out that since many *poskim* do permit using it, although we have a *minhag* to be stringent, we cannot deem it a *forbidden* object.⁶
- In the laws of Shabbos young children's needs are treated like those of a mildly sick person.⁷ Thus, if a child is crying strongly and the rattle can calm him down, one may give the rattle to the child to play with,⁸ or even shake the rattle oneself (preferably with a *shinui*).⁹

1. עירובין ק"ד ע"א, שו"ע סי' של"ח ס"א.
2. ראה שו"ע סי' של"ח ס"א.
3. ראה ילקוט שבת ברכ' ה' סי' של"ח ס"ב ובהערה שם. שו"ת אור לציון ח"ב פכ"ו ת' ט'.
4. שו"ע"ר שם וראה גם סי' של"ט ס"ב (אלא ש"ל שם משמיע קול שירה).
5. ביה"ל סי' של"ח ד"ה אסור מביא שהפרמ"ג הסתפק, וראה סי' אשרי האיש או"ח ח"ב פ"ז סכ"ז שהוא כלי שמל"א. וראה ארחות שבת מילואים לפי"ט אות ד' מש"כ מהירושלמי.
6. ע"פ לבוש סי' שח סמ"ט בנוגע למכבדות. ולהעיר שבשו"ע"ר שם סע' (ס"א).
7. ע"פ שו"ע או"ח סי' שכ"ח סי"ז שו"ע"ר סכ"ב, וראה אשרי האיש שם פל"ו סכ"ו עד גיל שלוש ולפעמים גם יותר.
8. ע"פ הגהות מקור חיים סי' של"ט ס"ג, וראה שו"ע"ר סי' של"ח סוס"א.
9. ראה שש"כ פט"ז הערה י"א שו"ת באר משה ח"ו סי' כ"ח (וראה שו"ע"ר סי' שכ"ח סי"ט) – אלא שיש מקום לומר שכאן ל"צ שניי שזהו משמעות הדין בסי' של"ח (ס"א).

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

OUR HEROES

Reb Shmuel Ber Barisover

Reb Shmuel Dovber Lipkin of Borisov, known to Chabad chasidim as "Reb Shmuel Ber Barisover," was a great *maskil*, *oived* and chosid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. The Friediker Rebbe spent much time with him, listening to the stories he related about the previous generations of chasidim.

When Reb Shmuel Ber was a *yungerman*, he and a group of friends wanted to travel to the Mittlerer Rebbe; however, their *mashpia* Reb Mordechai told them not to, for accusations were then being placed against the Rebbe (which eventually led to his imprisonment). Around this time, the young chasidim heard that the Rebbe would be traveling to Haditch, to the *tziyon* of the Alter Rebbe, so they secretly hitched a ride to Zhlobin, one of the stops the Rebbe was planning to make on his trip.

By forging a connection with the *gabbai* Reb Meir Tzvi, Reb Shmuel Ber was able to catch a glimpse of the Mittlerer Rebbe for the first time, even though people were not being accepted for *yechidus*. Later, the Rebbe asked for him to come in. Reb Shmuel Ber recounts: "When I heard that the Rebbe wanted to see me, I was so bewildered, and it was only thanks to Reb Meir Tzvi that I could actually make my way inside the room. Full of emotion, I was only able to utter the words, 'I want to be a chosid.' The Rebbe replied, 'Chabad is *haskalah*, *havana*, and *haamakah*,' (thinking, understanding, and delving in depth). Toil and you will become a chossid!."

Upon returning to my hometown, the *mashpia* Reb Mordechai told me that he senses a special "*ruach taharah*" in me and he asked what had happened. I had no choice but to tell him everything.

Reb Shmuel Ber once spent a long time in *yechidus* with the Rebbe Maharash, after which he asked the Rebbe, "After everything has been said, I still want to know what a chossid is."

"Go to my son, the Rashab," the Rebbe responded. Reb Shmuel was somewhat perplexed, for he was already an elderly chossid while the Rashab was still a young man.

The Rebbe explained, "I get up early every morning. One morning, at an early hour, I sent my *shamash* to see what my son the Rashab was busy with, and he reported that my son was sitting with a Siddur, though he could not tell exactly what he was doing. I sent someone else, who returned to tell me that the Rashab was sitting with a Siddur, an Abudraham, and a Nac"n, learning the translation of the *davening*."

"This", the Rebbe concluded, "is what a chossid is. He is capable of harnessing himself. After all the levels he may have attained, he can still sit with a Siddur and learn the simple meaning of the words in *davening*."

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

A Mezuzah Is Like a Helmet

The Ma'alot High School trip of summer 5734 (1974), in the north of Eretz Yisroel, terminated abruptly when they were attacked by an Arab terrorist group. The entire world followed the news, reporting how seventeen *neshomas* were taken, with many more casualties.

A contingency of Chabad chasidim immediately responded. In accordance with the Rebbe's latest *mitzvah*, they wasted no time in checking the school's *mezuzos*, of which seventeen were found to be *posul*!

This discovery was forthwith reported to the Rebbe. When three of the wounded subsequently passed away, the Rebbe ordered another check, bringing the total of *posul mezuzos* found to twenty...

On Shabbos *Parshas Behar-Bechukosai*, the Rebbe related the story. After Shabbos, there was an uproar throughout the Jewish world, as it was understood that the Rebbe had blamed and justified the students' deaths on the faulty *mezuzos*.

At the next *farbrengen*, the Rebbe clarified: "Having a *mezuzah* is like wearing a helmet. Of course, not wearing it does not cause death; but wearing one could certainly save the soldier from a bullet."

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