



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 תר"ה (1845), Reb Noach Baruch Moicher Seforim visited the village of Lubavitch. He generally came for Shavuot 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 תשל"ג (1972) 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!"

(שיח"ו ק"ת תשל"ג ח"א ע' 26, 119, 200)

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*, תשמ"ז (1987), 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.

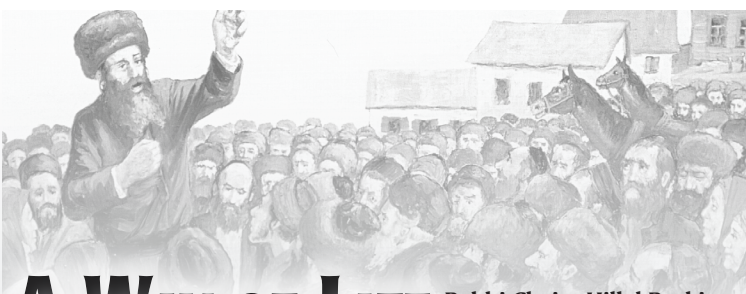
(ת"מ תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 172, ח"א ע' 558)

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*'?



A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Rov of Kfar Chabad Beis

Davening Announcements

May a *gabbai* announce *Yaaleh V'yavo* or other important notices during *davening*?

- Chazal state that one who had sinned could not participate in war even if he had only spoken between *Yishtabach* and *Yotzer Ohr*. The Alter Rebbe explains that *Psukei D'zimra* serves as introductory praise for Hashem, and one should not interrupt between it and the rest of *davening*.¹ While *Shulchan Aruch* records an allowance to break after *Yishtabach* (before *Kaddish* and *Borchu*)² for a *mitzva* purpose,³ *minhag* limits it to a pressing *mitzva* and not one that can be performed later.⁴ Thus, it is not appropriate to mouth learning or recite *Tehillim* at that point.
- During *Psukei D'zimra* one may not interrupt even for a pressing *mitzva*, since the *brachos* of *Boruch She'amar* and *Yishtabach* must link to each other.⁵ Yet, some *poskim* distinguish between other *mitzvos* and interrupting for the sake of *davening* itself. The interruption should be made after *Boruch Hashem L'olam* to conclude *Boruch She'amar* with a *bracha*, and then repeat *Boruch Hashem L'olam* to begin *Yishtabach* with a *bracha*.⁶
- During *Birchos Krias Shema* and before *Shmoneh Esrei* of *shacharis*—when one must adjoin *geulah* (*go'al yisroel*) and *tefilah*—it is forbidden to interrupt even for the sake of *davening*. Some are lenient at *maariv* when adjoining *geulah* and *tefilah* is voluntary,⁷ however, *minhag* Chabad is not to interrupt at *maariv* either.⁸ Instead, an appointed individual should bang to signal an addition or read aloud several words of the addition during *Shmoneh Esrei*.⁹
- What about announcing page numbers? Some consider this a necessity in certain circumstances and permissible after *Yishtabach*¹⁰ or during *Psukei D'zimra*.¹¹ If pages must be announced during the sections where interruptions are forbidden, the *gabbai* may *daven* earlier so that he can announce the pages. However, *lechatchila* one should avoid this *shaila* by posting the relevant page numbers where all can see.

1. שו"ע ר"ס נ"א ס"ד.
2. שו"ע ר"ס נ"ד ס"ג.
3. ראה שו"ע ר"ס נ"א ס"ד (ועיי"ש שהמפסיק חוזר מעורכי המלחמה).
4. ערוה"ש ס' נ"ד ס"ד, כף החיים ס' נ"ד סק"א.
5. שו"ע ר"ס נ"ד.
6. שו"ע ר"ס נ"ד.
7. ראה קצוה"ש ס' כ"ז ע"פ הסידור.
8. כף החיים ס' רל"ו סקט"ז (בשם רש"ל).
9. אבל יש לציין שבאם החזן הוא זה שמפסיק הרי יצטרך להגיד פסוקים מפסקי"ז לפני אמירת קדיש – שו"ע ר"ס נ"ד ס"ד.
10. שו"ע ר"ס נ"ד ס"ד.
11. שו"ת אג"מ ח"א ס' כ"ב.

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OUR HEROES

Reb Zalman Kurnitzer

Reb Zalman Kurnitzer was a tremendous *gaon* in *nigleh* as well as an important business man in Vilna. He became a *chossid* of the Alter Rebbe and later of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. He was from the *First Cheder* of the Alter Rebbe, reserved only for the greatest *geonim*. The Tzemach Tzedek's son, Reb Boruch Sholom, known as the *Rabash*, was his *mechutan*.



Reb Zalman was a dear friend of Reb Binyamin Kletzker. Once, Reb Zalman was heading to Prussia on business when Reb Binyamin asked him to lend him a large sum of money. Reb Zalman promised the loan upon his return from the business trip. Unfortunately, the business opportunity turned sour and Reb Zalman lost all his invested money. When he returned home, he sold some valuables and promptly lent the money to Reb Binyamin as he promised.



Reb Gronem – the *Mashpia* in Lubavitch, related: After the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Zalman became a *chossid* of the Mittlerer Rebbe. Once, the Mittlerer Rebbe visited Kurenitz where he said a *ma'amar*. When he finished the *ma'amar*, the Rebbe asked Reb Zalman, "Do you remember how the Rebbe (the Alter Rebbe) said the *ma'amar* and what I added myself?" Reb Zalman proceeded to *chazer* the *ma'amar* from the Alter Rebbe, pointing out what the Mittlerer Rebbe added. This was a *ma'amar* he heard from the Alter Rebbe thirty years earlier!

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Book Battle

Reb Zalman Duchman, a walking reservoir of *chassidishe* tales, was constantly prompted by the Rebbe to write his stories. During the 5700's (1940's), he would send long letters to the Rebbe, who would in turn present them to the Frieddiker Rebbe. The Rebbe wrote to him that he looks forward to his stories, and that they had earned a satisfactory smile from the Frieddiker Rebbe.

On *erev* Pesach 5727 (1967), as Reb Zalman came by to receive *matzah*, the Rebbe said to him, "If you publish another volume of *Leshema Ozen*, I'll give you a full *matzah*. If not, you'll get broken pieces!"

Reb Chananya Yosef Aizenbach relates:

"The Rebbe once demanded from Reb Zalman to publish another volume of his book. When Reb Zalman asked of what use it is, the Rebbe replied, 'From when the gates of wisdom were opened in the year 5600, as described in Zohar, every book of *kedusha* that is printed withholds the publication of another kind of book!'"

(*Otzar Hachassidim* NY page 480; *Hiskashrus* issue 126; *Kfar Chabad* issue 293)