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A House Full of Torah Books

Create an environment





Create an Environment

A container is defined by what it contains. Take a water pitcher, for example. If it's empty, you'll say, "Pass the pitcher." But if it contains even a little water, you'll say, "Pass the water."

So too, your home is defined by the most important things inside it. Aside from those who live there, the most important items are the Torah books lining the shelves and scattered about. Just one of those books, the Rebbe said, is enough to redefine your entire environment. Your home is transformed from just another house to a shining source of wisdom.



The Identity Thing

It's well known that only 15% of books sold are actually read. Psychologists say that's because we buy books to establish who we are for ourselves and for those who visit our homes. So fill your home with Torah books and identify.

Lay a Trap For Yourself

There's another obvious advantage to filling your home with Torah books: You or your kids might just pick one up and read a little of it. And then maybe even start asking some questions. Beware: This behavior may prove habit forming.

Life in Books

Great authors put their essence and being into their writings. When G-d authored the Torah, say the sages, He did the same. That's why we treat Torah books with such respect: We kiss them when they fall, we are careful to always place them right-side up and we never use them for anything other than reading and study. In other words, we treat them like very special people.

Ever consider inviting Moses, King David and the sages and prophets of the Great Assembly to come live in your house? And maybe Rabbi Akiva,



Maimonides and the Baal Shem Tov while you're at it. Watch out—they'll take the place over.

Basic Books

Start off with the basics: a Chumash, Tehillim and a Siddur. Expand from there. Here's a starter's guide. All of these are available in translation:

Chumash: a.k.a. "The Five Books of Moses". G-d dictates, Moses transcribes and you get to have the book in your house.

Tehillim: a.k.a. "The Psalms of David". The book your great-grandparents poured their hearts and tears into.

Siddur: a.k.a. "Jewish Prayer Book". It took 120 sages and prophets to compose one way for all Jews to talk to one G-d.

Tanach: a.k.a. "Torah, Prophets and Writings". Every prophecy and Divinely inspired writing that the sages determined would be needed for every generation. Known in other circles as

"The Bible". (Make sure you get an authentic Jewish translation).

Talmud: Voluminous compendium of discussion, debates and



anecdotes that defined Jewish practice at the outset of the Diaspora. The meat and potatoes of Jewish learning.

Zohar: Definitive work of Jewish mystic theology (a.k.a Kabala), authored principally by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai during a time of Roman persecution.

Mishneh Torah: a.k.a. “Rambam”. First comprehensive codification of Jewish law and practice, 12th century.

Kitzur Shluchan Aruch: Highly popular guide to Jewish practice for the everyman, first published in 1870 by a recognized Hungarian authority on Jewish law.

Tanya: The most important work of Hasidic teachings, blending and balancing the mystical and practical aspects of classic Jewish thought.



Transform Your City

How many people does it take to make a town into a city? Our sages say ten. Ten people who study Torah all day.

A place where people study Torah full-time is called a yeshiva. Just as a few Torah books transform your home into a luminous palace of wisdom, so a yeshi-

va transforms an entire town into a Torah center. Everyone in the town is affected—working people who arrange to study privately with the yeshiva scholars, school children who need some one-on-one assistance, teenagers and college students who drop by to chat and learn, anyone who comes by to witness that Torah study is alive and flourishing in his hometown. And every resident of a city that has now become a wellspring of Torah to the world.

That's why one of the prime projects of Chabad/Lubavitch is to establish yeshivas wherever there is a sizeable Jewish community. Ask your local Chabad rabbi how you can get involved.



