

Meforshei Haotzar – A New Initiative from Otzar Hachochmah

Most people are aware of the immeasurable contribution the Otzar Hachochmah program has made to Torah learners across the spectrum.

Ahead of the start of the new Daf Yomi cycle, Otzar Hachochmah is releasing a new program, *Meforshei Haotzar*. This revolutionary project is the first of its kind in the Torah world, and its effect will be as groundbreaking as that of the Otzar Hachochmah program two decades ago.

From now on, all pages of Gemara will be easily accessible in a comfortable and easy-to-use format. The entire spectrum of Talmudic literature will be available to the Torah scholar, in a n easily accessible and accurate fashion.

Rabbi Erez Sela, the founder and director of Otzar Hachochmah, tells us a bit more about this exciting development and its expected effects.

What is so special about Meforshei Haotzar?

Otzar Hachochmah currently has more than 100,000 *sifrei kodesh* and counting on its database. We sat down to work out how it would be possible for our users to gain maximum benefit from this wealth of material.

We had the idea of dividing the Gemara, Rashi, and Tosafos into small segments – sometimes even a line or two – according to subject, and to link all the commentaries that exist on each subject to each segment.

How will the product actually look?

We created an interactive *daf gemara* where every segment of the *daf* – a passage containing a question or a proof, a passage of Rashi, a question from Tosafos, and each *teirutz* responding to it, – is delineated for the user. The learner can study as he usually does, on the *daf*, which looks just like a printed page from a Vilna gemara.

When he wants to delve further into the commentaries on a specific passage, clicking the mouse on that passage will open up, on the right side, a comprehensive list of all the commentaries that address this passage. The commentaries can be perused with a quick scroll, and then the user can select the commentary he's looking for. Another click on the selected passage opens the whole page for the perusal of the user. The commentaries will all appear in their original form and interface.

How can a scholar find what he is looking for in the passages of Gemara that have many commentaries?

The commentary list features a variety of search options. After an initial perusal, the learner can choose the segments he wants to focus on. The pieces appear in ranked order, beginning with the basic commentaries, which are divided chronologically, followed by further explanations from other commentaries. There are also additional display options, among them alphabetical sorting or sorting based on personal preferences.

Who assigns each commentary to the relevant piece of Gemara-Tosafos and how exactly is this project carried out?

The work is both wisdom and a craft. We solicited many dozens of *avreichim* who were chosen after extensive vetting. They examine every passage in the commentaries and sort them by content, and then link them to the Gemara-Tosafos segment they apply to.

A professional team of Torah scholars oversees the work and is constantly making sure that the end product should be of the highest quality.

The project is also being accompanied by a top-tier programming team, as well another team that is in charge of designing the interface so that it's easy on the eye. The project has cost millions of shekels, and we are sure that it will be widely welcomed by *lomdim* who will be able to appreciate this treasure.

Will it be possible to print pages from the program?

The learner can choose certain commentaries from those on the list, or he can choose everything that he has open. The program will create a beautiful collage, where the commentaries will appear in an easy-to-read format. All these will appear in a separate window, with the option of hard-copy printing or virtual printing.

How does it work: Is Meforshei Ha'otzar only accessible to Otzar HaTorah users?

Initially, the loyal Otzar Hachochmah customers will be the first to benefit from Meforshei Ha'otzar. They will be able to add it to their existing Otzar program. Eventually, we'll also make it possible for other people to purchase Meforshei Ha'otzar, and to install it even without a subscription to Otzar Hachochmah.