

***"Otzar HaHochma" – 46,000 Judaic Books at your fingertips!***

The use of **computerized information archives** has created a revolution in our times. It is now possible to view articles and Torah insights that have been published in different forums, and are filled with wonderful information. It leads one to ask: "From whence these great scholars – these erudite experts in every facet of the written and oral Torah, the *Babylonian Talmud* and the *Jerusalem Talmud*, the *Tosefta*, *Sifre*, *Sifri*, and even relatively unknown *midrashim*?"

It would be nice to think that this was indeed the case. Yet, in actual fact, more than creating such individuals, **new tools were created**. With the aid of the electronic library, a person can now access sources that were in previous generations inaccessible to all but a few Torah giants who had committed the entire Torah to memory.

In our day, every self-respecting Jewish literary collection and library has at least one "*Otzar HaHochma*" station. In this small "box", they equip themselves with a powerful tool that far exceeds any "hard-copy" literary collection.

"*Otzar HaHochma*", the largest digital library in the world, contains **46,000 Jewish works**, and is still expanding. The books encompass every area of Judaism, and include old, rare books alongside thousands of copyrighted books, including works from large and well-known publishing houses, such as: *Machon Yerushalayim*, *Mossad Harav Kook*, *Sifrei Yad Harav Nissim*, *Machon Moshe Le-Cheker Ha-Rambam* (Harav Kapach), *Machon Ha-Torah Veba'aretz*, *Sifrei Wagshal*, *Mishnayot Kehati*, *Torah Sheliemah* and all of the publications of the institute, *Machon Haketav*, *Ahavat Shalom*, *Sifrei Harav Aviner*, etc.

"*Otzar HaHochma*" includes thousands of volumes on Bible and its commentaries; *Mishnah* and *Tosefta*; *Midrash Halachah*, *Aggadah* and midrashic commentaries; the *Babylonian Talmud*, the *Jerusalem Talmud*, and Talmudic commentaries; Gaonic literature, Jewish law, customs, and responsa; philosophy and Jewish thought; Jewish mysticism and Hassidism; research on Jewish history; Torah journals and memorial volumes; prayer books, etc.

What is the secret of the success of "*Otzar HaHochma*"? It is the blending of such a vast collection of Jewish literary works with a **broad and effective search engine**. While there were **typed** collections of Jewish books with a precise search mechanism prior to "*Otzar HaHochma*", they only included **hundreds of books**, even after decades of development. Furthermore, in "*Otzar HaHochma*", the books are **scanned page by page in their original format**. The great benefit of scanned pages over typed pages is that they present the book in its original form.

One of the unique aspects of "*Otzar HaHochma*" could have become its biggest drawback – how to find a desired work, topic, or word within the "sea" of material that it includes. A **professional search engine** enables users to locate many relevant sources for the subject requested in a matter of seconds. The search engine of "*Otzar HaHochma*" is based on the technology of **OCR – Optical Character Recognition** – which simulates the reading capability of the human eye and mind, and transforms a scanned text into a digitalized text.

"*Otzar HaHochma*" has become a fundamental tool for the study and research of Judaism throughout the world.

**Professor Meir Bar-Ilan**, from the Talmud and Oral Law Department of Bar-Ilan University, wrote the following comments in his article entitled "*Hashba'at Hakulmus*" in the weekly Torah Thoughts published by Bar-Ilan University (*Simchat Torah*, 5771):

The circumstances behind this article are as follows: Several months ago, I received an authorization to examine the on-line "*Otzar HaHochma*" collection of Rabbinical literature which allows for **information searches**. The searches can be implemented by inputting the name of a book or words that appear in the text.

I considered what Jewish text search I should perform in order to demonstrate the capabilities of this program. After several days of thought, I concluded that it would be good to search for a subject that **does not exist** anywhere else – i.e. it cannot be found in an encyclopedia or any other reference work. After additional thought, I decided to search for the phrase "*Hashba'at Hakulmus*", an expression that I have known about for many years, but am not certain of its source.

The results in the search of various collections were astounding. In the DBS program (version 13), no items were located. In the "*Otzarot Ha-Torah*" program, 5 items were found. Similarly, in the Bar-Ilan Responsa project (version 17+) the results were 5 items. A Google search resulted in 101 items, but a quick preliminary sorting revealed that there were many duplicate results, and that the actual number of items found was 20 (this data could be checked by running a test on a familiar concept and comparing the number of results). In contrast to these searches, the on-line "*Otzar HaHochma*" search yielded **381 results** (!!!). Even though some of the results were duplicates, the abundance of results demand more concentrated study. It seems to me that any other comments would be superfluous.



Use of "*Otzar HaHochma*" is easy and user friendly. After a short trial period, the user grasps how to maximize the use of the resources. The search engine is faster and more precise than the search engine in any other collection of Torah literature.

**"*Otzar HaHochma*" – The biggest revolution since the printing press!**