

JEWISH LIFE | Daniel Keren

A Fascinating Study of 500 Years of Hebrew Book Printing

Feldheim Publishers has just released a major tribute to the history of Hebrew book publishing with the publication of Rabbi Akiva Aaronson's 231-page deluxe coffee book edition titled most appropriately the "People of the Book: Five Hundred Years of the Hebrew Book." This fascinating book on Jewish books tells the story of Jewish publishing from the time that Johannes Gutenberg invented the modern metal printing press and revolutionized the production of books.

Books Were Not an Affordable Option

Prior to Guttenberg's breakthrough in printing the method of producing books was the same as in ancient times –

creating manuscripts on animal skins which was both more time-consuming per each copy and obviously because of the greater labor and costs of material more expensive.

The ability of a writer to have his literary or theological works spread outside his own community prior to the development of the printing press was limited by the cost and appeal of his reputation.

A Tribute to the Jewish People

Rabbi Aaronson has put much time and effort into researching the topic of Hebrew book publishing in the past half millennium. And to his credit he has managed to create a most interesting book

that serves as a true tribute to the legacy of the Jewish nation as the "People of the Book."

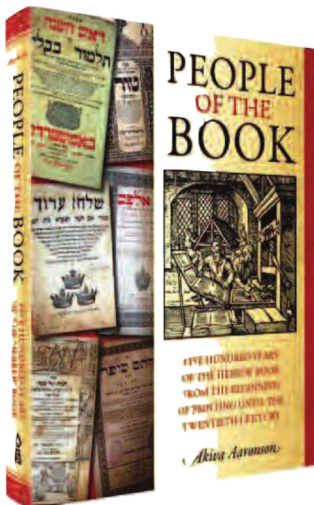
Taking what might be an overly technical and boring subject Rabbi Aaronson has managed to make it absolutely fascinating. Throughout the pages of "The People of the Book," the author has interspersed eye-catching photo-

manuscripts to Italy for publication.

Non-Jewish Printers Of Hebrew Books

Some of the most important printers of Hebrew books for the Jewish population in Italy were non-Jews who were quick to realize that in this community was a greater potential for profit than amongst the general gentile population.

One of the more intriguing gentile publishers of Jewish books in Italy was Daniel Bomberg who although born in Antwerp moved to Venice and obtained permission from the Venetian Senate for permission to establish a printing house to print Hebrew Books in 1515. A wealthy man he was able to purchase superior ink and paper and today almost 500 years later copies of the books he printed are found in outstanding condition.



graphs of some of the early and important Judaica books to be published since the invention of the Gutenberg Press with crisp informative text.

Almost Universal Literacy Among Klal Yisroel

The author notes that in the first half century following the invention of the printing press, some 20% of all books published were religious Jewish seforim, a compliment to the almost universal literacy of Klal Yisroel as opposed to the situation for the Christian populace in Europe in which only the clergy, merchants and certain aristocrats had been taught to read and write.

Chapter 3 deals with the first 50 years of publishing and on a map on page 20, Rabbi Aaronson shows all of the known locations where Hebrew books were published (i.e. Spain, Portugal, Italy and Turkey.) In Germany where the printing press had been invented, fierce protectionism by the non-Jewish printer's guild kept that option out of reach of the Jewish populace which had to send their

Employing Famous Jewish Scholars

Mr. Bomberg did not hold back when it came to employing famous Jewish scholars of that period to not only obtain important manuscripts for him to publish but also excellently help him to expertly edit the texts of the books.

In addition to giving an outline of Hebrew book printing throughout the centuries, Rabbi Aaronson's "People of the Book" also contains chapters describing the persecution and censorship of the Hebrew Book by the Church in Europe, questions in halachah such as do printed sefarim have kedushah (holiness) and issues regarding copyright.

"People of the Book" by Rabbi Akiva Aaronson will help the Jewish layman have a greater appreciation for the precious theological literary legacy that has contributed significantly to the advancement of Jewish Torah learning. It is a great gift for a friend or even oneself and is available in Jewish bookstores or directly from the publisher by either calling (845) 356-2282 or clicking www.feldheim.com

EVALUATION & REMEDIATION:

All grade levels kriyah, English, math. Help for bochurim and girls to pass GEDs, Regents, CLEP, NYS exams. Evaluations and advocate for proper school placement.

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING:

General language and communication skills – adults, children, adolescents. INCLUDES: explosive and isolated children, bullying issues, phobias, nonverbal communication issues.

DYNAMIC WORKSHOPS:

Interactive workshops for mechanchim, mechanchos, parents, teachers, seminary students. Kriyah, English reading, and social skills training. Also offering workshops on the two must read books "My Friend The Bully" and "My Friend The Troublemaker" focusing on Bullying and ADHD.

SHIDDUCH COACHING:

Private sessions for life-preparedness for young adults of chidduch age. ISSUES INCLUDE: inability to maintain a conversation, poor body language, anger problems, poor self-esteem, and difficulty making commitments. Get your Bochar & Kallah Maidel ready for a Rishon!

Call to purchase a copy of **MY FRIEND THE TROUBLEMAKER** Learning to ROCK and Thriving with ADHD, and receive a free copy of the ADHD NEWSLETTER.

SPECIAL SCANNING DEVICE to evaluate the level of ADHD in children and adults

MRS. RIFKA SCHONFELD • 718.382.5437 • WWW.RIFKASCHONFELDSOS.COM