

B"h

Extract from "ISRAEL SABA Conversations of Rabbi Israel Dov Odesser"

And I, from the time I first became aware while still a small child, though I still could not even say the Psalms, still my heart burned for God, and I greatly desired, I deeply loved Torah learning, mitzvot and faith. My heart longed to serve God, to learn the Torah and to give myself over to serving God, and praying with intense devotion, enthusiasm and animated gestures. I was accustomed to pray in a synagogue neighboring our house. There was one chassid there, a very elderly man who received a great deal of respect and importance, an upright man who loved the God-fearing. He saw how my praying was different from all the other children, he saw that I prayed with intention, devotion, with truth and simplicity, thus I found favor in his eyes. He was from among the chassids who do not pray forcefully or loudly, only in a whisper. But in spite of this, I had brazenness and paid them no mind. So this elderly man came to me every day and gave me a valuable coin. He was well known in the town for being miserly, always giving the smallest possible coin for charity. But to me he gave.

When I came home, being that my parents were poor, I gave them the coin. They were amazed. But after that I stopped giving to them and began saving the coins for a prayerbook. I wanted a prayerbook including Tikkun Chatzot and Psalms, plus all the various Selichot and Ma'amadot, all the requests and prayers - in short, a treasury, with all the prayers existing in the world, every supplication or plea.

So, I had a great longing for such a prayerbook, and I was receiving a valuable coin every day, so I saved up all the coins for the prayerbook. However, in Tiberias one could not find such a book - the prayerbooks in Tiberias were only the standard ones for children. The kind that I wanted could only be found in Jerusalem. Then God had mercy on me, and it happened that my mother needed to travel to Jerusalem for a wedding. When she was ready to leave, I said to her, "I saved up money for a deluxe prayerbook."

I was very cherished by my mother, and she promised me that she would buy me the type of prayerbook I wanted - a treasury with all the added features. I gave her the money, and she bought it!

She made an effort to inquire from one of our relatives who knew all the major dealers. A prayerbook like this could not be found just anywhere. In any case, she bought me a prayerbook that was a novelty even in Jerusalem. She came to Tiberias with the book. My happiness..... I went to synagogue with this prayerbook, and everyone was jealous. Everyone who saw it said "Wow! A prayerbook like that, who can merit to have such a prayerbook!"

What joy I had, everytime I saw the book by me, I wanted to eat it!

