



Gifts for BACHURIM

So, you want to buy a gift for a *bachur*? Anything's fine, so long as it's black, battery-operated and fits in his back pocket! Okay, I confess that not all the suggestions below meet all three criteria, but here's hoping you find some ideas that work for you.

Fun Trinkets

Last year, before taking off to Eretz Yisrael for a short trip, I stepped into Pretty Personal Packages in Boro Park and asked Mrs. Gitel Weber to help me choose some trinkets for my son in yeshivah.

The biggest hit was the gadget that turns whatever you attach it to into a speaker (Tweakers Vibe Vibration Speakers). You plug one side into your music player, and stick the other side onto a book, pillow or soda can, and the entire thing booms your music. Straight out of *The Marvelous Middos Machine*, you can now have your own



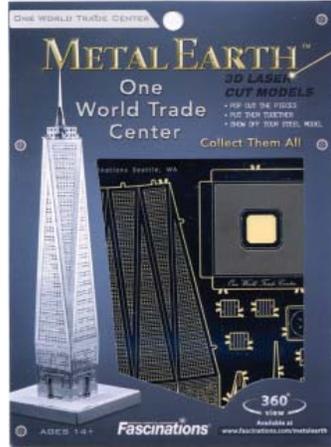
“music coming out of the cereal box!”

Another cute thingamajig was a mini tool set on a key-chain (Wood Mini Hammer Tool by Kikkerland). The seven tools include a hammer, screwdriver, pliers, bottle opener and more.

For your creative, artsy *bachur*, she also carries mini metal model-building kits (Metal Earth). Similar to the 3-D wood model sets where you punch out pieces from a wooden board and assemble them, these kits have you punch tin pieces from a metal sheet, and assemble them to make extremely detailed and life-like models of famous landmarks and vehicles. The results are curio-worthy! Kits are reasonably priced at



approximately \$10, so if a *bachur* enjoys it, he can eventually amass an eye-catching collection. (Note: You do need a tool or two to bend the metal, available also from Metal Earth, or use your own.)



Judaica Items

Some non-*sefer* gifts have become common even for a *bar mitzvah bachur*, mostly other Judaica items, such as a *shofar*. My son whose *bar mitzvah* was in Elul received three, but even boys whose birthdays are during the year might receive one. For extra elegance, it can be presented in an embroidered case.

Another common gift is the challah cover. In some families, the *bachur* begins to use this immediately for his own *lechem mishneh* at every Shabbos meal. Others, though, have mentioned that while their son appreciated the gift, it was put away until he got married.

Your son goes to bed with a calculator? Buy him a 100-Year Jewish Calendar. Besides the entertainment value for those boys whose brains think in numbers, the century-long scope helps a teenager see the bigger picture, that the world encompasses much more than the immediate happenings in his life.

Another Judaica winner is a bound book that looks like a *sefer* and is embossed with the words *Chiddushei Torah*. It is a lined notebook that a *bachur* can fill with his Torah thoughts.

The Practical

What can a *bachur* use day to day that he would still consider a gift?

If you've been following this column, you know the first one — an alarm clock! But now we have it on record from The Buzz: the recommended *bachur*-waker is the Sonic Boom Vibrating Alarm Clock.

A black (of course) tote bag. Boys need a sturdy bag for taking clothes to the *mikveh* and back. I've long been hoping some enterprising individual would manufacture a bag designed especially for this purpose, with compartments for wet and dry clothes, sealed areas for shampoo and other leakables, and a designated place for the *mikveh* card. But

WHAT CAN A BACHUR USE DAY TO DAY THAT HE WOULD STILL CONSIDER A GIFT? IF YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THIS COLUMN, YOU KNOW THE FIRST ONE — AN ALARM CLOCK! BUT NOW WE HAVE IT ON RECORD FROM THE BUZZ: THE RECOMMENDED BACHUR-WAKER IS THE SONIC BOOM VIBRATING ALARM CLOCK.



sandwich, treat him to a shwarma, or best yet, invite him out for a barbecue!

And of course, we can't forget what might just bring a delighted glow to any *bachur's* face: cash!

Every gift has its time and place, and each relationship might call for something different. With handwritten warm wishes on an old-fashioned card, presented with a handshake and a smile, whatever gift you choose is sure to hit the mark! ■

in the meantime, a sturdy black tote is a welcome gift.

A silver pen. This can be a gift on its own, especially if it comes in a gift box. It can be engraved with a *bachur's* name or a meaningful message, and can optionally be given together with the notebook for *chiddushei Torah* mentioned above.

A watch, a clip-on reading light, a compass (he'll always know which way is *mizrach*).

Or a watch with a light and a compass (AND a bottle opener, and some other why-not stuff you always thought should be on a watch) with Men's Dakota Clip-on Watches at Target.

Binoculars. For these, The Buzz recommends the Olympus. A chassidishe *bachur* can take them along to *tischen*, or to the Rebbe's grandson's wedding, and have a front-row view no matter where on the *parenches* his place is.

For many *bachurim*, a favorite gift is a meal. Preferably involving copious amounts of meat and bread. Send him over a deli

**All names have been changed; stories lightly fictionalized for your reading pleasure.*

Mrs. Paluch is the author of "Boy Oh Boy!" — the engaging guide for mothers of one boy or a dozen. Comments and topic suggestions related to this column can be directed to magazine@hamodia.com.