

## Why we are learning Mishna

1. **Although Talmud study is the greatest possible human achievement, if society pursues Talmud study before mastering Mishna, one should always prioritize mastering the Mishna ahead of studying Talmud.**

*The Rabbis taught: "Those who involve themselves with Tanach do something significant, yet relatively insignificant. [Those who involve themselves] with Mishna do something significant, and earn reward through it. [Yet, those who involve themselves with] Talmudic analysis—there is nothing more significant than this. And yet, one should always run to Mishna more than Talmudic analysis."*

*This statement seems self-contradictory! [First] you said regarding Talmudic analysis, "There is nothing more significant than this," but then you said, "One should always run to Mishna more than Talmudic analysis"?*

*R' Yochanan said: [The first part of this Mishna] was taught in the days of Rebbe, [when they knew the Mishna well and their Talmudic analysis was to understand the reasoning of the Mishna (Rashi).] Once everyone abandoned mastering Mishna and instead chased after Talmudic analysis [without a commitment to master of the Mishna text] he went back and taught, "One should always run to Mishna more than Talmudic analysis." (Bava Metzia 33a-b)*

2. **One should first study the breadth of the Torah from a teacher before delving into its depth.**

*Rav Kahana said, "When I was eighteen I had learned the whole of Shas, but I did not know that a verse never departs from its plain meaning until now." What are we to learn from this? That one should first learn all the information from his teacher, and then, once he knows the information, he should work to understand its rationale. (Shabbos 63a with Rashi)*

3. **If one had to choose between (a) mastering the breadth of Torah (known as "Sinai") and (b) being an expert in Talmudic analysis (known as an "uprooter of mountains"), the proper choice is the former (a).**

*...one said a "Sinai" is preferable, and one said an "uprooter of mountains" is preferable. ... The sages [in Babylonia] sent the question there [to the sages in Israel]: "Which one is preferable?" The sages in Israel responded that a "Sinai" takes precedence. (Horayos 14a)*

4. **Until you are familiar with all of Mishnayos, learning will always be frustrating on some level – like working on a complex jigsaw puzzle without all the pieces.**

*Reish Lakish said, "If you see a student whose studies are difficult for him as iron, it is because his study of Mishna is not arranged in an organized fashion." (Taanis 7b-8a)*

5. **If you want to be a serious *Talmid Chochum*, you have no alternative but to know the Mishna first.**

*With whom do you find the battle of Torah? With one who has in his hand bundles of Mishna. (Sanhedrin 42a)*

*To have a clear understanding of Torah, one must be well versed in Mishna, otherwise, no matter how intelligent he may be, he will not know the principles to arrive at the correct understanding. (Rashi, ad loc.)*

6. **The *halacha* is that one should start his day with a shiur of Mishnayos, because the study of Mishna is linked closely to the wellbeing and *shelaymus* of your own *neshama*. (Ba'er Heitiv, O.C. 1:6 quoting the Arizal)**

7. **The ingathering of the exiles at the coming of the Moshiach will be in the merit of Mishna Study (Vayikra Rabbah 7:3)**