

TORAH STUDY

Introduction to Torah Study

Studying Torah is a basic requirement for all Jews and such study is considered to be a prestigious commandment (Torah study is as important as doing all the other mitzvot: talmud Torah k'negged kulam). Setting time for Torah study (k'viat zman l'Torah) means that we show how important Torah study is by setting a specific time each day and a specific duration for such study.

But all commandments that you must do (mitzvot aseh) take precedence over studying Torah. That is, you may NOT ignore the need to do another positive commandment because you are studying!

Minimum Required Torah Study

The minimum requirements for Jews to learn:

- Men: All parts of the Torah plus whatever halacha is relevant for them.

NOTE The most important subjects for men to study are whatever is practical for them in their lives

- Women: All halachot relevant for them, and hashkafa.

Studying Torah

All Jews must study Torah “lishma” (studying for the sake of understanding the Torah, just because we are commanded to do so). If you are studying in order to teach, to get honor, or any other reason, it is not lishma.

Reading Weekly Torah Portion

Read the weekly Torah portion (parasha) twice each week and Targum (or commentary) once each week.

Learning Gemara

If you can memorize the gemara you are learning, you do not need to use the printed book.

Torah at Meals

Some Torah should be discussed at every meal.

Torah, Prayers, and Bad Smell

Do not say blessings or prayers or study holy subjects (limudei kodesh) if there is a bad smell.

Siyum

A siyum can be held anytime a book of Torah or Talmud or any other holy book (sefer kodesh) has been studied for a long time; three months or longer is a good guideline. Simply reading through a book does not qualify; you must study it and understand it.

NOTE Originally, the intent was for a volume (masechta) of Talmud or a division (seder) of the Mishna.