

How Much of The Torah Must One Learn?

Rav Chaim Weg

Question: A fellow really enjoys learning Maseches Makkos. He wants to learn it over and over again. Can he fulfill his obligation of *limud haTorah* by just learning this Masechta again and again?

Answer: Rav Yisroel Salanter writes that there are two parts to the mitzvah of *talmud Torah*. One part is that one must learn whenever he has time to learn. The second part is that one has to know the entire Torah. The second part itself consists of two segments - which are known as "*sinai*" and "*oker harim*". "*Sinai*" means that a person should be fluent in *kol haTorah kulo*. "*Oker harim*" means that one should plumb the depths of the Torah and understand the *lomdus* of every *sugya*.

Rav Moshe Feinstein also writes that everyone is obligated to try to learn the entire Torah and know it. He acknowledges that only select individuals can achieve fluency in all areas of the Torah but says that everyone has to set up a learning schedule in a way that shows that he aspires to know as much of the Torah as he can and wants to understand it to the best of his ability.

The Shulchan Aruch Harav suggests that in addition to one's regular learning, one should learn all of *Torah Shebaal Peh* - including Shas Bavli and Yerushalmi, Mechilta, Sifra, Sifri, Tosefta, and Medrash - at least once in his lifetime. Even if he won't necessarily retain all of it, he should still learn it all at least once.

Having a *bekius seder* to review and retain as much as possible of what one has already mastered is an aid to learning and knowing much of *kol haTorah kulo*. *Chazarah* is a necessary component of Torah study since part of the requirement is to know what one learned.