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אל כבוד ידידי ותלמידי היקר חו"ב ועסקן בהרבצת תורה מוהר"ר צבי זובין שליט"א
Rabbi Zvi Zobin, שליט"א, a former student of our Yeshiva, is well known to me as a genuine מים
מרבץ תורה who is an outstanding pedagogue and בעל מידות טובות.

The sefer is designed to show the student how he can relate to the גמרא and organise his underst:
סוגיא. Certainly, a person will enjoy learning גמרא and make the most progress when he "lives in
appreciating the reality of its arguments.

While I am not familiar with modern methods of teaching גמרא, anything which enhances the unc
תורה and leads to clarity in basic פשט is to be praised and will open the avenues to more advance
וחזקה על חבר שאינו מוציא מתחת ידו דבר שאינו מתוקן

With warmest personal good wishes

ברגשי ברכה והצלחה
הרב נ. ארדמאן לונדון

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YESHIVAT KETER TORAH רב רפאל לاپין, Dean ראש ישיבה

טו' שבט תשנ"ב לפ"ק פה עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

Rav Zvi Zobin שליט"א presented before me his work "Breakthrough to the First Levels" designed
the mastering of texural analysis and to aid teachers in effectively giving it over.

It is textual analysis which is the sine qua non of conceptual analysis (commonly known as "psh
of true התורה (לימוד התורה) and yet so neglected in to-days' gemmorah education curriculum.

Rav Zobin, שליט"א, who is himself a recognized authority and consultant in gemorah education,
really require my הסכמה, however, I would like to express how impressed I was with his work b
of methodology and comprehensiveness. I am certain that it will make a significant contribution t
Torah world.

יזכהו העליון להמשיך בעבודתו להעמיד תלמידים על דרך הפשט להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה
רפאל אלי' לפין

3 INTRODUCTION

This work is directed to the most basic level of Gemora - understanding and appreciating the act
the Tannaim and Amoraim. By virtue of being the most basic level, it is also the most critical. If
wishes to interpret part of a map, he must first grasp the layout of the entire map.

After arriving in America, Rav Ya'akov Kaminetzky יצ"ל's first post was at the Torah VoDass Y
Brooklyn, New York. People attending his shiurim were disappointed by their apparent low lev
seemed to comprise little more than discussion of basic peshot. "Is this the famous Rabbi Kam
whose fame reached us even when he was still in Europe?" people asked.

One day, Rav Kaminetzky delivered an amazing shiur in which he culled chidushim from all ove
Poskim.

"Ah!" people thought, "This is what we have been waiting for!" After the Shiur, Rav Kaminetzky
to his talmidim. "I am sorry that I could not give my usual shiur, but last night I went to a chass
did not get home until late and I was not able to prepare for the it. Tomorrow I hope that I will
give shiur as usual." (Story confirmed by his son, Rav Nosson Kaminetsky שליט"א.)

Newcomers to Rav Nochum Perzovitz יצ"ל's world-famous shiur in the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem
surprised by their apparent simplicity.

I once asked Rav Zvi Kushalevsky שליט"א (Rosh Yeshiva, Haichal HaTorah, Jerusalem) if h
particular דרך in his teaching. He replied that he insisted that his talmidim should know the b

of the Gemora and main Commentaries absolutely clearly.

4 There are two aspects to attaining clarity at the basic level. Firstly, you must appreciate the force of each stage of the argument. Secondly, you must understand the flow of the sugya and how it follows logically from the previous stage. Then, after you have worked out the complete flow of the sugya, you must be able to retain the construction of the sugya in your mind as an entire unit.

For the first aspect, I have given examples of common terms, showing how these terms would be used in everyday argument. You should try to isolate other standard terms and think of your own example of how they are incorporated into a discussion.

For the second aspect, I have given selections of two methods for graphically displaying an entire sugya. One method is known as a structured walkthrough, which shows the spatial relationship between parts of the sugya. The other is known as a flowchart, which shows the effect of each part of the sugya on the next. Devising a method for retaining the entirety of a sugya in your mind is an intensely personal matter. What is clear to one person can be completely baffling to another. You must work out which method is most suitable for you. Some people are fascinated by flowcharts. Other people are dismayed by them. Some people write a synopsis of the sugya, others make flash-cards with an outline of the sugya or a just a sequence of words. Others like a simple classified chart. Some people like to build-up collections of information about the sugya on filecards.

Once the basics of the sugya are clear and they are impressed upon the mind, learning through methods like these becomes stimulating and enjoyable. 5 HOW TO USE THE BOOK

This book is designed to be used as a reference book. When you encounter one of the standard terms, find the everyday example given in the third part. Then find an example from a Gemora in the fourth part where the term is used in the Gemora; note its role in the progression of the Gemora's discussion.

The first part of the book comprises a discussion of the basic level of making a "translation", distinguishing between the literal translation of the text and its idiomatic meaning.

The second part of the book comprises a discussion of the primary stages of understanding Gemora. It includes guidelines to standard formats of charts. The making of notes and charts are an invaluable aid to attaining clarity and to maintaining an alert attitude to learning. As a famous Rosh Yeshiva said,

Let your pen (קנה) be your friend קנה לך חבר

The third part comprises a dictionary of standard words and phrases, illustrated by examples in everyday conversation. They will help you to relate to the discussions of the Gemora as real-life arguments. You can become involved and participate.

The fourth part comprises a selection of small sugyas for you to practise on.

I have deliberately kept the everyday examples of the second and third parts in a standard format. This might make reading through the whole part in one session both boring and confusing. Using a standard format helps you to compare and contrast similar terms, so that you can define clearly the power of each term.

6 As with all "mechanical" help to learning Gemora, whether they are books, tapes or computer programs, this book cannot replace the rebbi-talmid relationship which is the basis of the Oral Law. These methods can often provide valuable supplements, but the role of the rebbi goes beyond the simple transfer of information.

When Rabbi Boruch Ber Leibowitz first returned to his home town of Slutsk after learning by Rabbi Chaim in Brisk, some of his neighbours tried to convince him that the long and arduous return journey was a waste of time. "We have a Bais haMedrash here, stocked with the finest seforim." they argued. "We do not need to go back to Rabbi Chaim. You can get all the s'voras you need from the seforim here." Rabbi Boruch Ber was not convinced, but still, their arguments hit home. When he returned to Brisk, Rabbi Chaim where lay the fallacy of their reasoning. Reb Chaim replied that to an extent they were correct. "You can think of a s'vorah and then see it in a Ketzos, you know that it is good. What they do not realise is that you can have a s'vorah and not see it in a sefer - then you need the rebbi to tell if it is correct or incorrect. He will guide you and train you." (Heard from Rabbi Rafoel Lopin שליט"א)

(עיין ספר רוח חיים על אבות פרק ו ד"ה "הלומד מחבירו")

7 When you first begin to look into the text, keep in mind that of those in the discussion, both the one who is asking and the answering, are all intelligent people who weigh each word with wisdom and understanding.

First, happily read aloud the entire text two or three times. Then read the text more intensively and try to grasp its plain meaning. Then read again and try to see the implications of what has been written. The first level is called simple meaning and the second level is called insight. Experts in the science of logic call the introduction and the insight they refer to as the consequence.

The straightforward way is to first to understand as much as you yourself. Then see whether or not the way you understand it agrees with the way it is explained by the Commentator.

When you first start to look into the text, firstly, go over the entire text to understand what the general idea is all about. Then go over it in detail to see how it fits into the general picture. Then, when you understand the overall picture, go over the text again and see if you agree with all of it.

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