

PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM

-----GEMARA SETUP-----

The purpose of this project is to help people focus on the GEMARA and not get needlessly lost in "a sea of words". It is designed to provide people with all backgrounds with tools which will enable them to substitute clarity for confusion, and to see that the Gemara consists of orderly and systematic material.

Every line, i.e., every sentence of the Gemara falls into one of four categories. The Talmid must ask "what category the line he is reading belongs to". If he is in the middle of a subject, it is generally advisable to recall what the preceding sentence was talking about. When a Mishna or Braisa is brought, the Talmid must ask himself which of the four methods is being served by it.

A mnemonic for the four categories is **מקתר**. Whenever you see a quote, i.e. a Mishna etc, you must ask how is it being used? This is in the form of a **תריץ, ראייה**, **מימרא** or a **קשה**.

מקתר - PNEUMONIC

1. **מימרא** - (Saying) There are two parts, ask which is the **מציאות** (facts) and which is the **דין** (law) or both. Once you see what the **מציאות** (facts) are ask immediately what's the problem. Once you've discovered the problem look for the **דין** (דין). For ex. // **פטור** or **חייב** // **כשר** or **פסול** // **אמור** or **מותר** // **כשרה** or **טרפה**.

2. **קשה** - (Question) - Picture a Bais Medrash and the **מקשן** is challenging something in a MISHNA, BRAISA or DIN. In almost every Gemara look for the one who asks the question, what we call the **מקשן**. This **מקשן** wants the **דין** to be contrary to either the Mishna, Braisa, Din etc. and he brings another Mishna, etc. or reason to prove his point. PAY close attention to this, it is the pivotal point in determining whether you will understand the Gemara or not.

Now look for this **מקשן** to ask the following "how could this be" or "why bother saying it"? This is your key to unlock the door!

קשה STRUCTURE OF EVERY

1. What is the **קשה** asking on, i.e. MISHNA, BRAISA, DIN, ETC.
2. What's the **קשה** itself?
3. How should the Din be according to the one who asked the **קשה**?

שאלה - There are two sides and each is looking to determine what the din is. i.e. **מאי**. This is usually in the form of a new case that wasn't mentioned in a Mishna, Braisa, etc.

3. תרץ (answer)- After a קשה you should expect either a תרץ or agreement with the קשה. From there you will look for a new way to explain the Din, Mishna, Braisa etc. The תרץ may agree to the basis (יסוד) of the קשה. If he does, he may then bring an answer (תרץ). Sometimes he will not agree at all with the basis (יוסד) of the קשה. If in asking the question, one has recognizable arguments and a rational line of thought, his words should not be dismissed out of hand. The following two approaches may be used.

A. The תרץ may point out the flaws in the theory and assumptions of the מקשן to explain the goal of the מקשן.

B. The תרץ may present an opinion which differs from the מקשן and then stay with that opposing opinion.

4. ראיה - (proof) In most cases the ראיה goes with a קשיה . A clarification may be brought by a proof, i.e. תא שמע or תדע. Next look for the source of the proof and is it a quote from somewhere else. Keep in mind always that the מקשן and תרץ were Amoraim and what was written in the Gemara is probably a very small part of a very long discussion.

When you finish a sugia, give a topic i.e. what din are we discussing then give the topic, i.e. reasoning of Din. The purpose of this is to train oneself in keeping a strict accounting of where he is holding in relationship to the ultimate problem that he has been presented with and to not get sidetracked with issue's that could deter him from reaching his ultimate goal of understanding and solving the overall problem that was originally presented at the start of the GEMARA.

חיצוניות- Always look for the goal of the Gemara. Pay attention to this after learning a few lines, and after you finish the Sugia go over it deeply once again. In order to do this you must always maintain focus of the topic that's being discussed throughout the sugia. In Baba Mezia daf 21א the Gemara asks whether half a Kav of fruit scattered over an area of two Amos must be returned or considered to be abandoned? If you will ask the talmid what the topic of the sugia is he should answer in brief "Half a Kav of fruit scattered over an area of two Amos." If we were to give a topic according to the logic (reasoning) that the Sugia is dealing with, the topic would be what causes one to be מייאוש and not pick up scattered abandoned fruit.? Is it the fact that a small amount is lacking in value, or that it's not worth the effort because it's too hard to gather together? The appropriate topic in brief would be: "What causes יאוש in מפוזרין?"

May the awakening and enlightenment derived therefrom be better than the finest gold!

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