

S.A.Y. Introduction

Sayomi.intro1. basics plus, 3 year division, guidelines.

Welcome to Shulchan Aruch Yomi !

And thank you for listening.

"יסוד הלימוד ושורש העבודה בתורת הנגלה לאסוקי שמעתתא אליבא דהלכתא ולהבין היטב העיקרים וכללים וטעמים של ההלכה, ולחזור על לימודו הרבה פעמים."

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The following is an introduction into the mission and goals of this learning project.

Note: I divided the introduction into several recordings.

I always wanted to systematically learn and review the entire Shulchan Aruch. But it did not seem like it was happening. I tried a few times, but I could not keep it up with it by myself. So I decided do go for it and take as many people along with me.

We will learn and review the entire Shulchan Aruch, ALL 4 chalakim in 3 years. We divided them into about 10-20 se'ifim a day, 5 days a week. It can take you 10-25 minutes a day, especially if you learnt it before and review it your own, or if you listen to me on 2x speed.

We will learn the Shulchan Aruch with the Rema, which are the backbone of practical halacha, with clear and practical explanations, plus additional insights from the Nosei Kelim and modern poskim.

Review the Shulchan Aruch every 3 years, retain what you learned, and familiarize yourself with all the rest!

Join us in person or listen from home, create your local chabura, or do it on your own. Obviously, with a chabura is best.

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Important: Always stop me if I make a mistake, or if I did not sufficiently explain something.

God willing, we will have a good understanding of most of the halachot, including the reasons, logic, and mechanics. However, and unfortunately, we will not be able to address every detail or nuanced halacha in depth in our limited time. And there will be some halachot that are too complicated to fully grasp, and we will learn and mark them with "tzarich iyun". Indeed, even the greatest minds and poskim, had difficulty with sugyot in shas and statements of the rishonim and the Shulchan Aruch.

Moreover, feel free to ask additional related and semi-related questions after the shiur, and I always recommend asking personal halachic questions to your personal Rav.

Why and How did I divide the daily portion into 3 years?

Rav Yosef Karo, the author of the Shulchan Aruch, encouraged us all to review all 4 volumes every 30 days, so that we would be proficient in halacha. He wrote in his introduction:

השולחן ערוך: "למען תהיה תורת ה' תמימה, שגורה בפי כל איש בישראל, כי כאשר ישאלו לתלמיד חכם דבר הלכה, לא יגמגם בה... כך יהיה ברור לו... הלכה למעשה... ללמוד בו בכל יום חלקו אשרי מי שבא לכאן" ותלמודו בידו" רב יוסף קארו, בעל השולחן ערוך, בהקדמתו

Similarly,

תנו רבנן "וְשִׁנְנָתֶם" שִׁיְהוּ דְבָרֵי תוֹרָה מְחוֹדָדִים בְּפִיךָ שְׂאֵם יִשְׁאַל לָךְ אָדָם דְּבָר אֵל תְּגַמְגֵּם וְתֹאמַר לוֹ אֵלָּא אָמֹר לוֹ מִיָּד. קידושין ל.

The Sages taught: The verse states: "And you shall teach them diligently [veshinnantam]" (Deuteronomy 6:7). The root *shin, nun, nun*, of *veshinnantam* should be understood as meaning sharp, i.e., that matters of Torah should be sharp and clear in your mouth, so that if a person asks you something, do not stutter in uncertainty and say an uncertain response to him. Rather, answer him immediately.

These teaching emphasize the need for constant reviewing on a regular basis.

Shortly afterwards, the Rema added his monumental work, called "The Mapa" or "The Tablecloth," onto to the Shulchan Aruch, almost doubling the length. Subsequently, the entire Shulchan Aruch with the Rema has been formally divided into a yearly calendar with daily portions to learn 7 days a week, to be repeated every year. Later, it has been divided into 2, and then 3 years. Therefore, I opted to divide into 3 years, 5 days a week, allowing for time to review or catch up.

I felt this would be a good balance between being realistic yet ambitious. I did not want to extend regular reviews of the material beyond 3 years, more than previous divisions. Additionally, reviews should be done often. Ultimately, I wonder if every 3 or 4 years would be most ideal.

I realize that most of the 1st volume, Orach Chaim, is more relevant to our daily lives than most other sections, and probably should demand most of our time. However, many parts of the other volumes are also very important and practical on a daily

basis. Furthermore, like other areas of the Torah, we should all strive to know, or at least be familiar with, it all.

Finally, I would just like to touch upon a couple basic and crucial guidelines in understanding the Shulchan Aruch that we will encounter on a regular basis. These principles are generally well-accepted. Naturally though, all these rules have exceptions. Nothing is 100%. [See Sdei Chemed, klalei haposkim, 13, for a more complete list, as well as some exceptions.]

Interestingly and noteworthy, Maran, the author of the Shulchan Aruch, did not say or write any of these guidelines or principles for his halachic masterpiece, at least not that I am aware of.

1. Sephardic Jewry accepted the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch as binding and final. Sephardic poskim take this very seriously. Again, there are exceptions. 2 quick examples: when the prevalent custom is not like the Shulchan Aruch or in cases of *safek brachot lehakel* when there is doubt regarding saying a blessing in vain.
2. Ashkenazic Jewry usually accepted the rulings of the Rema as binding and final. However, the Ashkenazic poskim do not always agree and follow all of his rulings.
3. *Stam veyesh, halacha kestam*. When Maran writes 2 differing opinions in a law, and one of them is listed plain as an accepted ruling, and then he lists another opinion introduced with “and some say”, then Maran’s final ruling follows the *stam* or plain opinion.
4. *Yesh vayesh, halacha keyesh*. When Maran writes 2 differing opinions and both are introduced with “some say”, then Maran’s final ruling follows the latter opinion.
5. Occasionally, Maran, the author of the Shulchan Aruch, will mention the prevalent custom. He is merely acknowledging the custom and accepts that this is a valid opinion in halacha that one can follow; however, it may not be his personal opinion and ruling.

May we merit to learn, complete, and review the entire Shulchan Aruch together.

ויהי רצון שלא נכשל בהלכה ובמיוחד בהלכה שמפורשת בשלחן ערוך

“*Baruch Hashem Leolam, Amen VeAmen!*”

Sayomi.intro2. Why the Shulchan Aruch?

So why am I fascinated with the Shulchan Aruch? Why more than the many modern kitzur halacha books.

Allow me to share 2 analogies, *lehavdil elef havdalos*.

A mashal from baseball: Imagine two guys. One watches a baseball game once or twice a year and knows most of the basic rules. He comes to watch and listen, relax and enjoy. He mostly follows what's happening. He sees when there's a strike, an out, or a run, and accepts it all at face value. It's a nice passive experience, but at the same time, he is a little bit in the dark. In contrast, there is an ex-baseball player who watches the game. He has a much deeper understanding of the game with all its subtle rules and nuances. He also understands the habits of each individual player with their strengths and weaknesses. He understands why the pitcher throws the ball one way to this player and a completely different way to another player; and why sometimes the outfielders throw the ball to second base as opposed to first base. It's a completely different experience.

A similar mashal from a musical orchestra: One enjoys listening to music and attends a musical concert, but he has no idea how to play a musical instrument. He can't read musical notes, and he barely comprehends the difference between high and low and harmony. In contrast, there is a musician who attends a philharmonic orchestra. He understands every note, every movement of the conductor, how each note and instrument effects the sound, how incredible the symphony orchestra sounds when each musician plays on-key and in unison, and how painful it is to his ears when one note is off-key.

Similarly, without the Shulchan Aruch, one is in the dark and is like an amateur of halacha. It is the backbone of practical halacha, wonderfully connected to the earlier sources, the Talmud and rishonim, and to the later commentaries and modern poskim. The Shulchan Aruch is indispensable for appreciating and determining the halacha.

The Shulchan Aruch is the most fundamental, authoritative, comprehensive, and concise work of practical halacha. It is also the most paramount and crucial work for understanding the halacha, differentiating between a chumra and a kula, and knowing how to apply and adapt the halacha to unique situations.

Unfortunately, I am the *am haaretz* who doesn't play baseball or a musical instrument, and doesn't know the Shulchan Aruch, and I cannot possibly do it justice in this short amount of time. But I will do my best.

Obviously, one should know the earlier and later sources as much as possible, to understand the principles and reasoning of each halacha profoundly and accurately.

Nonetheless, our goal is to learn most of it well, with explanations and depth, including some additional details; review every section; and understand our limitations. Some sections are too complex and would require more time to perhaps comprehend. Moreover, we will not be learning together most of the super commentaries in their original texts to fully appreciate them.

Moreover, in his lifetime and till this day, he was and is the most accepted and authoritative opinion in halacha, especially along with Rema for Ashkenazic Jewry.

”תזכה להיות מוסמך מכל חכמי ארץ ישראל ומחכמי חוץ לארץ...”... “בלי שום טעות וסיג, ושיאירו בו עיני כל ישראל”
כך אמר המלאך המגיד על רב יוסף קארו וספריו. מגיד משרים כג, כב

Thus, the Chazon Ish said that one who argues on the Shulchan Aruch is essentially also arguing against the angel.

The Rema described Maran as:

”מרן, נר ישראל, ראש הגולה... דברי נגד החכם הנ”ל כאין נחשבו... כי בידיעתו הכוללת להקיף הכל, דבר אחד ממנו לא נפלו, החולק עליו כחולק על השכינה... נשיא אלוקים אתה בתוכינו אשר מימיו אנו שותים.”

The Maharshal described the Rema as:

”נר המערבי הגאון הגדול בדורו... וממשה ועד משה לא קם כמשה בישראל.”

The Shalah hakadosh wrote that in Heaven they decided that the halacha is determined by the Rema’s rulings, like how we always follow Beit Hillel over Beit Shamai.

The Chida wrote that in Heaven they agreed that the codified halacha should be written by Maran because of his humility and the Rema because his intentions were pure for the sake of Heaven.

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May we merit to learn, complete, and review the entire Shulchan Aruch together.

ויהי רצון שלא נכשל בהלכה ובמיוחד בהלכה שמפורשת בשלחן ערוך

“Baruch Hashem Leolam, Amen VeAmen!”

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Sayomi.intro3. machshava, kabbalah, and daily halacha

Now before we embark on tackling the Shulchan Aruch inside, siman after siman, and seif after seif, Jewish law after law, detail after detail:

Let's take a big step back, take a deep breath, and think about what is most important, why is this learning endeavor important, and who wrote the Shulchan Aruch. I will attempt to touch upon each item in short. (No pun intended.) The following will be a short talk on machshava, philosophy, kabbalah, and background to the Shulchan Aruch, its authors, and halacha.

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Firstly, we must remember that *Emuna* and belief in Hashem is Number One. It is all about being connected to Hashem all the time. We must think of him in all that we do. Our goal is to constantly do the *ratzon* Hashem, the Will of God. It is not all about doing the action meticulously to every detail. The mitzvot must be done for Hashem, not for us. We should be inspired and thinking of Hashem when performing his mitzvot. We must do them with love and good midot, not out of anger or resentment, or while hurting a fellow Jew, emotionally or physically.

Mitzvot without *emuna* and awareness of Hashem are like a lifeless body without a soul. The physical actions of mitzvot are important in order to busy ourselves with thinking of Hashem and to demonstrate our strength to serve and believe in Him, and to conquer our desires to show our love and belief in Hashem. They are to build us and bring us closer to Hashem, not to busy ourselves with physical chores.

The Torah teaches in Devarim 4:4, "*Ve'atem hadvekim...chayim... hayom*" Real living is being attached and connected to Hashem. It's about the *penimiyus*, not brainless actions out of habit. Keeping the many details of Jewish laws and *chumras* are wonderful when they are meaningful and show our love and commitment to keep Hashem's mitzvot and His will, and making the needed *tikunim* in the heavens.

Accordingly, chazal generally do not argue over the inner meanings of the mitzvot. They only disagree over how to physically perform the mitzvot in the best way possible, given the spiritual constraints of time and space. In the spiritual realm, 2 truths can exist simultaneously, unlike our physical world.

Therefore, from one perspective, the halacha should follow the majority opinion, even if it is contrary to how one perceives the halacha should be. It is not about the individual ego or the specific physical action. But rather, it is about being humble, demonstrating our commitment to Hashem's will, our love of God, the *penimiyus* and *emuna*, and making *tikunim*.

Moreover, this is why a lack in *emuna* can jeopardize our entire existence and portion in the World to Come, while violating a mitzvah only results in a punishment, embarrassment, and being distanced from Hashem.

Remember, Moshe Rabenu tells us in Devarim 4:7,8, that our nation is so lucky and great that Hashem is so close to us, listens to our prayers, and grants us many mitzvot. Similarly, Chazal teach us that Hashem gave us many mitzvot in order to make it easy for all of us to merit a share in the World to Come.

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I would like to share a few more quotes from our Sages on the importance of learning halacha daily.

“אוהב ה' שערים המצויינים בהלכה יותר מבתי כנסיות ומבתי מדרשות...
מיום שחרב בית המקדש אין לו להקב"ה בעולמו אלא ארבע אמות של הלכה בלבד”
ברכות ה.

“תנא דבי אליהו כל השונה הלכות בכל יום מובטח לו שהוא בן העולם הבא”
גדה ע.

“והלומד על מנת לעשות, מספיקין בידו ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות.”
אבות ד:ה

Clearly, learning halacha is extremely important, if not paramount.

Accordingly,

“וכאשר תקום מן הספר, תחפש באשר למדת אם יש בו דבר אשר תוכל לקיימו.”
איגרת הרמב"ן

Moreover,

“שהלימודים שלמד האדם בעולם הזה יזכה לבסוף לשמוע אותם מפי הקדוש ברוך הוא בעצמו... בעולם הבא”
חפץ חיים (תורת הבית) בשם תנחומא פ' כי תבוא

Furthermore,

לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁלַח אָדָם שְׁנוֹתָיו שְׁלִישׁ בְּמִקְרָא שְׁלִישׁ בְּמִשְׁנָה שְׁלִישׁ בְּתַלְמוּד.
קידושין ל.

The Sages said that a person should always divide his years into three parts, as follows: A third for Bible, a third for Mishna, and a third for Talmud.

One should spend one third of his learning time on mishna or halacha. One third should be spent on gemara, drash, and analytics, which includes halachic analysis and response. The last third should be spent on Tanach.

Even though each individual's breakdown of learning subject matter and time is subjective and varies from person to person, and that different interpretations have been offered on this "one third," nonetheless, one should obviously spend a significant amount of one's time learning halacha. Halacha can be studied alone as a separate subject and in conjunction with learning Talmud.

Ideally, a portion of our daily learning of the Torah should be at a fast pace to cover ground and accomplish many reviews or "chazaros" of the material to acquire proficiency and recall. And another portion of our daily learning should emphasize slower and deeper analysis and understanding. Again, the proportions are subjective to a person's soul, knowledge, age, available time, environment, etc.

Now, let us begin!

"Baruch Hashem Leolam, Amen VeAmen!"