

Pesach - Questions



Aims:

- 1) Where do we see the idea of asking questions in the Pesach Seder?
- 2) How do we live our Jewish lives as questioners?



Shalom Roshim, Sganim v'Madrichim,

Can't believe that it's the final Sviva of the term! Massive Kol Hakavod to all of you for all of your work! And Bhatzlacha to Mill Hill who are rounding off the term in style with their Shabbat Halrgun!

Pesach is coming up next week! The iconic practice of this chag is the Seder night, when we relive Yetziat Mitzrayim (the Exodus from Egypt) with a multi-sensory, interactive, crazy story-telling experience! A key element of the Seder is the idea of asking questions about the Pesach story. As we will discover, we should not be asking questions only on Seder night, but throughout our lives, about all of our Judaism.

To emphasise this point, I've changed the layout of the Choveret to a question and answer format: This choveret asks a question, then shows you some sources that relate to it. Then, there are some questions for you to ask and discuss for yourselves.



← They are next to the ones next to this sign.

Then there is a short paragraph to hammer home the main point. So, your mad's meeting should have more discussion and less reading paragraphs from the choveret!

The "Mortar" section of practical ideas for your peulah is in the pink boxes

Let me know what you think... If you like it, I could do it again for future Chovrot!

Have a wonderful week, Chag Kasher v'Sameach and until next term, have a good break!

Bevirkat Chaverim l'Torah v'Avodah

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WHERE DO WE SEE THE IDEA OF ASKING QUESTIONS IN THE PESACH SEDER?

Here are some sources which relate to this question...

Mah Nitshtana – the questions asked by the youngest person at the Seder, the Hagaddah:

What has changed, this night, from all the other nights?	מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה, הלילה הזה מכל הלילות
That in all other nights we eat both chametz and matzah, on this night, we eat only matzah?	שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמַצָּה הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה, כָּלוּ מַצָּה
That in all other nights we eat many vegetables, on this night, maror?	שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה, כָּלוּ מָרוֹר
That in all other nights we do not dip vegetables even once, on this night, we dip twice?	שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אֵין אֲנוּ מְטַבִּילִין אֶפְּלֹ פֶּעַם אַחַת הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה, שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים
That in all other nights some eat sitting and others reclining, on this night, we are all reclining?	שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה, כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין

The Haggadah

“even if we were all wise sages ... we still have a mitzvah to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.”



Why do you think we are supposed to tell the Pesach story through asking questions?

Why does one of these sources focus on young children (Ma Nishtana) and the other on elderly sages?



Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz once said that if a parent drops his child off at cheder and then goes to play golf, what sort of a message does that send to the child? The child understands that cheder is for kids but once you grow up then you can do **really** useful things like play golf!

It is not enough to allow the children to ask the questions on seder night, we are teaching that everyone asks questions, everyone learns and everyone has a part in the seder.

Activities

Younger Groups

- **Quiz:** Ask questions about Pesach. You could do a regular “quiz” or in the style of Who Wants to be a Millionaire/some other quiz show. This introduces them to the idea of questions at the Seder

Older Groups

- **20 questions:** about key players in the Pesach story e.g. Moshe, Pharaoh
- **Question game:** have to have a conversation, but all in question form. Rules: You can't say a statement and then end with a question. The first person to hesitate/not ask a question gets replaced by another volunteer.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ASK QUESTIONS?

בכל דור ודור, חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משיעבוד מצריים
In every generation everyone is obliged to show himself as if he himself is now leaving slavery in Egypt.

Rambam Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah 7:6



*“Religious faith is not uncritical. It does not only ask us to take things on trust. It **encourages us to look at the world, and ask, why are things as they are?** Could they be otherwise? The great prophets took nothing for granted, least of all the injustices of the world. **They asked questions of God**, deep and searching questions. **And God asks questions of us.** Why do we allow evil to prosper? Why are we passive in the face of suffering? For God and mankind are partners in the work of redemption, and every step on the way begins with a willingness to question why we are as we are.”* Rabbi Lord Sacks (Emeritus Chief Rabbi)



Why is it important to feel as if WE OURSELVES came out of Egypt?

Is it important for us to feel a personal connection to Jewish stories and practices?

What is the main point that Rabbi Sacks is making?

Just as questions at the seder ensures that everyone, of all ages and walks of life, gets involved; so too the idea that we should all consider ourselves to have left Egypt gives us a personal interest in the event, and a motivation to ask those questions. Hashem may not reply in the conventional sense but by creating a human response to divine command we bring ourselves into the process of becoming holy.

By asking questions we take part in the Jewish dialogue, it spans generations and brings us close to those events which shaped our lives so many years ago. It means that as Jews we refuse to stand still, by having the youngest person ask the questions we also show that through questioning we are trying to figure out how to build the future that Hashem wants from us. Rabbi Sacks coins the idea nicely...

What we learn as children shapes the society we make when we become adults. And so on Pesach we turn to our children and say: Here is the freedom God has given us. Take it and make it yours.”

Activities

Younger Groups

- **Human chain:** Get the chanichim to make a human chain of their bodies to reach from one side of the room to the other. This shows how we link our lives back to the stories of our ancestors!
- **Chair game:** same idea as above!

Older Groups

- **Bangers, Sausages and Mash:** with the Rabbi Sacks quote
- **Question bang bang:** Like compliment bang bang but with questions! Extra points for questions being about Pesach/the idea of questioning
- **Discussion:** this is a topic that can get really deep for older chanichim. Use the questions above to direct a meaningful discussion with them.

Peulah Planning Sheet

Peulah Title:

Trigger:

Aim 1:

Related Activities and how they relate:

Aim 2:

Related Activities and how they relate:

Aim 3:

Related Activities and how they relate:

What we still need to do (tziud + other preparations):

Conclusion: