

### 1. MISHNA PESACHIM 116A

מזה לו כוס שני וכאן הבן שואל אביו ואם אין דעת בבן אביו מלמדו מה נשתנה הלילה זהה מכל הלילות שבעל הלילות אנו אוכלים חמץ ומצה הלילה זהה יכול מצה שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלים שארירקוט הלילה זהה מרור שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלים בשר צלי שלוק וմבושל הלילה זהה יכול צלי שבכל הלילות אנו מטבילים פעם אחת הלילה זהה שתי פעמים

MISHNA: The attendants poured the second cup for the leader of the seder, and here the son asks his father the questions about the differences between Passover night and a regular night. And if the son does not have the intelligence to ask questions on his own, his father teaches him the questions.

The mishna lists the questions: Why is this night different from all other nights? As on all other nights we eat leavened bread and matzah as preferred; on this night all our bread is matzah. As on all other nights we eat other vegetables; on this night we eat bitter herbs. The mishna continues its list of the questions. When the Temple was standing one would ask: As on all other nights we eat either roasted, stewed, or cooked meat, but on this night all the meat is the roasted meat of the Paschal lamb. The final question was asked even after the destruction of the Temple: As on all other nights we dip the vegetables in a liquid during the meal only once; however, on this night we dip twice.

### 2. TALMUD PESACHIM 116A

תנו רבנן חכם בנו שואלו ואם איןו חכם שאלתו שואלו ואם לאו הוא שואל לעצמו ואפילו שני תלמידי חכמים שיעודין בהלכות הפסח שואליין זה זהה:

GEMARA: The Sages taught: If his son is wise and knows how to inquire, his son asks him. And if he is not wise, his wife asks him. And if even his wife is not capable of asking or if he has no wife, he asks himself. And even if two Torah scholars who know the halakhot of Passover are sitting together and there is no one else present to pose the questions, they ask each other.

### 3. SHIBOLEI HALEKET ON HAGGADAH QUOTING THE RID

*Zedekiah ben Abraham HaRofei - Composed in (c.1240 - c.1280 CE). Commentary on the Passover Haggadah excerpted from the medieval Halakhic work 'Shibolei HaLeket'. Isaiah di Trani ben Mali (the Elder) (c. 1180 – c. 1250) (Hebrew: ישעיה בן מאלי הזרן דטראני, better known as the RID, was a prominent Italian Talmudist.*

מה נשתנה הלילה זהה. פירש רבינו ישעיה צ"ל זה נתkan עברו מי שאין לו מי שישאל שאלתו היה לו בן [חכם] שהוא שואל לא הוא צרכין לאומרו. כי הא דברי הוה יתיב קמיה (דרבא) [דרבא] חזא דקא מגביה פטורה פ' שהוא עוקרין את השלחן אמר אטו מי אוכלים שאתה עוקר את השלחן מלפנינו אמר ליה (רבא) [רבא] פטרתן מלומר מה נשתנה אבל במקום שאין לו מי שישאל ח"בין לשואל זה את זה. ואפי' שני תלמידי חכמים הבקיין בהלכות הפסח:

#### 4. RAMBAM – HILCHOT CHAMETZ U'MATZAH 8:2

מתחל ומקיר בורא פרי הארץ ולוקם בرك ומטרל אותו בחרס וואכל קצית הוא וכל המסביר עמו כל אפס ואפס אין אוכל פחות מכך. ואחר בר עזירין השלtron מלפני קורא הגדה לבן. ומזהgan הפסח השמי ואכן הבן שואל. ואומר הקורא מה נשמעה הלילה זהה מכל הלילה שבעל הלילה אין אותו מטבילין אפילו פעמי אפסת ובלילה זהה שמי פעמים. שבעל הלילה אין אוכלין חמץ ומצה ובלילה זהה כל מצה. שבעל הלילה אין אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומברש ובלילה זהה כל צלי. שבעל הלילה אין אוכלין שאר ורקوت ובלילה זהה מזרום. שבעל הלילה אין אוכלין בין ישובין בין מסכין ובלילה זהה כלנו מסכין:

One begins and recites the blessing "who creates the fruit of the ground," takes a vegetable, dips it in charoset and eats a kazayit - he and everyone reclining with him - each and every one should not eat less than a kazayit. Afterwards, we take away the table from in front of the reader of the Haggadah only. We [then] pour the second cup; and here the son asks. **And [then] the reader says**, "What differentiates this night from all [other] nights? On all other nights we don't dip even once; but tonight twice. On all other nights we eat chametz and matzah; but tonight it is all matzah. On all other nights we eat meat roasted, boiled, or cooked; but tonight it is all roasted. On all other nights we eat other vegetables; but tonight it is all bitter herbs. On all other nights we eat whether sitting or reclining; but tonight we are all reclining."

#### 5. GEVUROT HASHEM CHAPTER 2:2 AUTHOR: MAHARAL

*Composed in Prague (c.1562 - c.1582 CE). Gevurot Hashem is the Maharal of Prague's commentary on the Exodus from Egypt and the Passover Haggadah.*

הרי כי שאלת בנו יותר עדיף כי כל אשר בא סיפור יציאת מצרים לפרש נפלאות ונסים שעשה הקדוש ברוך הוא יותר עדיף, ולכך לבנו שאינו יודע המצוה לגמרי יותר מצוה שהוא פרטום אליו יותר לכך יש להודיע כל הדברים אשר שייכים ליציאה, אבל תלמידי חכמים שכבר יודעים ענין הפסח אין כל כך פרטום כיון שכבר ידעו כל ענין הפסח, ומכל מקום גם הם צריכים לספר ביציאת מצרים, כדי שאף על גב שידע המצוה לספר ולדבר מזה בפה שזה פרטום יותר לכך יש לו לשאול מה נשתנה הלילה וכו':

The reason that it is better for a child to ask questions is because the purpose of the telling is to publicize the wonders and miracles, which the Holy One performed at the time of the Exodus. It is better for the child to ask since this will allow for an even greater spreading of the Exodus story. One should relate all matters regarding the Exodus to him. Telling the story to a good student who already knows about the Exodus is not as effective as such a student already knows about it. Still, a *mitzvah* is still a *mitzvah*! One is obligated to study about the story of the Exodus since even though one already knows the story, by telling the story orally, one publicizes the Exodus more.

#### 6. LINGUISTIC THEORY OF QUESTION

Prof. Maria Polinsky - <http://serious-science.org/linguistic-theory-of-question-34>

There are essentially three types of questions that every language has: so-called polar questions, content questions and "what-the-hell" questions. So let's start with "what-the-hell" questions. In English these questions take their name from "What the hell are you doing?" or "Where on earth are you going?". And this is the sort of expressions which probably shouldn't be called questions, because when you say, "What the hell are you doing?" you're not asking for an answer, you're just expressing that you're unhappy. These questions are very varied, but again, every language has a way of expressing my unhappiness and sometimes it's in the form of questions.

7. A TYPOLOGY OF QUESTIONS IN NORTHEAST ASIA AND BEYOND: AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE  
by Andreas Hözl p. 5

While most scholars would probably agree that there may be fundamental differences among individual symbolic, natural, and sociocultural ecologies, there is often a tacit assumption of the uniformity of human cognition throughout the world. This is what Levinson (2102b: 397) has rightfully called “the original sin of the cognitive sciences – the denial of variation and diversity in human cognition.” In fact, Henrich et al. (2010: 61) have quite convincingly shown that many previous investigations in cognitive science or psychology were strongly biased due to problematic samples of participants that do not accurately represent human diversity. This presents us with a severe problem. For instance, questions, it might be argued, can be seen as a way to verbally resolve curiosity. Problematically, publications on curiosity such as Reio (2011: 453) usually share this tacit assumption of universality:

*Curiosity is the desire for new information and sensory experience that motivates exploratory behavior. External stimuli with novel, complex, uncertain, or conflicting properties (i.e. collective stimuli) create internal states of arousal that motivate exploratory behaviors to reduce the state of arousal.*

Curiously, there are surprisingly few scientific investigations of curiosity... But it should be borne in mind that there are personal differences of curiosity in both quantity and quality.

8. SOPHIE’S WORLD – JOSTEIN GAARDER

The most subversive people are those who ask questions. Giving answers is not nearly as threatening. Any one question can be more explosive than a thousand answers.

9. HALACHIC MAN – RABBI YOSEF DOV SOLOVEITCHIK, FROM FOOTNOTE 4

That religious consciousness in man’s experience which is most profound and most elevated, which penetrates to the very depths and ascends to the very heights, is not that simple and comfortable. **On the contrary, it is exceptionally complex, rigorous, and tortuous. Where you find its complexity, there you find its greatness.** The religious experience, from beginning to end, is antinomic and antithetic. The consciousness of homo religiosis flings bitter accusations against itself and immediately is filled with regret, judges its desires and yearnings with excessive severity, and at the same time steeps itself in them, casts derogatory aspersions on its own attributes, flails away at them, but also subjugates itself to them. It is in a condition of spiritual crisis, of psychic ascent and descent, of contradiction arising from affirmation and negation, self-abnegation and self-appreciation. The ideas of temporality and eternity, knowledge and choice (necessity and freedom), love and fear (the yearning for God and the flight from His glorious splendor), incredible, overbold daring, and an extreme sense of humility, transcendence and God’s closeness, the profane and the holy, etc., etc., **struggle within his religious consciousness**, wrestle and grapple with each other. This one ascends and this one descends, this falls and this rises.

Religion is not, at the outset, a refuge of grace and mercy for the despondent and desperate, an enchanted stream for crushed spirits, but a raging clamorous torrent of man’s consciousness with all its crises, pangs, and torments. Yes, it is true that during the third Sabbath meal at dusk, as the day of rest declines and man’s soul yearns for its Creator and is afraid to depart from that realm of holiness whose

name is Sabbath, into the dark and frightening, secular workaday week, we sing the psalm, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters” (Ps. 23), etc., etc., and we believe with our entire hearts in the ultimate destination of homo religiosis, not the path leading to that destination. For the path that eventually will lead to the “green pastures” and to the “still waters” is not the royal road, but a narrow, twisting footway that threads its course along the steep mountain slope, as the terrible abyss yawns at the traveler’s feet. Many see “the Lord passing by; and a great and strong wind rending mountains and shattering rocks . . . and after the wind an earthquake . . . and after the earthquake a fire” but only a few prove worthy of hearing “the still small voice” (1 Kings 19:11-12). **Out of the straits of inner oppositions and incongruities, spiritual doubts and uncertainties, out of the depths of a psyche rent with antinomies and contradictions, out of the bottomless pit of a soul that struggles with its own torments I have called, I have called unto Thee, O Lord.**

#### 10. THE JONATHAN SACKS HAGGADAH PP. 136-137

Religious faith has often been seen as naïve, blind, accepting. That is not the Jewish way. Judaism is not the suspension of critical intelligence. It contains no equivalent to the famous declaration of the Christian thinker Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est*, “I believe it because it is impossible.” **To the contrary: asking a question is itself a profound expression of faith in the intelligibility of the universe and the meaningfulness of human life.** To ask is to believe that somewhere there is an answer. The fact that throughout history people have devoted their lives to extending the frontiers of knowledge is a compelling testimony to the restlessness of the human spirit and its constant desire to go further, higher, deeper. Far from faith excluding questions, questions testify to faith – that history is not random, that the universe is not impervious to our understanding, that what happens to us is not blind chance. We ask not because we doubt, but because we believe.