

Dial a Rebbi & Dial a Morah

Questions & Answers for Pesach, Chol Hamoed, and Bein Hazmanim

All *halacha* questions are answered on an individualized basis. *Lehalacha lama'aseh*, one should consult their own Rov, or can speak to one of our Rabbonim on option 3.

Pesach

Question:

How many *mitzvos* do we fulfill on the night of the Seder?

Answer:

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein quotes a teaching from the Haggadah of Rabbi Chaim Zeitchik, who brings a mesorah from Rav Elchonon Wasserman, that the Gra stated that we fulfill **64 mitzvos** on the night of the Seder.

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein explores a possible *cheshbon* of what those 64 *mitzvos* are. Rabbi Shlomo Brevda zt"l also stated in the name of the Gra that we fulfill 64 *mitzvos* on the night of the Seder, adding that when the *talmidim* tried to calculate them, different *talmidim* arrived at different *cheshbonos*.

Question:

I remember learning that if you have a poor person at your meal you should not delay it. Is there a source for this? And if there is, how come we invite them at the beginning of the seder and then we make them wait all the way till Shulchan Orech?

Answer:

Great question. Yes there is a source. They say that the Chafetz Chaim would skip Shalom Aleichem so the poor guests wouldn't be too hungry. Nowadays most people are not that starving and one doesn't need to be concerned about making them wait a few more minutes to sing Shalom Aleichem. Additionally, if you invite someone to the seder they expect to do the seder properly. Which is so fundamental as our yesod of our emunah is based upon it. However you make a good point, that one should be careful not to keep children and guests starving. You necessarily need so many divrei Torah before the seuda. There are many great people who would save the divrei Torah till the seudah and put the emphasis on the basics of the seder and emunah

Question:

Chazal say that the buildings the Yidden built in Mitzrayim were made on land that wasn't able to hold up the buildings and they eventually sank. If so, why didn't the Yidden sink as well, while building them?

Answer:

It would seem that the buildings did not sink instantaneously. They would rather sink slowly over time—over several days or longer. Therefore, while the Yidden were building them, they did not experience any sinking. Additionally, a building is a lot heavier than a person.

Question:

If Paroh and the Mitzrim were destined to be punished in Gehinnom for their cruelty, why did Hashem also punish them in this world with the Ten Makos and *Krias Yam Suf*?

Answer:

Indeed, the main punishment of the Mitzrim was reserved for Gehinnom, which is far more severe. However, Hashem wanted to convey important messages through the *makos*—to Bnei Yisrael, to Mitzrayim, and to the entire world.

These messages included that Hashem is all-powerful, completely in control, and—perhaps most importantly—that He deeply loves and cares for the Jewish people. When someone harms us, Hashem takes it personally.

Additionally, the *makos* were intended to give Paroh an opportunity to do teshuvah. At least the initial *makos* served as a wake-up call.

Question:

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 67) says that water removes black magic. Why didn't Moshe and Aharon simply pour water on the snakes of Paroh's magicians?

Answer:

Excellent question. One answer is that the Gemara tells us that there's a type of magic called *ma'aseh shedim*, which is not nullified by water.

Another possible answer is that the magicians may have started with real snakes and turned them into staffs. If so, pouring water on them would not have helped, since they were originally snakes.

Chol Hamoed

Question:

May I cut my nails on Chol Hamoed?

Answer:

If you cut your nails **before Yom Tov**, it is permitted.

Question:

May one draw, paint, or fish for fun on Chol Hamoed?

Answer:

Children may color or paint on Chol Hamoed as long as it does not produce professional-quality results.

(Source: *Chol HaMoed Kehilchaso*, Perek 6, Se'if 84 — considered a □□□□□ □□□□)

Regarding fishing:

- If the fish will be eaten on Yom Tov, it is certainly permitted.
- Recreational or sport fishing is subject to a machlokes:
 - Some Poskim permit recreational fishing even if the fish will not be eaten.
 - Other Poskim forbid it, even if one plans to eat the fish.
- If fishing causes *tzaar baalei chayim* and the fish will not be eaten, it may be problematic based on the prohibition of causing pain to animals.

Bein Hazmanim

Question: What should I do? It's so hard to learn over *bein hazmanim*. And looking back over the past couple weeks, I barely learned. I feel terrible.

Answer: Remember, Hashem only expects us to do our best. It makes sense to learn less before Pesach, as everyone is busy preparing for it. Plus, taking time to relax over *bein hazmanim*, helps one rejuvenate and continue to learn with *hasmadah*, during the *Zman*.

On the other hand, even during *bein hazmanim* it's important to be *koveah itim* to learn every day even if it's only a half hour. It's helpful to make a set time for the next day or upcoming week that one will learn. Another *eitzah* is to have a *chavrusa*. During the *Zman* we have a built-in structure to learn so it's a lot easier. During *bein hazmanim* we need to create our own structure.

In summary, we need to find a balance over *Pesach Bein Hazmanim* to learn as much as we can, alongside our responsibilities to our family and *mitzvos hayom*, and need to refresh ourselves for the next *zman*. *You took a great first step by asking the question. Now the next step is to make a plan for the rest of bein hazmanim.*
Hatzlacha rabah!