



THE FOUR CHILDREN

Asking Questions in this Political Reality

ארבעת הילדים



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What do we lose and what do we gain when we use questions that are actually statements in disguise?
2. When have you had successful experiences of questions leading to discussions, even if they don't result in the parties agreeing?
3. What questions are you carrying?

By Natalie Blitt

Questions are one of the most central elements of the Passover seder. Everyone is encouraged to participate, to ask about parts of the seder that feel strange or hard to understand. Whether the youngest person at the seder is a toddler or an adult, the call and response of the four questions is a memorable element of the seder.

However, the freedom to ask questions is tempered by the story of the four children. Here, there are consequences to the way the questions are phrased and the perceived intention of the questioner.

This is not so different today. The past 18 months have seen communities, families, and friends divided by the questions and responses being volleyed back and forth. We have used questions as accusations and sometimes do not even listen to the responses, so convinced that we know what the other will say.

While the Haggadah offers us thoughtful explorations when questions come up at the seder, in our lives, there are many questions for which there are no answers. And there are many responses that are dependent on who is being asked and their unique life experience.

This year, let us resolve to ask questions with more humility. Let us endeavor to remember that there are many answers to most questions. None of us has the necessary expertise to speak in absolutes. Let us ensure that the questions being asked lead to discussions instead of closing down the possibility for conversations. Let us commit to weaving back together the divisions and splits within our communities, friends, and families.