



BO

TOMORROW'S QUESTIONS, TODAY'S ANSWERS

Passing the torch of faith to the next generation

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Bo

The last three of the Ten Plagues are visited on Egypt: a swarm of locusts devours all the crops and greenery; a thick, palpable darkness envelops the land; and all the firstborn of Egypt are killed at the stroke of midnight of the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan.

G-d commands the first *mitzvah* to be given to the people of Israel: to establish a calendar based on the monthly rebirth of the moon. The Israelites are also instructed to bring a “Passover offering” to G-d: A lamb or kid is to be slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of every Israelite home so

that G-d should pass over these homes when He comes to kill the Egyptian firstborn. The roasted meat of the offering is to be eaten that night together with matzah (unleavened bread) and bitter herbs.

The death of the firstborn finally breaks Pharaoh’s resistance, and he literally drives the Children of Israel from his land. So hastily do they depart that there is no time for their dough to rise, and the only provisions they take along are unleavened. Before they go, they ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold, silver, and garments—fulfilling the promise made to Abraham that his

descendants would leave Egypt with great wealth.

The Children of Israel are commanded to consecrate all firstborn and to observe the anniversary of the Exodus each year by removing all leaven from their possession for seven days, eating matzah, and telling the story of their redemption to their children. They are also commanded to wear *tefilin* on the arm and head as a reminder of the Exodus and their resultant commitment to G-d.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

How do you reach across and connect with someone whose values are so drastically different that you feel they don't even speak your language?

Under such circumstances, are true empathy and friendship even possible?



RASHI RULES

1. There are no superfluous words in Rashi's commentary. If something seems superfluous, we misunderstood Rashi's intent.
2. When necessary, Rashi quotes other biblical passages to support his contentions; however, he rarely provides commentary or context for those passages. When he offers such commentary, it fills a gap that might otherwise not be filled.
3. When Rashi cites a biblical passage, he prefers to use the nearest one to the passage under discussion.



When the simple son asks, “What is this?” the Torah instructs us to respond by telling him the story of the Exodus.

RASHI'S QUESTION

Why does the Torah include the word
“tomorrow” if the passage reads well without it?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION

The Torah is talking about a distant future,
not the day after the Exodus.

QUESTIONS ON RASHI

1. Why does Rashi mention that some tomorrows are immediate if his point is that this passage discusses a distant tomorrow?
2. Why does Rashi provide an additional example of a tomorrow that refers to the distant future?
3. If Rashi must bring proof, why does he cite a passage from the Book of Joshua when there is a perfectly good example in the Book of Deuteronomy?
4. Why does Rashi add that the passage he cited was written about the tribes of Gad and Reuben?

מחר

Machar

Tomorrow

←---

מאחר

May-achar

From After

←---

אחר

Achar

After

Anything after the present is
machar—"tomorrow."

"Machar" refers not to the day after today but to a moment after this one.





Years after the Exodus, a child who has never heard of it might ask what the holiday is all about.

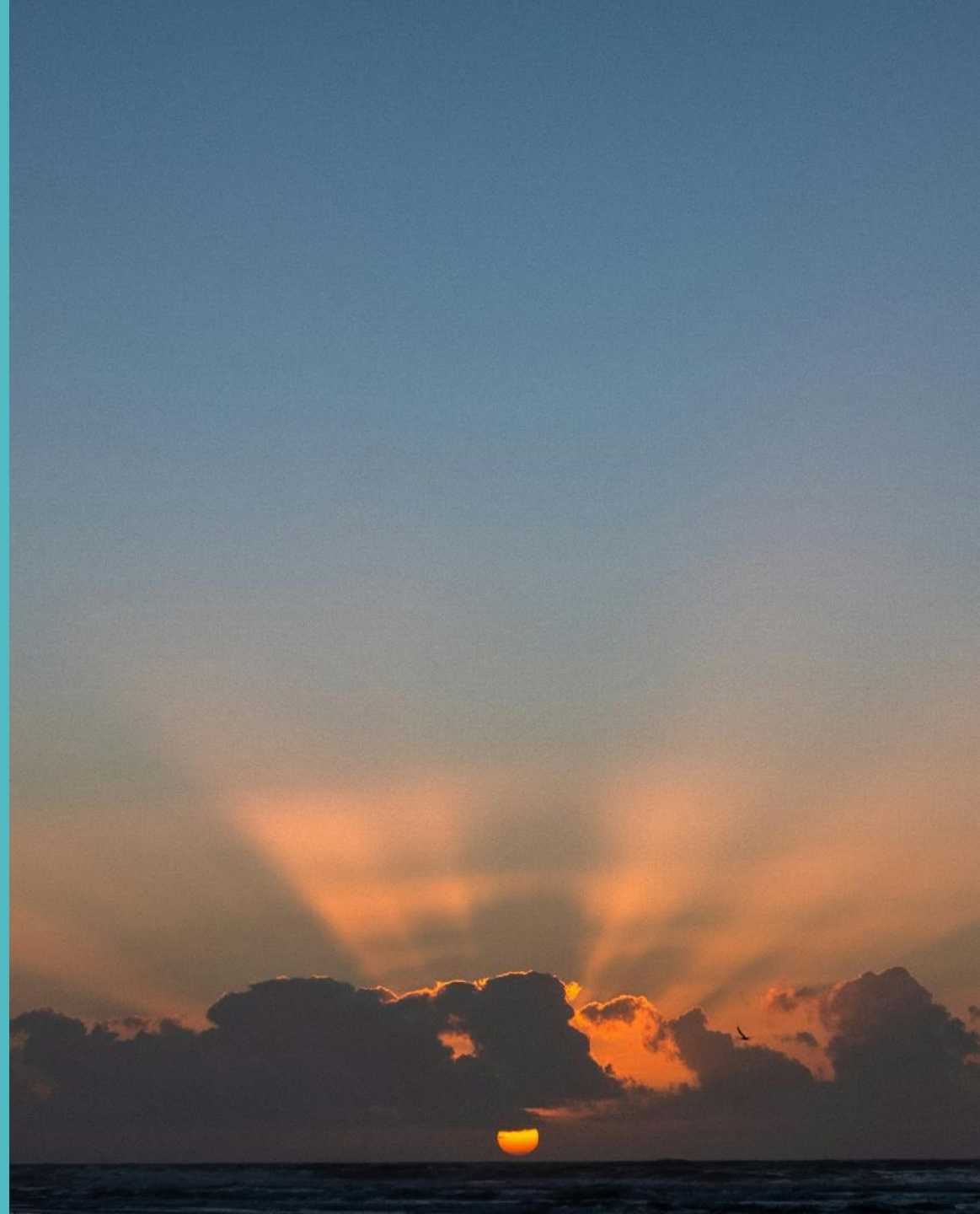
When they ask, share the story, history, tradition, and rituals with them.

“DISTANT TOMORROW”

occurs because time
has passed.

“IMMEDIATE TOMORROW”

arises because we are
indifferent to the present.



QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

What happened on
March 15, 44 BCE?

Julius Caesar was
assassinated on the steps
of the Roman senate.



IMMEDIATE TOMORROW



Rashi begins with mentioning the immediate tomorrow to demonstrate that in this case, the distant tomorrow will be like an immediate tomorrow.

This child's question
will be a product of
complete indifference.





The story about the descendants of Gad and Reuben is the only other text in the Torah where *machar* is used in a context that includes both elements: a distant future, completely cut off from the present.

ANSWERS

1. Rashi begins with the immediate tomorrow to demonstrate that in this case, the distant tomorrow is wholly disconnected from the present.
2. Rashi must cite proof for this translation because it is a radically different interpretation of tomorrow than conventionally offered.
3. Rashi can't use other passages that employ the word *machar* because they don't use *machar* in this unique context.
4. Rashi must provide context for the verse he cites because otherwise, the student would not know why Rashi insists that *machar* in this passage refers to this unique type of "tomorrow."

The *seder* table includes everyone regardless of their differences.

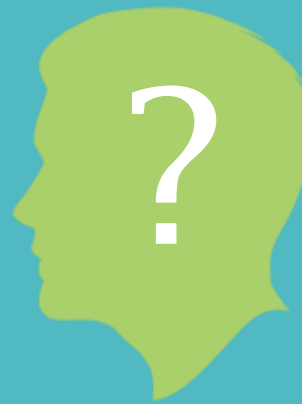
THE FOUR SONS



Wise



Wayward



Simple



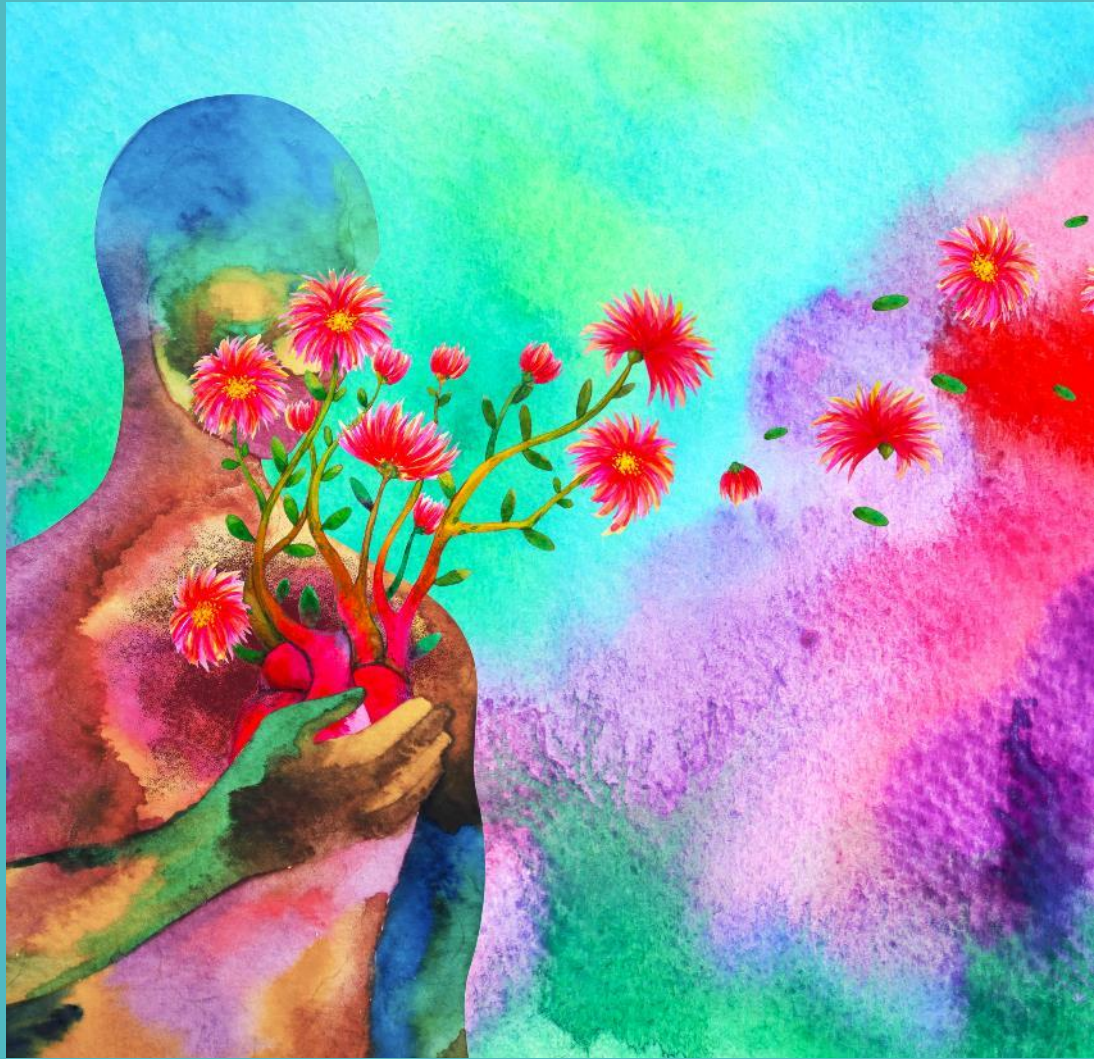
Doesn't Ask



Every Jew has the same soul deep inside even if their outer layers seem drastically different.

Those who are distant from Torah are **our children**. Its our responsibility to draw them close to G-d.





Address those who seem
disconnected **on the level
of the heart.**

The key to connecting to those who seem different than you is to **view them on a soul level.** They are our family regardless of what they believe. That connection is unbreakable.



KEY POINTS

1. Shortly after the Exodus from Egypt, the Torah informed us that there would come a time when our children might be cut off from our tradition and value system and forget all about the Exodus.
2. When this occurs, the Torah tells us not to dismiss them but to gather them in. Invite them to the Passover *seder* and tell them all about our history. Help them embrace the rituals that keep our memories and values alive.
3. Sometimes, we feel alienated by people whose opinions are so radically different from ours that we can't understand them, let alone relate to them.
4. The Torah tells us to look past their outer surface, and even their opinions, and look to their souls. Deep down, they have a spark of G-d and want the same things we want, perhaps even more intensely than we do.
5. When we view them as siblings, and in some ways, even children, we will embrace them with love despite the disagreements. This love is the link that bridges the gap.

