

Reading for Questions

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

We go to the internet for information. The range of reference at our fingertips is astonishing. We have too many places to get answers. But one reads, wrote Franz Kafka, to ask questions.

Where can a reader go for good questions? One place is the prayerbook. Early in the morning service is a series of powerful questions: "What are we? What is our life? What is our righteousness?" At the outset of the service each morning we are invited to question the very fundamentals of our lives.

Or you might read the Passover *Haggadah*; it too is built around questions. And they are designed to be recited by the youngest child so we will socialize our children to ask.

Answers do not drive us deeper; questions do. If you wish to read for questions, as Kafka advises, there is no better place than the Talmud. In traditional Jewish learning, a *kashya*, a difficulty, a question, is something to be prized. A better, deeper question betokens a more gifted and industrious student. The *mishnah* begins with a question. The Rabbis tell us we all end with questions — in the afterlife we will be judged by having questions asked of our lives. So read for entertainment, enlightenment, diversion, delight — but also for the questions, okay?