

SUCH A BIG EGO: PRIDE AND HUMILITY

HOST INSTRUCTIONS:

- This guide is intended to be served on Shabbat.
- The language used for participants is guests. This is intentional. The deep questions asked assumes that the host is a friend and that the participants trust the Host and are treated as guests in their home.
- Likewise, the language used for the person leading the Shabbat is host rather than facilitator or leader. Yes, you are to guide the conversation but you should be as much a part of the conversation as you are guiding it.
- The conversations intended are intense and deep. It is up to the host to ensure that the atmosphere is casual but safe and encouraging towards participation.
- Questions posed are a suggestion. Not all questions need to be asked, nor do each set of questions need to be asked. However, the questions set with the main are connected to the theme.
- The host should encourage guests to open up facilitation and ask questions to the group as well.
- There are no time limits for conversation once the Shabbat dinner begins. Conversation should flow freely and not be impeded by time limits. Likewise, If there is silence after a question, that is okay. Some of these texts and questions may take time to process and it's okay to embrace this silence.
- Not all conversation should be centered on the guide. It is ok to veer off-topic. This dinner should be as social as it is educational and introspective.

Serves 5 - 10 guests

Conversation 1 – To be served with the pre-dinner schmooze

Start question once two guests have arrived. Continue asking the question to new guests/ inviting new guests into the conversation. Allow talking about the question to continue until max 10 minutes after the final guest arrives.

- **How do you feel when someone gives you a compliment? Are you good at accepting compliments, or do you struggle?**

Setting the atmosphere – to be served with the pre-dinner rituals (Candle-lighting; Shalom Aleichem; Kiddush; Washing; Hamoitzzi etc. as per your custom)

Inform/ remind guests that this dinner is not a normal Shabbat dinner - that it is meant to inform deep conversation about beliefs that many hold personal and can only be successful if people both share what is personal, and respect the personal that is shared. Further, that conversation is to be free-flowing and that questions are only a guide – guests are encouraged to ask their own questions based off of rituals, question stimuli, and the answers of others so long as it is a question for the whole table and not just individuals. Additionally, guests should also be encouraged to empower and make space for softer and more introverted voices without singling anyone out.

Conversation 2 – To be served with Challah and Appetizers

Instructions: Allow a different person to read each text first then follow with the questions. Allow conversation to continue until the vibe peaks.

Stimulus 1 – *More than the Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews.* – Quote by Secular Jewish thinker and cultural Zionist Ahad Ha'am

Stimulus 2 – Edgar Bronfman – Secular Jewish Philanthropist

'Shabbat, above all, underscores the idea that 'being' is as important as 'doing'.

Stimulus 3 – *'The Sabbath Lie'* by Yahuda Amichai - Secular Jewish Writer

On Friday, at twilight of a summer day

While the smells of food and prayer rose from every house

And the sound of the Sabbath angels' wings was in the air,

While still a child I started to lie to my father:

"I went to another synagogue."

I don't know if he believed me or not

But the taste of the lie was good and sweet on my tongue

And in all the houses that night

Hymns rose up along with lies

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*To celebrate the Sabbath.
And in all the houses that night
Sabbath angels died like flies in a lamp,
And lovers put mouth to mouth,
Blew each other up until they floated upward,
Or burst.*

*And since then the lie has been good and sweet on my tongue
And since then I always go to another synagogue.
And my father returned the lie when he died:
“I’ve gone to another life.”*

Suggested Questions

- What did you connect to in these texts?
- What did you find troubling?
- These three writers were secular Jews, meaning they didn’t necessarily believe in the G-d described in the Torah. Can you really appreciate Shabbat without believing in G-d or the story of creation?
- What do you appreciate about Shabbat?

Conversation 3 – To be served with the Main

Stimulus 1 – Torah, Numbers 12:3

Now Moses was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth.

Stimulus 2 – Rabbi Yochanan, Babylonian Talmud, [Megillah 31a](#)

Wherever you find the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, there you find His humility. This is written in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the Writings. It is written in the Torah: “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awe-inspiring God, who shows no favoritism and accepts no bribe.” Immediately afterwards it is written, “He upholds the cause of the orphan and widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.”

Stimulus 3 – Moves Like Jagger by Maroon 5 and Adam Levine—Secular Jewish popstar

*Just shoot for the stars
If it feels right
And aim for my heart
If you feel like*

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*And take me away and make it OK
I swear I'll behave
You wanted control
So we waited
I put on a show
Now I make it
You say I'm a kid
My ego is big
I don't give a shit*

And it goes like this (Uh)

*Take me by the tongue
And I'll know you
Kiss me 'til you're drunk
And I'll show you*

*All the moves like Jagger
I've got the moves like Jagger
I've got the moves like Jagger*

Stimulus 4 – Beatie Deutsch- Ultra-Orthodox Marathon Runner and Israeli Olympic-Hopeful

I let go of the fear, I shook off the self-doubt and I charged forward, believing that with Hashem's help, I could make it. I think that if you look at people who have achieved success in life, you'll see this common thread in their stories -- they weren't afraid to take risks, they jumped into something even if the water was above their head... they believed in their dream and vision and ran with it. I'm glad I rose above my fear, conquered the voices in my head, and chose to take that leap.

Also personal disclaimer -- life is so so much more than winning races, or becoming 'famous' Your self-worth will never be defined by how fast you run, how many followers you have, or how many medals you've won. The only thing that truly defines us is the choices we make to expand our self. At the end of my life, that's the only thing I am going to take with me and I'm here to develop my soul to it's fullest.

Suggested Questions

- The Torah calls Moses the most humble man. What do you make of this oxymoron?
- How do you strike a balance between pride and humility? What happens if you are too prideful? What happens if you are too humble?

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- What do we learn from Rabbi Yochanan about G-d's character? In talking about G-d's own greatness, does G-d come across as prideful or humble?
- Is it okay to accept praise for and be proud of your accomplishments? What if you believe that all talents are G-d-given, does that change anything?
- Is humility a trait you value in your friends? Why or why not?

Conversation 4 – To be served with Dessert

Stimulus 1 – Edgar Bronfman

'Questioning, arguing, and even outright rebellion is integral to Judaism...Even when the perpetrator is G-d himself, we are invited to stand up, to challenge, to question and even chastise'

Stimulus 2 – Stephen Jay Gould- Secular Jewish Scientist

"Nothing is more dangerous than a dogmatic worldview - nothing more constraining, more blinding to innovation, more destructive of openness to novelty."

Suggested questions:

- What are these quotes trying to say?
- Do you agree with Bronfman – Does Judaism allow G-d to be questioned, challenged and even chastised?
- What troubles you about Judaism and why?
- In what ways do you wrestle with your Jewish identity?
- What does it mean to you to be Jewish?

Compulsory question – Did you find this Shabbat dinner helpful in articulating your Jewish connectivity?