



Malaria kills. Send a net. Save a life.

Discussion Questions for the *Nothing But Nets* “Modern Talmud” Page

The discussion questions can also be used either by the small groups for further discussion, or by a group leader/facilitator for a full group discussion together, to relate the texts to *Nothing But Nets*.

You can use our brochures and informational material at www.rac.org/nets to learn more about the disease, send a letter to your Member of Congress or donate a net to a family in Africa. With this crucial life-saving program, we can both *na’aseh v’nishma*—do and understand the covenant mitzvot of Torah.

A traditional Talmud page contains the Sages’ discussions of the Mishna text surrounded by later commentaries. The accompanying Modern Talmud page is a similar collection of related quotes around a central Mishna text that can be used as a tool to elicit discussion. Use the following questions with that Modern Talmud page to help guide the discussion toward the relationship of these Jewish texts to Nothing But Nets.

1. What does the central text from Mishna Sanhedrin mean to you? How do the other quotes relate to, or expand upon, this central text? How does this central Mishna text relate to the concept of *Nothing but Nets*?
2. In what ways does Maimonides’ theory of *tzedakah* pertain to the *Nothing but Nets* campaign? Where do you think *Nothing But Nets* would fit in his theory?
3. What do you think Rabbi Tarfon’s quote means? How does it apply to *Nothing but Nets*?
4. What does the Talmud conversation between Rabbi Joshua and Elijah teach us about the nature of *tzedakah* and helping others?
5. How are African refugees like the captives mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch*?
6. Do you agree with Rabbi Heschel’s quote? Are we responsible for the poor, sick and others those less fortunate?
7. If we are responsible, is it a moral responsibility as suggested by Rabbi Hillel, or is it a historical responsibility as suggested by Elie Wiesel?
8. Does donating mosquito nets fall into the highest level of *tzedakah* according to Maimonides? What about advocacy?
9. After reading the “Modern Talmud” page, why do you think the Reform Movement is involved in the *Nothing But Nets* campaign?
10. After reading the “Modern Talmud” page, do you think that the work of *Nothing But Nets* to prevent malaria in Africa is a way to live Torah? Is it a Jewish issue? Why/why not?



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A Nothing But Nets Modern Talmud Page

Rabbi Hillel said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? And if not now, when?" -*Pirkei Avot* 1:14

"You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor." - *Leviticus* 19:16

Rabbi Joshua asked, "Where shall I find the Messiah?" "At the gate of the city," Elijah replied. "How shall I recognize him?" "He sits among the lepers." "Among the lepers?!" cried Rabbi Joshua, "what is he doing there?" "He changes their bandages," Elijah answered; "He changes them one by one. That may not seem like much for a Messiah to be doing. But apparently, in the eyes of God, it is a mighty thing indeed." - *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 98a

Rabbi Akiva would say, 'Human beings are beloved because they were created in the image of God. It is an even greater love that this was made known to humanity, as it says, "and in the image of God were people created.'" - *Pirkei Avot* 1:18

Rabbi Tarfon said, "It is not up to you to finish the work, yet you are not free to abstain from it." - *Pirkei Avot* 2:21

"What is might? When you see people about to fail and you rescue them." - *Midrash Tehillim* 52:24

וְכֹל הַמְּקַיֵּם נְפֹשׁ אַחַת . . .
כְּאִלּוּ קִיַּם עוֹלָם מְלֵא.
One who saves a life...
It's as if one saves an entire world.
- *Mishna Sanhedrin* 4:5

"Every minute that one delays to redeem the captives when it is possible to move forward, it is as if one spilled blood." - *Shulchan Aruch, Yorah Deah* 252:3

"If we Jews remain indifferent to the plight of the oppressed, what right do we have to criticize the leaders of the free world for having abandoned us during the Holocaust?" – Elie Wiesel

"Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." – *Amos* 5:24

"Above all, the prophets reminded us of the moral state of a people: Few are guilty, but all are responsible." – Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Maimonides taught that there are eight levels of *tzedakah*, each greater than the next, and the greatest level is to empower others through gifts, loans or partnerships in such a way that they are able to become independent and able to sustain themselves.
-URJ Resolution to End Global Poverty