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THE FOUR SONS

Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb

The Torah refers to four sons: One wise, one wicked, one simple and one who does not know how to ask a question. What does the wise son say? "What are the testimonials, statutes and laws Hashem our G-d commanded you?" You should tell him about the laws of Pesach, that one may eat no dessert after eating the Pesach offering.

What does the wicked son

say? "What does this drudgery mean to you?" To you and not to him. Since he excludes himself from the community, he has denied a basic principle of Judaism. You should blunt his teeth by saying to him: "It is for the sake of this that Hashem did for me when I left Egypt. For me and not for him. If he was there he would not have been redeemed."

What does the simple son say? "What's this?" You should say to him "With a strong hand Hashem took me out of Egypt, from the house of servitude."

And the one who does not know how to ask, you start for him, as the Torah says: "And you should tell your son on that day, saying 'It is for the sake of this that Hashem did for me when I left Egypt.'"

The passage of the four sons raises many questions:

The wise and wicked sons seem to be opposites, but then why isn't the wise son called 'the good son?'

Is the simple son the opposite of the one who does not know how to ask? If so, how are they opposites?

The simple son's question — "What's this?" — is as simple as can be. Who,

then, is the son who does not even know how to ask? A little baby?

The wicked son is told: "It is because of this that

ASK the RABBI

Pass Over the Peanut Oil

Carol & Barry Stein <steinb@libertynet.org> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Why, in the United States, at Pesach, is it OK to cook with peanut oil, but not to eat peanuts? We've tried unsuccessfully to get an answer to this question for at least 25 years. Now, having harnessed the power of the Internet, we eagerly await your response.

David Kaplan <davos@interlog.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Shalom, I have a question which as you can see concerns the 'laws' and traditions governing what one may eat during Passover. I cannot understand why Sephardic Jews are allowed to eat beans, legumes and rice on Passover and Ashkenazic Jews are not. This is not the same as eating pork or milk and meat obviously. I really find this a difficult issue to come to terms with. Please help. Thanking you in anticipation.

Dear Carol and Barry Stein & David Kaplan,

Kitniot is the Hebrew word for all types of legumes, such as peanuts, peas and beans, and cereal grasses such as rice and corn.



© 1997 OHR SOMAYACH INSTITUTIONS - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED PRINTED IN ISRAEL AT OLD CITY PRESS 02-651-1529 According to the Torah, *kitniot* are permitted on Passover because *kitniot* are not considered *chametz* (leaven).

But *kitniot* are similar to *chametz* in that they swell when water is added, and people often use them as a flour substitute. Furthermore, *kitniot* are often stored together with grain, and sometimes a bit of grain gets mixed into the *kitniot*. For these reasons, Ashkenazic Jews throughout the centuries have adopted the practice to refrain from *kitniot* during Passover.

Sephardic Jews, however, never adopted this practice. Therefore, they are allowed to eat *kitniot*, provided they check it to make sure there's no wheat mixed in. (For this reason, some Sephardic Jews also have the custom to refrain from rice, although they eat other types of *kitniot*.)

Now about peanut oil. Oil derived from *kitniot* no longer resembles *chametz* because it no longer swells when you add water. Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank, *zatzal*, a former Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, cites an opinion that *kitniot* derivatives are therefore permitted. Many people in the United States follow this ruling and use *kitniot*-based oil on Passover. Many are strict, however, and use olive or walnut oil.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 453:1
- Ibid. Mishnah Berurah 6
- Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Yabia Omer 5:37:5

What Isn't In a Name?

Marsha from NYC asked:

Dear Rabbi,

Why is Moses' name not mentioned in the Haggadah?

Dear Marsha,

To answer this question, let's look at the very first Pesach Seder in history.

After a full year in the desert, the Jewish People celebrated the Pesach festival. They offered the Paschal lamb and ate *matzah* and *maror*. But when it came time to tell the Pesach story, who did they tell it to? To whom did they relate the plagues and miracles, the Strong Hand and Outstretched Arm? Everybody was there! Everyone saw it with their own eyes!

Only one person had children who did not personally experience the going out of Egypt — Moses! Moses' two sons were in Midian during the Exodus. Moses, therefore, was the first person in history to relate the Pesach story to children who didn't know it first-hand.

As we know, "Moses was the most humble person on the face of the earth." Would you be surprised, then, if the world's humblest person omitted his name from the story, and instead he attributed all the credit to Hashem? This would then become a precedent for future generations.

THE HAGGADAH Q.

and more...

- I. What does Haggadah mean?
- 2. Name all the items on the Seder-plate.
- 3. Why do we wash our hands before eating the karpas?
- 4. What is the answer to the "four questions?"
- 5. Name the Sages in the Haggadah who held a seder in B'nei Berak.
- 6. Why did Elazar ben Azarya say he was '**like**' seventy years old?
- 7. What does afikomen mean literally?
- 8. Which two of the 'four sons' receive the same response?
- 9. What did Esav inherit?
- 10. What does "Arami oved avi" mean?
- II. What do the nations try to do to the Jewish People in every generation?

- 12. What is derived from the verse "they were a nation there (vayehi sham l'goi)?"
- 13. Name the ten plagues in order.
- 14. What is the acronym for the ten plagues?
- 15. In the 'dayenu' section of the Haggadah, what is the last item mentioned in the list of things Hashem did for us?
- 16. Rabban Gamliel said: "Whoever doesn't explain the following three things hasn't fulfilled his obligation." What obligation is he referring to?
- 17. What are the three things? (see question 16)
- 18. At which point in the seder do we say hallel?
- 19. What does tzafun mean?
- 20. Why does the Seder end with the phrase "Next year in Jerusalem?"

- I. Telling.
- Beitzah (egg), zeroah (bone), charoses (fruit, nut and wine mixture), chazeres (Romaine lettuce), karpas (vegetable) & maror (bitter herb).
- 3. It's a reminder of Temple times, when the laws of ritual purity required one to wash one's hands before eating food dipped in liquid. It also arouses the children to ask questions. (In fact, this washing before eating certain wet foods is required all year long.)
- We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem, our G-d, took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.
- 5. Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon.
- 6. He was much younger, but his hair miraculously turned white when he was appointed as the head Sage.
- 7. Dessert.
- The wicked son and the one who doesn't know how to ask.

BONUS O

Q

"This is the bread of affliction our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt." Matzah symbolizes the haste of the redemption. Why, then is matzah called "bread of affliction?"

A

The Egyptians gave their slaves matzah, because it is inex-

9. Mount Seir.

0

- 10. Lavan the Arami tried to destroy my father, Yaakov.
- II. Annihilate them.
- 12. The Jews were different from the Egyptians (in their language, dress and moral conduct).
- 13. Dam (blood), tzefardeah (frogs), kinim (lice), arov (wild beasts), dever (cattle disease), shechin (boils), barad (hail), arbeh (locusts), choshech (darkness), makas bechoros (death of the firstborn).
- 14. Datzach, Adash, B'achav.
- 15. Built the Temple for us .
- 16. The obligation to tell about the going out of Egypt.
- 17. The Pesach offering, matzah and maror.
- 18. We say part of *hallel* before the second cup of wine, and the rest of *hallel* we say before the fourth cup.
- 19. Hidden, referring to the hidden matzah.
- 20. This year, our Seder was missing the Pesach offering. We pray that next year the Temple will be rebuilt and then our Seder will include the Pesach offering. Next Year In Jerusalem!

pensive and very filling. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra was once taken captive, and his captors fed him matzah for this reason.

"...In order that you remember the day you left Egypt, all the days of your life." In fulfillment of the above verse, we mention the Exodus every day and night in our daily prayers. What's different about the obligation to relate the Exodus on the first night of Pesach?

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THE

SEDER IN THE WORLD

You gather round the table and begin the seder. Jews have done this for more than 3,000 years.

You remember your *bubbe* and *zeide*. They no doubt remembered their *bubbe* and *zeide*. And your children, shining in their Yom Tov best, gaze up at your parents. Memories being made. Chains of love stretching across millennia.

Here it is, the moment we've all waited for... And yet...

What is it? Something's lacking. The children don't want to listen to the Haggadah. They want to eat the matzah now! They have absolutely no interest in why Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said he was like a man of 70 years. You would love to listen to your husband's *drasha* about the *korban Pesach* — the one he's been working on for as long as you've been planning the menu — but at the crucial moment the light has gone out under the chicken soup, (yes, you decided to have both chicken soup *and* egg and onion) and panic stations

have been declared!

Why is it that every Pesach seems somehow... I don't know... You start such high hopes...

off with such high hopes... This year it's going to be dif-

ferent... This year you're really going to experience what coming out of Egypt means. This year...

You remember the story of the Chassidim of the *Kotzke Rebbe* who had a vision of gravy from the *korban Pesach* trickling down the *Kotzke's* beard when he ate the *afikomen*. Ahh! If it can't be 'This year in Jerusalem,' at least it could be this year with a real Pesach feeling...

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

ou've just finished putting the last touches to the Seder table. The house has been scrubbed from top to toe. No mercy has been shown to the smallest piece of chametz. In this 'war' there are no prisoners.

Your husband has spent the last month reviewing the laws of Pesach. He's bought one of the new crop

of *Haggados* that always appear at this time of year, looking for inspiring words of Torah to be devoured along with the matzah on Seder night.

The annual argument over the recipe for the *charoses* has again been fought and a compromise has been reached through arbitration: One cup of wine and no walnuts.

Will we have egg and onion *and* chicken soup, or will it be too much?

"Reb Shmuel sat down and conducted his Seder with a joy and a feeling of *Yetzias Mitzraim*...which was unparalleled in all his holy life."

Pesach with a broken-heart

he great *tzaddik*, Rabbi Shmuel Koriver, a student of the Seer of Lublin, was a poor man. He constantly lived on the poverty-line and was always in need of help.

Once, he decided that he wasn't going to ask anyone for help anymore. If help came his way he would accept it; he would not seek it out.

Pesach was rapidly approaching, and in Reb Shmuel's house there was nothing. No matzah, no wine for the four cups, no *charos*- es, no food, no money, nothing.

In spite of these dire circumstances, Reb Shmuel refused to budge from his decision. He was convinced that Hashem wouldn't desert him. Everything would be fine.

The Seer of Lublin heard of Reb Shmuel's plight and

... your children,

shining in their Yom

Tov best, gaze up at

your parents.

Memories being

made. Chains of

across millennia."

love stretching

was worried about him. He dispatched one of his wealthy Chassidim, Reb Shlomo Mikunskwalya to quietly provide Reb Shmuel with his needs.

On *Erev Pesach*, a wagon laden with food and crockery, wine and matzahs arrived at Reb Shmuel's door. He was overjoyed. Here in the twinkling of an eye was Hashem's deliverance!

That night, Reb Shmuel sat down and conducted his Seder with a joy and a feeling of Yetzias Mitzraim (coming-out-of-Egypt) which was unparalleled in all his holy life.

He imagined himself ascending to the upper worlds, born on a

tremendous joy that Hashem had provided for him without having to ask for charity. His unbridled happiness made him feel that no one had ever experienced such a Seder as his that night. This was it! You couldn't go any higher!

On the second night of the Seder, Reb Shmuel was tired from all the elation of the previous night and decided to rest a little before beginning the second Seder. He lay down on his bed for just a couple of minutes. He was thinking that he really ought to get up, when he drifted off to sleep.

Several hours later, he awoke with a start. 'What's the time!' He glanced at the clock and was horrified to see that it was nearly midnight! In just a short while the last time to eat the *afikomen* would pass!

Reb Shmuel was broken. In tears, he rushed to fulfill the *mitzvos* of the Seder: *Kiddush*, reciting the *Haggadah*, the four cups, *hallel*, eating the matzah, the bitter herbs, the *charoses*, the festive meal and — seconds before midnight — eating the *afikomen*.

Reb Shmuel fell into a deep depression. It seemed to him that never in the entire history of the Jewish People had there been such a miserable Seder. It had been a shambles.

After Pesach, Reb Shmuel traveled to visit his teacher, the Seer of Lublin. Immediately after he had greeted him, the Seer said to Reb Shmuel "Come, let us examine the two Sedarim of Reb Shmuel.

"The first night was below par considering who he is. (The Seer honored Reb Shmuel by referring to him in the third person.) He imagined himself hovering in the upper worlds, no doubt intoxicated by the thin air at these rarefied altitudes. He thought that there had never been a Seder like this before.

"No, this was not a great Seder. But the **second** Seder now there was a Seder!

> "Few have flown to the heights that Reb Shmuel reached at his second Seder — broken spirited and humble, wanting no more than to fulfill the Will of the Master of the World.

As it says "The sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit."

When you're sitting at your Seder table, and the kids are screaming, when you have to get up from the table for the 28th when time. you just manage to finish the last of the matzah iust before the boils soup over, and you start to feel frus-

trated and saddened and a long way from Pesach - remember Reb Shmuel...

Sources: The Pardes Haggadah ; Rabbi Yaakov Lubow

Continued from page one

Hashem did 'for me' when I went out of Egypt — for me and **not** for him — had he been there he would not have been redeemed." Why is the wicked son answered in third person?

The verse used to answer the wicked son is the same verse used to answer the one who does not know how to ask. Why?

The sons divide into two pairs — the wise and the simple on one side, and the wicked and the one who does not know how to ask on the other.

The simple son wants to learn. He looks up to the wise son and emulates him. When he hears the wise son asking questions, he also wants to ask. His question 'What's this?' lacks the sophistication of the wise son's question, but it reflects the same sincere desire to learn and understand.

The one who does not know how to ask admires the wicked son. He desires to show the same ironic contempt for the Torah, but unlike the wicked son he lacks the requisite cleverness. Not trusting himself to

attack as effectively as his mentor, he remains silent.

The wicked son's 'question' is merely rhetorical — it deserves no response at all. Yet, the one who does not know how to ask is sitting at the table listening to the wicked son's remarks. He's in danger of being influenced. Therefore, our response to the wicked son is to say to the one who doesn't even know how to ask: "Don't be influenced by his smug cynicism. Had he been in Egypt, he would not have been redeemed. He is cutting himself off from the eternity of the Jewish people."

This difference in

approach is described in the book of Proverbs (26:4,5): "Do not answer the fool according to his foolishness, lest you become equal to him. Answer the fool according to his foolishness, lest he be wise in his own eyes." This seems like a contradiction: Should we answer the fool or not?

The answer is that there are two types of fools. One type of fool already 'knows' everything. For him, discussion is merely an opportunity to show off his 'superior' knowledge. There is no point in answering him, because he will never admit a fault. On the contrary, our attempts to educate him will meet with ridicule. As he rejects our insights one after another, the fruitlessness of our efforts makes *us* appear foolish.

But there is another type of fool: One aware of his limitations. His views are wrong and foolish, but he's not completely closed to instruction. If we open the lines of communication we can have an impact on him. If we don't reach out to him, he'll eventually start to think: "I've held these views for so long, and no one has ever contradicted me — so, I must be right!"

There is a profound message here for our times. We are all confronted with people who scoff at the Torah. We often have to decide if and how to respond. The book of Proverbs teaches us that our primary responsibility is to improve the critic by our response. If that is impossible, then responding is a waste of time. But if it is possible, then we must not wait for his initiation. We must reach out to him and start the dialogue.

If we don't reach out to him, he'll eventually start to think: "I've held these views for so long, and no one has ever contradicted me so, I must be right!" Notice, however, that the wicked son is at the Seder! We do not exclude him or reject him personally. Only discussion is avoided, since discussion has no point. The inclusion of the wicked son at the Seder expresses our conviction that no Jew is ever irretrievably lost. We hope our stern response will shake his proud self-confidence to the point where real discussion becomes possible.

"Who is wise? He who learns from every person (*Pirkei Avos* 4:1)." Indeed, the classical title for a Torah scholar is '*Talmid Chacham*' a wise student.

What is the idea behind this

definition? In order to learn from others, one needs two crucial insights. First, "I am lacking. There is much that I do not know." And second, "Others possess the knowledge which I need."

Now we can appreciate why the Haggadah juxtaposes the wise and the wicked sons. The central failure in the wicked son is his close-mindedness. The heart of his evil is the supreme foolishness to think that his understanding is perfect. Thus he is the diametrical opposite of the wise son who is completely open to the instruction of others.

THE TEN PLAGUES

by Rabbi Mordechai Becher

Live From Egypt!

n the early 19th Century a papyrus, dating from the end of the Middle Kingdom, was found in Egypt. It was taken to the Leiden Museum in Holland and interpreted by A.H. Gardiner in 1909. The complete papyrus can be found in his book *Admonitions of an Egyptian from a hieratic papyrus in Leiden*. The papyrus describes violent upheavals in Egypt, starvation, drought, escape of slaves (with the wealth of the Egyptians), and death throughout the land. The papyrus was written by an Egyptian named Ipuwer and appears to be an eyewitness account of the effects of the Exodus plagues from the perspective of an average Egyptian. Below are excerpts from the papyrus together with their parallels in the Book of Exodus. (For a lengthier discussion of the papyrus, see *Jewish Action*, Spring 1995, article by Brad Aaronson, entitled *When Was the Exodus*?)

IPUWER PAPYRUS - LEIDEN 344 TORAH - EXODUS

2:5-6 Plague is throughout the land. Blood is everywhere.2:10 The river is blood.2:10 Men shrink from tasting - human beings, and thirst after water3:10-13 That is our water! That is our happiness! What shall we do in respect thereof? All is ruin.	7:20all the waters of the river were turned to blood.7:21there was blood throughout all the land of Egyptand the river stank.7:24 And all the Egyptians dug around the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river.
 2:10 Forsooth, gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire. 10:3-6 Lower Egypt weeps The entire palace is without its revenues. To it belong [by right] wheat and barley, geese and fish 6:3 Forsooth, grain has perished on every side. 5:12 Forsooth, that has perished which was yesterday seen. The land is left over to its weariness like the cutting of flax. 	 9:23-24and the fire ran along the ground there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous. 9:25and the hail smote every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the field. 9:31-32and the flax and the barley was smitten; for the barley was in season, and flax was ripe. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not grown up. 10:15there remained no green things in the trees, or in the herbs of the fields, through all the land of Egypt.
5:5 All animals, their hearts weep. Cattle moan9:2-3 Behold, cattle are left to stray, and there is none to gather them together.	9:3the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field and there shall be a very grievous sickness.9:19gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field9:21 And he that did not fear the word of the Lord left his servants and cattle in the field.
9:11 The land is without light	10:22 And there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt.
 4:3 (5:6) Forsooth, the children of princes are dashed against the walls. 6:12 Forsooth, the children of princes are cast out in the streets. 6:3 The prison is ruined. 2:13 He who places his brother in the ground is everywhere. 3:14 It is groaning throughout the land, mingled with lamentations. 	12:29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive that was in the prison.12:30there was not a house where there was not one dead.12:30there was a great cry in Egypt.
7:1 Behold, the fire has mounted up on high. Its burning goes forth against the enemies of the land.	13:21 by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.
3:2 Gold and lapis lazuli, silver and malachite, carnelian and bronze are fastened on the neck of female slaves.	12:35-36and they requested from the Egyptians, silver and gold articles and clothing. And God made the Egyptians favor them and they granted their request. [The Israelites] thus drained Egypt of its wealth.

A

On the first night of Pesach, we are required to relate the Exodus in question/answer form. Even if a person is alone, he should relate the Exodus by first asking himself the four questions.

• Minchas Chinuch

• Based on the Chasam Sofer

Q

"The Pesach offering, what does it signify? It signifies that Hashem skipped over our houses in Egypt... The Matzah we eat, what does it signify? It signifies that our ancestors' dough didn't have time to rise... The Maror we eat, what does it signify? It signifies that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt..." Maror symbolizes bitterness. Pesach and matzah symbolize redemption. Chronologically, the bitterness preceded the redemption. Why, then, is maror listed last?

A

After the redemption, the bitterness is seen in a new light. We can't fully explain the significance of the bitterness until we first recognize it as being a step towards the redemption.

Q

Why do we interrupt hallel with a meal?

A

The purpose of the Exodus was for the Jewish People to receive the Torah. With the Torah we gain the ability to serve Hashem not only through 'spiritual' means — Torah study and prayer — but through 'physical' *mitzvos* as well — marriage, enjoying Shabbos, eating *matzah*, *maror*, *etc*. We eat in the *middle* of *hallel* in order to praise Hashem for sanctifying and elevating our physical existence. Even mundane activities like eating are elevated when we do them in the service of Hashem.

• Netziv (heard from Rabbi Mordechai Perlman)

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

• In Temple times, the *Mah Nishtana* included the following question: "On all other nights, we eat meat either roasted, baked or boiled. Why on this night do we eat only roasted meat? This was because the Pesach offering was eaten roasted.

• Avraham was without an heir for 100 years and Sarah was childless for 90 years. Hashem added up those years of suffering and subtracted them from the decree of slavery in Egypt. Hence, we were redeemed 190 years early.

• According to some authorities, we should drink five cups of wine at the Seder. Although we don't follow this view, we nevertheless fill a fifth cup in expectation of the imminent arrival of Elijah who — according to tradition will resolve all unresolved halachic questions. He will tell us whether or not we should drink it!

It once happened ...

During a scholarly lecture, a person asked Rabbi Yonason Eybeschitz the following: The Torah says, "*and they embittered their lives*," but the cantillation symbol that the cantor reads is a **happy** tune! The simplicity of his question amused the more erudite listeners.

"Excellent question!" said Rabbi Yonasan. "Hashem told Abraham that his offspring would be in exile for 400 years. But in fact we were in Egypt for only 210 years. Why was this? Since the Egyptians "embittered their lives," Hashem had pity on us and shortened the exile by 190 years — surely a cause for song!

"By the way," said Rabbi Yonason, to the astonishment of his listeners, "the cantillation symbol, '*kadma v'azla*,' hints at this idea by its exact numerical value: 190 !

