



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Pass Over the Peanut Oil
2. What Isn't In a Name?



Marsha from NYC asked:

Dear Rabbi,

Why is Moses' name not mentioned in the Haggadah?

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.

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 Sefardic Jews are allowed to eat beans, legumes and rice on Passover and Ashkanazic 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.

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. Mishna Berurah 6
- Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, Yabiahe Omer 5:37:5

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Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

General Editor: **Rabbi Moshe Newman**
Production Design: **Lev Seltzer**

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22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel
38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

972-2-581-0315
1-212-213-3100
1-905-886-5730

972-2-581-2890
1-212-213-8717
1-905-886-6065

ohr@virtual.co.il
RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@aol.com
Somayach@MSN.com

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

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Issue #147 - 22 April 1997 - Pesach

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