

## THE NUMBER 4 AT THE SEDER

All who have participated in a Seder know the important role that the number four plays at the Seder. We drink four cups of wine. The children ask the Four Questions and we recall how the Torah provides the answers to questions that four types of children may ask. The link between the number four and the Seder is so ingrained that we would never think to question whether four is the correct number for each practice. Since the night demands that we question, let us ask: is the correct number of cups to drink four or five; are the children asking four questions or three and does the Torah indeed provide guidance to answering the questions of four or three types of children?

### *Four Cups Or Five Cups Of Wine*

What is the basis to argue that we should be drinking five cups of wine and not four? I will answer that question with a question: why do we drink four cups of wine? The most popular answer to that question is that we want to drink a cup of wine that corresponds to each of the four vows that G-d issued promising that He would rescue the Jewish People from Egypt. The four vows are found in consecutive פסוקים:

שמות פרק ו', ו'— לכן אמר לבני־ישראל אני ה' והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים  
והצילתי אתכם מעבדתם וגאלתי אתכם בזרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדלים:

*Translation: Therefore say to the people of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you from their slavery, and I will redeem you with a outstretched arm, and with great judgments;*

ו'— ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי לכם לא—להים וידעתם כי אני ה' א—להיכם המוציא אתכם  
מתחת סבלות מצרים:

*Translation: And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a G-d; and you shall know that I am the Lord your G-d, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

In these two verses we find that G-d issued four vows promising to rescue the Jewish People; i.e. והוצאתי אתכם, והצילתי אתכם, וגאלתי אתכם and ולקחתי אתכם. In recognition of those four vows, we celebrate the fulfillment of each vow by drinking a cup of wine. But are those the only vows that G-d issued promising to rescue the Jewish People? Clearly, G-d issued a fifth vow in the subsequent verse:

ח— והבאתי אתכם אל־הארץ אשר נשאתי את־ידי לתת אתה לאברהם ליעקב וליצחק  
ונתתי אתה לכם מורשה אני ה':

*Translation: And I will bring you into the land, concerning which I swore to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for a heritage; I am the Lord.*

The vow of **והבאתי** may not only constitute a fifth vow but may arguably be the most important vow. G-d's intent in rescuing the Jewish People from Egypt was not to have the Jewish People roam the desert for all eternity. It was to bequeath the land of Israel to the Jewish People. Should we not celebrate that G-d gifted the Land of Israel to the Jewish People? The simple answer is that the **הגדה** was composed and the Seder organized after the destruction of the Second Temple. How could the Jewish People celebrate the gift of the Land of Israel when many of its People were in the Diaspora and the Second Temple lay in ruins. In other words, how can we say in our prayers: **ומפני חטאינו גלינו מארצינו**, because of our sins, we were exiled from our Land, on the same day that we celebrate the gift of **ארץ ישראל**. Those events in Jewish History can be compared to a family who after buying their new home celebrated each year on the anniversary of their occupying their home. Later, due to financial difficulties, the bank foreclosed on the unpaid mortgage and evicted them. After losing their home, would the family still celebrate the anniversary of their having occupied their new home? That is the same issue that faced the Jewish People after the destruction of the Second Temple.

Some of our Sages counted the vow of **והבאתי אתכם** as one of G-d's four vows. To maintain the number of four cups, those Sages disregarded the vow of **ונאלתי אתכם**. Here is one example:

**צורר המור דברים פרשת נצבים – וכמו שכתב שם ארבעה לשונות של גאולה דכתיב והוצאתי אתכם, והצלתי אתכם, ולקחתי אתכם, והבאתי אתכם.**

*Translation: In Parshas Va'Aira we find written four vows of redemption as follows: and I will extract you; I will rescue you; I will forcibly remove you and I will deliver you.*

Is there any other basis upon which to argue that we should be drinking a fifth cup of wine at the Seder? Let us take a look at this excerpt from the Talmud:

**תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קיח' עמוד א' – מאי ברכת השיר? רב יהודה אמר: יהללך ה' א-להינו, ורבי יוחנן אמר: נשמת כל חי. תנו רבנן: רביעי גומר עליו את ההלל, ואומר הלל הגדול, דברי רבי טרפון.**

*Translation: What is Birchas Ha'Shir? R. Yehudah said: Yihalelucha Hashem Elokeinu and R. Yochanon said: Nishmas Kol Chai. Our Rabbis taught: After pouring the fourth cup, a person completes Hallel. He also must recite the Great Hallel (Tehillim Ch. 136), that is the opinion of R. Tarfon'.*

On its face, this excerpt does not provide any support to an argument that we should be drinking five cups of wine at the Seder. However, a different version of this excerpt

1. Concerning the dispute as to what Birchas Ha'Shir represents and the dispute as to which Hallel must be recited after pouring the fourth cup, the composer of the Haggadah provided that we follow both opinions. The composer of the Haggadah similarly incorporates all opinions concerning the definition of recalling the shame and recalling the glory as well as the text of the Bracha of Geula.

# להבין את התפלה

appears in other writings and supports drinking a fifth cup. Here is the text of the excerpt as found in Seder Rav Amrom Gaon, the first Siddur:

סדר רב עמרם גאון (הרפנס) סדר פסח-ואם רוצה לשתות כוס אחד אחר ארבעה כוסות,  
חוזר ואוחז כוס חמישי ואומר עליו הלל הגדול וחוזר וחותרם ביהללך. שכך שנו חז"ל תניא  
חמישי אומר עליו הלל הגדול, דברי ר' טרפון.

*Translation: If a person wishes to drink an additional cup of wine after completing the four cups, he should fill a fifth cup and recite the Great Hallel after repeating the ending Bracha of Yihalelucha. This is based on what our Rabbis taught: over a fifth cup, one recites the Great Hallel, that is the opinion of R. Tarfon.*

In this version of the excerpt from the Talmud, R. Tarfon is arguing that we should drink the fourth cup of wine after completing הלל המצרי and that we drink a fifth cup of wine after reciting הלל הגדול.

The practice developed that drinking a fifth cup was optional while others felt it was better to reserve the fifth cup for those who were elderly or infirm. Some saw the כוס של אליהו as a compromise between the opinion of Rabbi Tarfon who advocated for a fifth cup and the Sages who advocated for only four cups of wine. The compromise was forged by requiring that the כוס של אליהו be filled but not drunk. The cup was given the title of the כוס של אליהו because it is expected that when אליהו הנביא comes he will rule on all unresolved Halachic issues including whether we should be drinking a fifth cup of wine at the Seder. This theory has been debunked by those who argue that the כוס של אליהו is linked to the curses that we issue before completing Hallel and before pouring the fourth cup of wine. A concern developed that the curses we issue not enter the fourth cup of wine in the event the evil eye reversed the curses. To avoid that being possible, we issue the curses after pouring a cup of wine from which we do not intend to drink. If by chance the curses were to enter the cup, the curse would be eliminated once the cup of wine was emptied. We open the door as a symbol of our belief that the משיח may come on that night. The cup became known as כוס של אליהו since אליהו הנביא will appear first to announce the coming of the משיח as we read in the הפטרה for שבת הגדול:

מלאכי פרק ג' כג'-הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום ה' הגדול והנורא.

*Translation: Know that I am sending to you Elyahu Ha'Navi, before the coming of the great and awesome day of G-d.*

A similar explanation is provided for the Ashkenazic practice of removing drops of wine from the cup when the plagues that G-d rained upon the Egyptians are described. We do not want the evil eye that tale of calamity to enter our cup of wine so we remove drops of wine upon which the calamities can fall<sup>2</sup>.

2. A fuller discussion of these can be found in a pamphlet entitled כוסו של אליהו הנביא which contains a reprint of an article written by Rabbi Yehuda Abida, z"l and other materials. The pamphlet was compiled by Rabbi Dr. Eliezer Brodt.

An argument that the practice of drinking a fifth cup of wine to celebrate the fifth vow of redemption, **והבאתי אתכם**, should be followed today was made by Rabbi Menachem Kasher, z”l, in a pamphlet<sup>3</sup> he produced entitled: **כוס המישי** in which he describes the history of drinking a fifth cup of wine at the Seder. In his conclusion he suggests the following:

והנה בְּזַמְנֵנו אֵנו, שְׂנֵכֵנו לְרֵאוֹת חֲסֵדֵי הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁעֵנו עֲלֵינוּ בְּהַקְמַח מְדִינַת  
יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁהִיא אֲתֻמְלֶטָא דַּמְאָלָה וְיִשְׁעָה מְגָלוֹת אֲדוּם וְקִיּוּם הַבְּסֻמַּח. וְהַבְּאֵתִי  
אֲתֵכֶם אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר בְּשֵׂאתִי אֶת יְדֵי לְתֵת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם, לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב, וְעַתָּה אֲתָהּ  
לְכֶם מוֹרְשָׁה, אָמֵן ה' – טוֹב הָיָה לְכֵּיּוֹם מִצְנוּה מִן הַמְבַחֵר בְּשֵׂמֶיךָ כּוֹס חֲמִישִׁי, שֶׁהִיא  
גִּדּוּ וְהַבְּאֵתִי וְלוֹמַר עָלֵינוּ הַלֵּל הַגָּדוֹל, שֶׁבְשֵׂמֶלֶט וְכַר לֵט... וַיִּפְרָשֶׁנוּ מִצְרַיִם,  
וְלִהְיוֹת לַה' עַל הַנְּסִיּוֹת וְעַל הַנְּפִלְאוֹת וְעַל הַמְלַחְמוֹת וְהַחֲשׂוֹת שֶׁעָשָׂה לֵנו בְּיָמֵינוּ.  
כִּי עָמְדוּ לֵנו חֲסֵדֵי ה' בְּעַת מְצוֹר וּמְצוֹק בְּקִיּוֹם עֲלֵינוּ יִתְרוֹ שֶׁבַע אַמּוֹת לְהִרְעוֹ וְלְהַשְׁמִיד  
אֶת הַמְּדִינָה הָעֵבְרִית וְלְהַטְבִּיעָה בְּנַחְלֵי דָם נֶאֱשׂוּ וְחִמְרוֹת עֲשָׂנוּ, וְה' בְּרַחֲמָיו הַרְבִּיּוֹת הַפִּיד  
עֲצַת וְדָם וְעָשָׂה לֵנו נֶס וְנִפְלָא וְצִוְרָה וְגִבּוֹרָה, וְנִתְקַיֵּם בָּנוּ מִה שֶׁהַבְּטִיחָנוּ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ: יִתֵּן  
ה' אֶת אוֹיְבֵינוּ הַקְּמִים עָלֵינוּ לְפָנֵינוּ... וְיִבְשְׁבָעָה דְרָכֵינוּ יְיָנוּ לְפָנֵינוּ, כִּי אָמְנָם  
מִסָּר ה' רַבִּים בְּיָד מַעֲשִׂים, עַל אוֹיְבֵינוּ הַפִּיל פָּתוּד וְיִטִּי, וְלַעֲמֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָתָּה יִשַׁע רַב  
וְיִפְרָקֵן בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה. וְאַנְחֵנו חֲפִלָּה וְתִקְוָה לֵאלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנו, כִּי כָּזִי אֵילַת הַשְּׁחָר אֲשֶׁר הִגִּינוּ  
לֵנו עַל אֲדַמַּת אַבּוֹתֵינוּ יַעֲזָמוּ לְאוֹר גְּדוֹל וּמְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵנָה וְחֲבָסָם עַל יְסוּדֵי  
הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּטְוָה, רִיחַ יִשְׂרָאֵל סָבָא, וְכָל קִנּוּךְ לַמּוֹדֵי ה'.

*Translation: In our era, in which we merited to witness an example of G-d's compassion and salvation through the establishment of the State of Israel, evidence that the process of rescuing the Jewish People from the Roman Diaspora and the fulfillment of the promise of (Shemos 6, 8) "and I shall bring you to the land which with My own hands I delivered to Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, and I will give it to you as an everlasting inheritance, I am G-d" has commenced. In recognition of this momentous historical event, it would be wonderful and well advised to fulfill the Mitzvah of drinking cups of wine at the Seder by adding a fifth cup representing G-d's fifth vow of redemption found in Parshas Va'Eira and before drinking the cup, reciting the Great Hallel (Tebillim Chapter 136) which contains within it the verses: in the moment that we experienced a low point in Jewish history (the Holocaust), G-d remembered us and rescued us from our tormentors and to acknowledge to G-d "the miracles, the wonders, the battles, and the rescues that G-d performed during our lifetimes." For we relied upon G-d's kindness in the times of siege and great danger during the War of Independence when seven nations gathered to harm and to slaughter the citizens of the State of Israel and to drown the population in rivers of blood, fire and gasses. G-d, in an exhibition of His great compassion, reversed the attempts by our enemies to destroy us and performed miracles, provided assistance and bravery, thereby fulfilling the promise found in the Torah (Devarim 28, 7) that G-d will cause the enemies that rise up against you to fall before you . . . and using seven routes, they will flee from before you. We witnessed G-d deliver the few from the hands of the many; instill great fear and trepidation in our enemies. To the Jewish People, He handed a great victory and rescue. We are obligated to*

3. The pamphlet can be found at [hebrewbooks.org/http://hebrewbooks.org/2408](http://hebrewbooks.org/2408).

# להבין את התפלה

*acknowledge G-d who provided salvation, through prayer and through demonstrating our continued allegiance because the rays of early light that emanated on the land of our ancestors is growing into a great light. The State of Israel will be built on the foundation of Torah and tradition. The spirit of the Jewish People will fly high and all our descendants will recognize themselves as students of G-d's Torah.*

## *The Four Questions Or The Three Questions*

The תלמוד בבלי presents the questions to be asked by the children as follows:

משנה מסכת פסחים פרק י', משנה ד' – מזגו לו כוס שני, וכאן הבן שואל אביו, ואם אין דעת בבן אביו מלמדו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות; שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמין ומצה, הלילה הזה כולו מצה; שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות; הלילה הזה מרור; שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל, הלילה הזה כולו צלי; שבכל הלילות אנו מטבילין פעם אחת, הלילה הזה שתי פעמים. ולפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו; מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, ודורש מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה.

*Translation: Mishna. They filled a second cup for him. At this stage the child questions the father; if the child is not yet knowledgeable about the subject, the father instructs him to ask: 'why is this night different from all other nights. On all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread, whereas on this night we eat only leavened bread; on all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, on this night bitter herbs; on all other nights we eat meat grilled, stewed or boiled, on this night, grilled only. On all other nights we dip once, but on this night we dip twice.' According to the son's level of understanding, his father instructs him. He commences his answer by describing the shame within Jewish History and concludes with the glorious side of Jewish History; and he expounds from 'a wandering aramean was my father' until he completes the whole section.*

You notice the following three differences between the questions found in the משנה and the questions found in the הגדה. We no longer ask the question that pertains to the preparation of the meat that is to be eaten at the Seder. In the question that pertains to dipping, we now say that each night we do not dip even once while in the משנה the question provides that each night we dip once. We currently ask a question that is not found in the משנה; i.e. why at the Seder do we eat and drink in a reclined position?

Here are how the questions are presented in the תלמוד ירושלמי:

תלמוד ירושלמי (וילנא) מסכת פסחים פרק י' – הלכה ד' – מתני' מזגו לו כוס שני, וכאן הבן שואל. אם אין דעת בבן לשאול, אביו מלמדו: מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות? שבכל הלילות אנו מטבילין פעם אחת, והלילה הזה שתי פעמים; שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמין ומצה, והלילה הזה כולו מצה; שבכל הלילות אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל, והלילה הזה כולו צלי. ולפי דעתיה של בן אביו מלמדו; מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, ודורש מארמי אובד אבי עד שהוא גומר כל הפרשה.

*Translation: Mishna. They filled a second cup for him. at this stage. The son questions his father; if the son is not yet knowledgeable about the subject, his father instructs him to ask: why is this night different from all other nights. On all other nights we dip once, but on this night we dip twice. On all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread, whereas on this night we eat only leavened bread; on all other nights we eat meat grilled, stewed or boiled, on this night, grilled only. According to the son's level of understanding his father instructs him. He commences his answer by describing the shame within Jewish History and concludes with the glorious side of Jewish History; and he expounds from 'a wandering aramean was my father' until he completes the whole section.*

The תלמוד ירושלמי provides that only three questions are asked. The question that appears in the תלמוד בבלי but which does not appear in the תלמוד ירושלמי is the question that concerns eating מרור at the Seder. Before answering why the תלמוד ירושלמי omits the question concerning מרור, let us understand the questions that do appear in both תלמודים but are no longer asked at the Seder.

Why did the question that concerns eating only grilled meat at the Seder appear in the two תלמודים but does not appear in the הגדה? The reason is provided as follows:

ספר שבולי הלקט סדר פסח סימן ריח'—ובזמן שבית המקדש קיים שואל על פסח שאומרים בכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל והלילה הזה כולו צלי; אך עתה אין מקום לשאילה זו.

*Translation: While the Beis Hamikdash was standing, it was appropriate to ask why the Korban Pesach was prepared by grilling the meat and not by any other process. Now that we no longer prepare a Korban Pesach, it is no longer appropriate to ask the question.*

But is it true that after the destruction of the Second Temple, the Jewish People stopped eating only grilled meat at the Seder? Here is evidence that the custom continued even after the destruction of the Second Temple:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף נג' עמ' א'—משנה. מקום שנהגו לאכול צלי בלילי פסחים – אוכלין, מקום שנהגו שלא לאכול – אין אוכלין.

*Mishna. Where it is the custom to eat grilled meat on the night of Passover, one may eat it; where it is the custom not to eat grilled, one may not eat it.*

This משנה must be concerning itself with an era subsequent to the destruction of the Second Temple since during the period of the Second Temple, the קרבן פסח needed to be eaten in Yerushalayim and no where else and had to be roasted over a fire.

Further evidence that the משנה is dealing with the period after the destruction of the Second Temple more can be seen by the following:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף נג עמוד א—גמרא. אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: אסור לו לאדם שיאמר בשר זה לפסח הוא – מפני שנראה כמקדיש בהמתו, ואוכל קדשים בחוץ. אמר רב

# להבין את התפלה

פפא: דוקא בשר, אבל חיטי – לא, דמינטר לפסחא קאמר. ובשר לא? – מיתיבי אמר רבי יוסי: תודום איש רומי הנהיג את בני רומי לאכול גדיים מקולסין בלילי פסחים, שלחו לו: אלמלא תודום אתה – גזרנו עליך נדוי, שאתה מאכיל את ישראל קדשים בחוץ.

*Translation: Gemara. R. Yebuda said in Rav's name: a man is forbidden to say, 'this meat shall be for Passover,' because it looks as though he is sanctifying his animal and eating sacred flesh outside the Temple grounds. Said R. Papa: This applies only to meat, but not to wheat, because he means, It is to be guarded from fermenting for Passover. But not 'meat'? An objection is raised: R. Jose said, Thaddeus of Rome accustomed the Roman Jews to eat helmeted goats on the nights of Passover. Thereupon the Sages sent a message to him: If you were not Thaddeus, we would proclaim the ban against you, because you make Israel eat sacred flesh outside the grounds of the Temple.*

The Jews of Rome who are referred to in the above excerpt generally followed מנהג ארץ ישראל because they were exiles from ארץ ישראל. Thanks to the discovery of the Cairo Geniza we can confirm that those who followed מנהג ארץ ישראל continued the practice of eating only grilled meat at the Seder even after the destruction of the Second Temple. Given the date of the materials found in the Cairo Geniza, we can state that as late as the 1200's, those remaining Jews who followed מנהג ארץ ישראל continued to ask the question concerning grilled meat at the Seder and followed the practice of eating grilled meat only, at their Seders.

The second question we need to resolve is why a change was made to the question that deals with dipping. The text was modified from שבכל הלילות אנו מטבילין פעם אחת, to שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת. Apparently, at the time of the Gemara, it was customary to serve an appetizer of vegetables that were to be dipped into a liquid at their meals. That custom was preserved for the Seder but since the custom was not followed throughout the year, the question was changed.

In much the same way, the question concerning reclining was not recited at the time of the Gemara. Apparently it was customary to recline during all meals at the time of the Gemara. The question was added as a substitute for the question that concerned the meat only after it was no longer customary to recline at every meal.

Let us now return to the question of why the תלמוד בבלי provides for the recital of four questions while the תלמוד ירושלמי provides for the recital of only three questions. To explain that difference we have to examine the answers that the משנה provides for the מה נשתנה questions. The first answer, מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, is interpreted in two ways:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קטז עמוד א-רב אמר: מתחלה עובדי עבודת גלולים היו אבותינו. ושמואל אמר: עבדים היינו.

The **בעל הגדה** incorporates both definitions in the text of the **הגדה**. Therefore the one phrase constitutes two answers to the questions. The **משנה** provides a third answer: **מסכת פסחים פרק י', משנה ד' – ודורש מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה.**

The fourth answer is provided as follows:

**משנה מסכת פסחים פרק י', משנה ה' – רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו פסח מצה ומרורים.**

**רבן גמליאל** is the only opinion that provides direct answers to the questions. **רבן גמליאל** provides three answers, **פסח, מצה, ומרורים** to correspond to what he views to be three questions. Those three questions are the ones found in the **תלמוד ירושלמי**. It is not difficult to link the answers of **פסח** and **מצה** to their respective questions but how does the explanation for **מרורים** answer the question concerning dipping **מרור** in **חרוסת**.

To appreciate **רבן גמליאל**'s answer to the question of dipping **מרור** in **חרוסת**, it is necessary to examine not only what **רבן גמליאל** says but also what the **בעל הגדה** adds to the answer of **רבן גמליאל**. Here is what **רבן גמליאל** says:

**משנה מסכת פסחים פרק י', משנה ה' – מרור זה שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שמררו המצרים את־חיי אבותינו במצרים,**

The **בעל הגדה** adds:

**שנאמר: וימררו את־חיהם בעבדה קשה, בחמר ובלבנים, ובכל־עבדה בשדה: את כל עבדתם, אשר עבדו בהם בפרך.**

*Translation: The Marmor that we ate, for what reason do we do so? Because the Egyptians made our forefathers lives miserable while residing in Egypt as it is written: And they caused our forefathers lives to be miserable through hard work, with bricks and mortar and with various jobs in the fields. Whatever work they gave them to perform, they made sure that it was difficult for them to perform.*

**מרור** represents the bitterness that our forefathers experienced in Egypt due to the hard work but only after it is dipped in **חרוסת**. It is by eating **חרוסת** that we experience the hard work of the **חמר ולבנים**, the bricks and the mortar. **רבן גמליאל** is explaining not only why we eat **מרור**. He is also explaining why it is necessary to eat the **מרור** only after it has been dipped in **חרוסת**. In other words, **רבן גמליאל** is clarifying for us that the question concerning **מרור** and the question concerning dipping are one and the same in that one answer serves to resolve both questions.

# להבין את התפלה

## *The Four Sons*

That the תורה speaks of four sons is not in dispute. Because the הגדה בעל ההגדה abbreviates the verses from which the questions of the Four Sons are derived, it can be a challenge to identify how the מדרש concluded that the תורה speaks of four sons. To clearly see the four references to sons found in the תורה, it is a good practice to include the complete verses found in the תורה before reading the section of the הגדה that refers to each son. The table below includes both the text that appears in the הגדה and the comparable text found in the תורה. I underlined the words in which the תורה refers to sons. In the last verse cited, the תורה does not introduce the answer to a son after the son asks a question. That is why the מדרש interpreted the absence of a question as an indication that the תורה is concerning itself with a son who does know enough to ask.

הגדה	תורה
חכם מה הוא אומר? מה העדת והחקים והמשפטים, אשר צוה ה' א-להינו אתכם?	[דברים ו', כ'] כִּי־ישאלך <u>בנך</u> מחר לאמר מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' א-להינו אותנו.
רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבדה הזאת לכם?	[שמות יב', כו'] והיה כִּי־יאמרו אליכם <u>בניכם</u> מה העבדה הזאת לכם.
הגדה-תם מה הוא אומר? מה זאת?	[שמות יג', יד'] והיה כִּי־ישאלך <u>בנך</u> מחר לאמר מה־זאת?
בן שאינו יודע לשאול את פתח לו תחילה.	[שמות יג', ח'] והגדת <u>לבנך</u> ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים: