

Passover Laws

The Four Questions, The Four Cups of Wine, The Four Sons

The number four comes up a lot during the seder, with the Four Questions, the four cups of wine, and the four sons.

The Four Questions: At the beginning of the Passover seder, children at the table ask the Four Questions. (If there are no children at the seder, adults ask the questions, instead.) These questions lead us into the story of Passover.

The Four Questions, often said in Hebrew, focus on things that make Passover different from all other nights of the year. In English, the Four Questions are as follows:

What makes this night different from all [other] nights?

- 1) On all nights we eat chametz or matzah, and on this night only matzah?*
- 2) On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, and on this night maror (bitter vegetables)?*
- 3) On all nights we need not dip even once, on this night we do so twice?*
- 4) On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline?*

The answer that follows the Four Questions is:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the L-rd, our G-d, took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm.

The different things we do throughout the seder either remind us of our slavery in Egypt or remind us of how G-d freed us.

We eat maror/bitter vegetables, and we dip the karpas vegetable into salt water and the maror into charoset (the mixture which reminds us of bricks), to remind us of our slavery in Egypt.

We eat matzah and not chametz, and we recline while eating (which is the way royal people used to eat), to remind us of how G-d took us out of Egypt and turned us into free people.

The Four Cups of Wine: During the Passover seder, we drink 4 cups of grape juice or wine. These four cups remind us of the 4 times in the Torah that G-d tells us how He saved us in Egypt. (They are: 1. “V’hotzeiti”- “And I took you out,” 2. “V’hitzalti”- “And I saved you,” 3. “V’ga’alti”- “And I redeemed you,” 4. “V’lakachti”- “And I took you.”)

The Four Sons: The Hagadah, which we read at the Passover seder, talks about four sons- 1. The wise son, 2. The wicked son, 3. The simple son, and 4. The son who doesn’t even know how to ask any questions. Each son represents a different kind of Jew- we invite them all to join us at our Passover seder and hope that, with our friendship and love, we can help the wicked son become kinder.

Additional resource: Click [here](#) for the Ma Nishtana trainer