

Dvar Torah for Pesach

Based on *Likutey Moharan* II, Lesson #7:6, 8

The Torah refers to four types of sons: wise, wicked, simple and one who doesn't know how to ask.

Rebbe Nachman teaches that when a person leaves this world, he should leave behind his *daat*, the insights of serving and/or recognizing God that he achieved. Our Sages, of blessed memory, teach that this *daat* can be left with either a disciple or a son (*Bava Batra* 116a), but—says Rebbe Nachman—only if the son is also a disciple, who receives the parent's wisdom and *daat*, because there is no advantage to leave behind a wicked son, God forbid.

We want the four sons to be our disciples and they are. The first two engage us in dialogue and we respond. The latter two, we approach and guide according to their ability. What types of questions are they asking? How do our answers help them?

Rebbe Nachman explains that imparting *daat* to another, or oneself, is achieved when *makifin*, concepts, ideas and awareness that the “disciple” did not previously have, are internalized. A place is created in the mind of both disciple and teacher—or child and parent—for the former when s/he asks a question and for the latter when s/he answers.

But, the Rebbe warns, the perception and internalizing of a new idea can lead to an infinite chain of *makifin* for which one is unprepared. Such an infinite chain will wreck one's Jewishness. Not a pretty sight, especially at the Seder, the night our individual and collective Jewishness is meant to be reborn with new *daat*.

Rebbe Nachman teaches that the vessel to contain (potential) runaway *makifin* is silence. One must know, or be taught, when to recognize that he is caught in such a vortex. It is difficult to recognize this and difficult to remain silent when necessary. The acquisition of *makifin* can be so intoxicating that one loses sight of the actual goal—*daat*—and goes off course. So the Hagadah teaches us, “*Af* you say to him...” The word *af*, usually translated as “so” or “even,” also has the connotation of toughness and determination (see Proverbs 30:33). “‘*Af*’ —‘Be determined’—you say to him...”

My dear son, you have to learn how to be silent. If you are wise, look to the laws of the Pesach sacrifice: Once you've eaten it, don't follow it with a dessert. Once you've asked a profound question and the space created in your mind becomes filled with new *makifin*, don't follow with “dessert.” Let the answer stay within.

My son, are you wicked? It is only if you separate yourself from us ordinary folk on account of your thinking that you know and others don't. I'm determined to “blunt your teeth,” if you insist. Genius that leads to a superiority complex will prevent you from leaving exile.

The last two sons don't need to learn silence. We don't need to teach them toughness lessons. They need *makifin*. We need to create a *makifin*-space within them and fill it with *daat*. This is something well within our ability. It is in our words and hearts to do it (Deuteronomy 30:14).

agutn yom tov!

Chag sameach!

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