

CHILDREN

Four Children-Arbaah Banim- ארבעה בנים

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Source: The Open Door (ed., Sue Levi Elwell)

The chacham asks, "What are the rulings, the laws, and the traditions which God has commanded us?"

We answer, "With a strong hand, God took us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

You are the bright child, sure and clear and eager. Your questions are your strength. Keep asking, and going deeper, turning each question so it yields a new response.

The rasha asks, "What is this service to you?"

We answer: "to you" and not "to him. Jews from the community, and thus reject an essential tenet of our tradition. You should give people a sharp answer and set their teeth on edge, saying, "Because of what God did for me when I came out of Egypt." "For me" and not "For them." For if they had been there, they would not have been redeemed.

You are the angry child. What is the source of your anger? Is your place at the table too narrow for your spirit? Open the door and look out, beyond this room, beyond this night. Can you see a freedom that is beyond our sight?

The tam asks, "What is this?"

You instruct this one in the precepts of Passover, including, "One must not continue to feast after sharing the afikioman."

Your question is simple, but you have much more to ask, much more to tell. Perhaps we need to listen for the question within your question, for the question behind your question.

For the she-eino yodei-a lishol, the one who does not know how to ask, you must open open the door. The Torah teaches: "You shall teach your children on that day, 'because of what the Holy One did for me when I went out of Egypt.'"

You are the child whose silence speaks for many who do not know how to begin. We are enriched by your presence tonight. The story will become clear. It will become yours.