

The Five Children

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Source: Original

The traditional Haggadah speaks of four children—one who is wise, one who is wicked, one who is simple, and one who does not know to ask. Each of these sons phrases his question about the seder in a different way. Answer each child according to his question.

The wise child asks " *What are the statutes, the testimonies, and the laws that God has commanded you to do?*" He is answered fully: *You should reply to him with all the laws of pesach: one may not eat any dessert after the paschal sacrifice.*

The wicked child, who asks, " *What is this service to you?*", is characterized by the Haggadah as isolating himself from the Jewish people, standing by objectively and watching their behavior rather than participating. Therefore, he is rebuked by the explanation that " *It is because God acted for my sake when I left Egypt. For me. Not you. If you were in Egypt, you would not have deserved to have been set free.*"

The simple child, who asks, " *What is this?*" is answered with " *With a strong hand the Almighty led us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage.*"

And the one who does not know to ask is told, " *It is because of what the Almighty did for us when we left Egypt.*"

Now, we add a fifth child: The one who is absent from the Seder table. He asks no questions, poses no questions. He knows nothing of the Seder. These are the Jewish children who live in oppression, or those who perished in tragedy. We remember them this moment, to pray that one day, those in oppression will be freed to learn of their heritage, and remember those who were never given a chance.