

Four Questions on Slavery

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Our tradition speaks of four children or four attitudes: the wise child, the wicked child, the simple child, and the one who does not know how to ask. Each child has a different reaction to hearing about slavery.

What does the wise child say? "What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the laws that apply to this situation? How we are to discern what God demands of us?"

You are to answer this child: "God brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage that we may understand the heart of those suffering in slavery, and use all our powers to redeem them."

What does the wicked child say? "What does all this work have to do with you?" Notice: "you," not him or her. The wicked child stays far removed from suffering, and thus has lost the essence of our teachings.

You might ask this child: "If you had been in Egypt, would you have been redeemed? And if you do not lift a finger now, who will redeem those who languish in slavery?"

The simple child asks: "What's this all about?"

And you should teach this child: God brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand, out of the house of slaves. So we should use our strength to abolish slavery around the world. No slavery. No exceptions.

And the one who does not know to ask, you must open his and her eyes to what is going on. For today there are 27 million people living in slavery, and over 8 million of them are children. Surely this is one reason God took our people out of Egypt long ago – so that we might understand what it means to be a slave, and so that we might help free all those who live in slavery.