

National Jewish Outreach Program

Beginners Passover Haggadah

SAMPLE



הַגְּדָה שֶׁל פֶּסַח
Haggadah Shel Pesach



of Israel] built Pithom and Raamses as store-cities for Pharaoh.”⁶

They imposed hard labor upon us -- as it is written: “They imposed back-breaking labor upon the people of Israel.”⁷

“We cried to the L-rd, the G-d of our fathers; the L-rd heard our cry and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.”

We cried to the L-rd the G-d of our fathers -- as it is written: “It happened in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died; the children of Israel sighed because of their labor and cried; their cry of servitude reached G-d.”⁸

The L-rd heard our cry -- as it is written: “G-d heard their groaning; G-d remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.”⁹

And saw our affliction -- that is, the conjugal separation of husband and wife, as it is written: “G-d saw the children of Israel and G-d knew.”¹⁰

Our toil -- refers to the drowning of the firstborn who were “Every son that is born you shall smite at the birth, but you shall let every daughter live.”¹¹

Our oppression -- means the use of force upon them, as it is written: “...in how the Egyptians are oppressing them.”¹²

“The L-rd brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great awe, miraculous signs and wonders.”

The L-rd brought us out of Egypt -- not by an angel, not by a seraph, not by a messenger, but by the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself. As it is written: “I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night; I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt from man unto beast; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments; I am the L-rd.”

“I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night”-- Myself and not an angel; “I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt”-- Myself and not a seraph; “on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments”-- Myself and not a messenger; “I am the L-rd, I and none other.”¹³

Mighty hand -- refers to the disease among the cattle, as it is written: “Behold the hand of the L-rd strikes your cattle which are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks--a very severe pestilence.”¹⁴

*****POINTS TO PONDER*****

Into Slavery

One might question the swift descent of the Jewish nation from the esteemed family of the Viceroy (Joseph) to abject slavery. Xenophobia, the fear of foreigners, is a common historic phenomenon. One would think, however, that transforming a nation into slaves would take generations or cause an uprising. The Sages teach that the Egyptians were cunning and enslaved the Jews through artifice. This is understood in the Hebrew term used in the Bible to describe the Hebrew word: פֶּרַח (*pherach*) which can be broken up to mean *peh rah*, which means evil speech and can also be understood to relate to *peh rach*, soft, gentle speech. Language is a powerful tool, and Pharaoh well understood this. When he decided to enslave the Jews, he declared a national labor week in which all loyal citizens were expected to participate in order to help build the great store cities of Pithom and Ramses, with Pharaoh himself in the lead. The Jews, wanting to show their devotion to their host country, joined enthusiastically. The next day, however, the Jews came, but the Egyptians did not return. Shortly there-after, the Jews found themselves surrounded by taskmasters who demanded that they produce the same amount of work that they had done as volunteers the day before. It was through soft, gentle and cunning words that Pharaoh lured the Jews into slavery.

(7) Exodus 1:13 (8) Exodus 2:23 (9) Exodus 2:24 (10) Exodus 2:25 (11) Exodus 1:22 (12) Exodus 3:9 (13) Exodus 12:12 (14) Exodus 9:3

Outstretched arm -- means the sword, as it is written: "His drawn sword in His hand, outstretched over Jerusalem."¹⁵

Great awe -- alludes to the divine revelation, as it is written: "Has G-d ever attempted to take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation by trials, miraculous signs and wonders, by war and with a mighty hand and outstretched arm and by awesome revelations, just as you saw the L-rd your G-d do for you in Egypt, before your eyes?"¹⁶

Miraculous signs -- refers to the miracles performed with the staff of Moses, as it is written: "Take this staff in your hand, that you may perform the miraculous signs with it."¹⁷

Wonders -- alludes to the plague of blood, as it is written: "I will show wonders in the sky and on the earth."¹⁸

As each of the following three terms are recited, a drop of wine is spilled.

SAMPLE

"Blood, Fire, and Columns of Smoke," -- a reference to the ways in which G-d expresses His divine wrath. We then recite the ten plagues themselves. The plagues are followed by a mnemonic devised by Rabbi Judah. As we read each of the three sets of words, the ways of G-d's wrath, the plagues and the mnemonic, it is customary for each person to spill out a drop of wine from their wine cup. (How the wine is removed varies from family to family: some pour the wine out directly from the cup and some dip a finger in the wine and remove a drop. Why do we do this?)

POINTS TO PONDER

The Spilling of the Wine

During the next section of the Seder, we recall the terrible plagues that befell Egypt. First, we call out: "Blood, Fire and Columns of Smoke," -- a reference to the ways in which G-d expresses His divine wrath. We then recite the ten plagues themselves. The plagues are followed by a mnemonic devised by Rabbi Judah. As we read each of the three sets of words, the ways of G-d's wrath, the plagues and the mnemonic, it is customary for each person to spill out a drop of wine from their wine cup. (How the wine is removed varies from family to family: some pour the wine out directly from the cup and some dip a finger in the wine and remove a drop). Why do we do this?

The Midrash tells us that as the Egyptians were meeting their horrible end in the churning waters of the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea), the angels wished to sing out praise to the A-lmighty. G-d rebuked them and said "My creations are drowning in the sea, and you wish to sing praises?!" We spill the wine from our cups, explained the Abrabanel (a famous medieval Spanish commentator), because wine is a sign of rejoicing. But one should not rejoice when an enemy falls because they too are creations of G-d.

(The glass must be refilled before it is used for the second cup).

Another explanation of the preceding verse: Each two-word phrase represents two plagues, hence **strong hand**, two: **outstretched arm**, two: **great awe**, two: **miraculous signs**, two: **wonders**, two.

(15) I Chronicles 21:16 (16) Deuteronomy 4:34 (17) Exodus 4:17 (18) Joel 3:3

The Ten Plagues

As each of the ten plagues and the three abbreviations are recited, a drop of wine is spilled.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Blood | <i>Dahm</i> | דָּם |
| Frogs | <i>Tz'phar'day'ah</i> | צְפַרְדֵּי |
| Lice | <i>Ke'nim</i> | כְּנִים |
| Wild Beasts | <i>Ah'roav</i> | עָרוֹב |
| Pestilence | <i>Deh'ver</i> | דֶּבֶר |
| Boils | <i>Sh'chin</i> | שַׁחִין |
| Hail | <i>Barad</i> | בָּרָד |
| Locusts | <i>Ar'beh</i> | אַרְבֵּה |
| Darkness | <i>Choshech</i> | חֹשֶׁךְ |
| Plague of the First Born | <i>Makat B'chorot</i> | מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת |

Rabbi Judah abbreviated the ten plagues by composing a three word mnemonic from the plagues' initials: *Adash, B'achav, B'achav*

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Adash, Adash, B'achav דָּצ"ךְ עַד"ש בְּאַח"ב

The wine cups are refilled. The spilled wine is not used.

The ten plagues were not random punishments. Commentators throughout the ages have demonstrated the many ways in which the plagues were fair and just, to both avenge what the Egyptians did to the Jews and for their unceasing idolatry. Try to think of how each of the plagues was a quid pro quo for the Egyptians:

Blood - _____

Frogs - _____

Lice - _____

Wild Beasts - _____

Pestilence - _____

Boils - _____

Hail - _____

Locusts - _____

Darkness - _____

Death of the First Born - _____

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POINTS TO PONDER

The Ten Plagues

Blood - During the plague of blood, the waters of Egypt turned to blood. This plague had two separate features: (1) the Nile, which the Egyptians worshiped, turned to blood, and (2) all the water that the Egyptians kept in containers in their homes also turned to blood, while the Jews still had water to drink.

Frogs - There was no place for the Egyptians to escape from the frogs. They were everywhere -- in the Egyptians' beds, in their pockets, and even in their ovens.

Lice - To initiate the plague of lice, G-d commanded Aaron to command Moses, to hit the ground with his staff and the dust turned to lice and spread everywhere.

Wild Beasts - The plague of wild beasts struck the Egyptians in their homes. Fearing for their lives, they dared to do what they had never done before.

Pestilence - The Egyptian cattle died from the ravaging of the wild beasts were struck with pestilence and died. No Jewish-owned cattle died, even those in close proximity to the Egyptian cattle. The first five plagues taught the Egyptians that their possessions were lost and their wealth ephemeral.

Boils - With all of their land and cattle destroyed, the Egyptians continued to deny G-d and to keep the Jews as slaves. The plague of boils struck them personally, showing them that ultimately they had no control over anything, not even themselves.

Hail - The plague of hail had a two-fold intent: (1) it destroyed the physical structures of Egypt, and (2) it was a "fireworks" display of the power of G-d. For those who still needed to be impressed by the awesomeness of G-d, the seventh plague consisted of giant iceball of hail containing fire encased in ice. The hail killed much of the surviving Egyptian cattle and destroyed many agricultural crops.

Locusts - Not much was left of Egypt by the time the plague of locust arrived. The cattle were dead, the buildings destroyed, morale was low and then the locusts came in an enormous swarm that darkened the sky and devoured anything that remained of the crops.

Darkness - For three days, total darkness descended on Egypt. The Sages taught that the darkness was so intense that it was a physically restricting as well, leaving the Egyptians unable to move. Miraculously, the Jews, however, could see where they were going and had full range of motion.

Death of the First Born - The final plague was the only one for which the Jews needed to prepare. In order to be "passed-over," Moses instructed the Jews to mark their doorposts with lamb's blood from the Pascal sacrifice. And in the darkness of the midnight hour, G-d smote all of the first born in the land of Egypt.

**For further thoughts on the Ten Plagues, visit www.njop.org
(Please do not visit our site on Shabbat or religious holidays.)**

Rabbi Yose the Galilean said: How do we know that, after the ten plagues in Egypt, the Egyptians suffered fifty plagues at the Sea? Concerning the plagues in Egypt the Torah states that “the magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘It is the finger of G-d.’” However, at the Sea, the Torah states that “Israel saw the mighty hand that the L-rd laid upon the Egyptians, and the people revered the L-rd and they believed in G-d and in His servant Moses.” If one finger of G-d caused ten plagues in Egypt, we may properly assume that G-d’s whole hand at the sea caused fifty plagues (5 fingers on a hand, thus $5 \times 10 = 50$).

Rabbi Eliezer says: How do we know that every plague that G-d inflicted upon the Egyptians in Egypt was equal in intensity to four plagues? It is written: “He sent upon them his fierce anger, wrath, fury and trouble, a band of evil messengers.” Since each plague was comprised of 1) wrath, 2) fury, 3) trouble and 4) a band of evil messengers, they must have suffered fifty plagues in Egypt and two hundred at the Sea (10 plagues \times 4 = 40, 40 \times 5 = 200).

Rabbi Akiva says: How do we know that every plague that G-d inflicted upon the Egyptians in Egypt was equal in intensity to five plagues? It is written: “He sent upon them his fierce anger 1) anger 2) wrath 3) fury 4) trouble and 5) a band of evil messengers, they must have suffered fifty plagues in Egypt and two hundred and fifty at the Sea (10 plagues \times 5 = 50, 50 \times 5 = 250).

What do you think is the purpose of the above debate between the three rabbis?

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Dayenu -- It Would Have Been Enough

One of the most popular of all Seder songs, Dayenu reminds Seder participants how much there is to be grateful for, and praises G-d for the many miracles and gifts He gave to the Jews. Dayenu means “It would have been enough!” It is a song that builds upon itself. Each verse starts with the end of the preceding verse and ends with an enthusiastic call of the word Dayenu!

Read through Dayenu before the Seder and think about your own life and how you too can give similar thanks and praise:

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