

# Ten Plagues, Ten Healings

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## WISDOM FOR THE JOURNEY

**"I felt as if my legs were praying."**

– Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, coming back home from the voting-rights March in Selma, Alabama, 1965

**"Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods."**

– Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1970

## THE PALMS OF POSSIBILITY

The people gather at a central point, perhaps a synagogue or church. Each takes a frond of the palm tree, and in pairs they bless each other, each tapping the other on the shoulder with a palm frond, saying:

May the Holy One Who interbreathes all life, breathe life between you and this palm branch, between the forests of the Earth and our communities.

The people move into the streets. Chanting and singing as they go, carrying a portable large-sized globe of Planet Earth, waving the Palm branches, they walk toward a Pyramid of Power of our own day: perhaps an office of Exxon or BP, or a coal-fired power station, or a bank that invests in a coal company that is destroying the mountains of West Virginia, or a religious or academic or governmental institution which they could call on to end its investments in Big Carbon and invest in renewable energy companies instead.

And as they walk they sing:

We've got the sun and the rain in our hands,  
We've got the wind and the clouds in our hands,  
We've got the whole world in our hands.  
We've got the whole world in our hands!

We've got the rivers and the mountains in our hands,  
We've got the lakes and the oceans in our hands

We've got you and we've got me in our hands,  
We've got the whole world in our hands.

We've got everybody here in our hands,  
We've got everybody there in our hands,  
We've got everybody everywhere in our hands,  
We've got the whole world in our hands.

We've got trees and tigers in our hands

We've got our sisters and our brothers in our hands

We've got our children and *their* children in our hands/

## WE'VE GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN OUR HANDS!

As they arrive at the point they have chosen, they share in this reading, each person reading a passage and then passing it on to another:

"Rabbi Jesus and his companions called upon their followers to "Occupy Jerusalem," "Challenge the money-changers," "Lift high the Green faces of God, the Palms of Possibility."

"Gather," they said, "on the eve of Passover to recall the fall of Pharaoh. For in every generation there is a Pharaoh who arises to enslave us and destroy us. In every generation we must all see ourselves: It is we who must go forth from slavery to freedom, not our forebears only." [Quotation from the Passover Haggadah]

Defenders of the status quo told Rabbi Jesus to tell his followers to shut up.

And the Gospel (Luke 19:40) says: "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep silent, the very stones will cry out." □

□ In our own generation, the stones *are* crying out.

The frozen stones we call glaciers are groaning as they melt. □□

The rivers cry out by flooding one-fifth of Pakistan and the entire City of New Orleans, by washing out the sturdy bridges of Vermont and flooding the subways of Manhattan.

The rains cry out in silence as they fail to fall, bringing unheard-of droughts to central Africa, Australia, Russia, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Iowa.

As the planet scorches  
and the corn parches,  
the price of food climbs.

Those who were hungry, starve.

The children whose bellies swelled from hunger,  
whose voices wailed from famine,  
grow silent.

Dying. Dead.

And all these silent, silenced voices call on us to speak.

Not only to speak but to act.

To act against the money-changers,  
the corrupt banks and other corporations  
that are not human beings, persons:  
are NOT created in the Image of God.

The Caesars of our day,

The Pharaohs of our day.

The Pontius Pilates and Abu-Jahls of our day—

The Empires of Oil, Tar, Coal, Unnatural Gas.

The Pharaohs of Fracking.