

# Ten Plagues

Contributed by [Dalya Romaner](#)

Source:

**1) דם Dom: Blood:** all the water in Egypt (in the rivers, lakes, and even in basins at home) turned to blood. The only water that remained pure and clear was water owned by Jews. And if an Egyptian wanted a drink or a bath? He had to buy water from a Jew.

Why? The Jews had been forced to draw water from the wells and carry the heavy buckets to their Egyptian masters. But the Jews were not allowed to use any of the water for their own needs.

**2) צפרדע Tzfardeah: Frogs:** The kitchen pots and plates were full of frogs, so an Egyptian family dashed to the bedroom, only to find it full of croaking, jabbering, jumping frogs. The people ran out to the street, only to trip over a dozen frogs, and fall face first into a loud pile of more frogs.

Why? The Egyptians forces the tired Jews to sit among the noisy frogs at the riverbank, catching fish. And if a Jew wanted to rest by day or night, the Egyptians would yell and scream, always disturbing them.

**3) כנים Kinim: Lice:** The dust turned into lice, and the lice got into the Egyptians' hair, under their clothing, and into their beds, itching, biting and annoying them.

Why? The Egyptians forced the Jews to clean the streets and all the filthy places. The dust got into Jewish noses and lungs, making the people sneeze and cough. Lice and other insects made their lives miserable.

**4) ערוב Arov: Wild Animals:** From the deserts and jungles, thousands upon thousands of wild animals came galloping into Egypt. Every time an Egyptian poked his head out a window, it could end up in a lion's mouth.

Why? The Jews were forced to put their lives in danger by catching wild animals for their masters. The Egyptians wanted hides and tusks, and live animals for their zoos and circuses.

**5) דבר Dever: Pestilence:** A strange epidemic came and killed the Egyptian cattle and sheep. One second the animals were quietly grazing and the next second they were dead.

Why? The Egyptians forced Jewish men to leave their wives and children and go far out into the fields to care for Egyptian cattle and sheep.

**6) שחין Sh'chin: Boils:** Without warning, Egyptians began to feel uncomfortable all over. They looked at their skin and saw boils and blisters. When they burst, the skin became raw, red, and painful.

Why? The Egyptian slave drivers used to beat the helpless Jews until their bodies were covered with blisters and sores. And if an Egyptian thought his "beautiful" skin was a bit rough, he would tell a Jew, "Make me a warm, comfortable bath to soften my skin."

**7) ברד Barad: Hail:** Huge, fiery hailstones rained from heaven, hurting and smashing everything in the fields—people, animals, and full-grown crops.

Why? When the Jews were working in the fields, the Egyptians "enjoyed themselves" by throwing stones at them.

**8) ארבה Arbeh: Locusts:** One day, the fields of Egypt were colorful with grass, leaves, fruit and crops. The next day, everything was gone. Unbelievably big swarms of hungry locust covered the country and ate every growing thing in sight.

Why? The Jews were forced to work long and hard— plowing, planting, and tending trees and crops for the

Egyptians.

**9) חֹשֶׁךְ: Choshech: Darkness:** For seven days Egypt was so dark that the people couldn't see a thing, even with a torch. For the last several days of that time, the Egyptians couldn't even move.

Why? When the Jews were slaves, their lives were so hopeless that everything seems to be very dark. And if a Jew did something an Egyptian didn't like, the Jew could be thrown into an underground dungeon without any light at all.

**10) מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת: Makat Bechorot: Slaying of the first born:** The first born children of every Egyptian family, and even their first born animals and servants, died exactly at midnight on the first night of Pesach.

Why? Hashem said that the Jews were like His own first born– but the Egyptians made the Jews suffer, and they even killed Jewish babies.

Passover was actually celebrated before the last plague, the death of the first born in Egypt. Each Hebrew family was told to gather a lamb, keep it in their front yard for three days, then kill it, and sprinkle its blood upon the doorpost of their house. The Angel of Death would pass over the homes where the blood was spread, sparing the first born children of the Hebrews while killing all other first born. It was after this tenth plague that the pharaoh finally consented and allowed Moses to lead the Hebrews to freedom.

*Think about it: The risk the Jews took in binding an Egyptian God (a lamb) in their front yard.*

The Hebrews traveled until they reach the Sea of Reeds, often called the Red Sea. At their arrival, the Hebrews were surrounded with hills on either side, the sea in front of them, and the Egyptian armies rapidly approaching from behind. Moses prayed to God and received the commandments to go forward– in the face of the Red Sea. The winds immediately began to blow, causing the waters before them to divide and open up a passageway for Hebrews to cross the sea. When they had crossed safely, the Egyptians rushed into the passageway and were drowned by the water as it returned to its natural flow.

**Question for discussion: Would you have been the first to volunteer to go into the sea?**

The departure from Egypt completed by the crossing of the Red Sea marked the beginning of the Hebrew nation.

From the crossing of the Red Sea, the shortest route from Egypt to the “Promised Land” would have been along the Mediterranean Sea coast. Although this was the route usually followed by travelers, Moses led his people in a southerly direction. This gave the Hebrews time for special instructions, training and experience, and allowed time for God to deliver the Law to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

While Moses was receiving the Law of God at Mt. Sinai, some of the Hebrew followers lost faith in Moses and God and molded a god in the form of a calf. Upon Moses' return from the mountain, he destroyed the calf.

It was for this sin of losing faith and trust in God that God punished the Jews by making them wander in the wilderness for 40 years before delivering them to the Promised Land. The generation freed from slavery would not see the Promised Land, but their children would.

(End of the Story of Pesach)

Leader: The Omnipresent God has bestowed an abundance of favors upon us!