

The 10 Plagues

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Source: CSJO: Congress of Secular Jewish Organization

It saddens us that any struggle for freedom involves suffering. Generally, we drink wine to rejoice. Therefore, for each plague we take out a drop of wine from our cup. This way we do not rejoice over the suffering of others. The plagues that, we are told, afflicted the Egyptians were:

(Take a drop of wine out of your cup for each plague)

- blood
- frogs
- vermin
- beasts
- boils
- cattle disease
- locusts
- hail
- darkness
- slaying of first born

Our world today is still greatly troubled. For these plagues, let us repeat the same ceremony.

Take a drop of wine out of your cup for each plague)

- war
- illiteracy
- hunger
- crime
- bigotry
- injustice
- inequality
- tyranny
- poverty
- ignorance

Many people perished during the plagues and the suffering was great. Pharaoh remained obstinate. However, with the tenth plague, the death of the first born, a great cry went up throughout Egypt. On that night, the Hebrews marked their door posts with the blood of the paschal lamb so the Angel of Death would 'pass over' their homes. Thus, the name Passover for this holiday. Pharaoh finally ordered Moses to take the Jewish people out of Egypt.

After the slaves hurriedly left, the Pharaoh had a change of heart and the Egyptian army pursued them. Legend has it that when Moses and his people came to the Red Sea, the waters parted to allow them to cross. The Egyptians followed and were engulfed when the waters returned. Thus, the Exodus from Egypt was complete.

Whether the waters actually parted overlooks the inner meaning of this event; when the Hebrews reached the edge of the desert and found the courage to continue, the Sea of Obstacles parted and they walked toward freedom.