

God Does Not Bring Plagues

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Source: Rabbi Naomi Levy

At every Seder, as we recite the ten plagues over Egypt we pour out a drop of wine to symbolize our sadness. We are heartbroken that any soul had to suffer, even those who hated us, tormented us and enslaved us.

And still, we sing lighthearted songs with our children about “frogs here, frogs there.”

And as we enumerate the plagues we find ourselves muttering the final plague beneath our breath, not wanting to frighten our own children, not knowing what to make of a God who would murder innocent children.

Tonight, more than ever, it is time to liberate the God of the Universe from “Acts of God”. There was a time in history when we didn’t understand what caused earthquakes or floods or fires or contagious viruses. In order to feel less helpless in the face of nature’s fierce capricious power, religions found comfort in blaming the victims of plagues for their own suffering. The Torah ascribes mass slaughter to God as divine punishment for sin: “They brought this upon themselves, they had it coming.”

But God is praying to be freed from this monstrous portrayal.

Tonight is the time to liberate God from this twisted, sadistic depiction.

Tonight is the time to proclaim God as the One who lifts us up, frees us, shelters and blesses us each day.

Passover will survive without a belief in a God who visits plagues upon any soul.

The key to Passover is a belief in rebirth, a belief that tomorrow can be better than today; a knowing that we each have a critical part to play in the unfolding of hope.

Freedom begins with open eyes and ears and hearts.

Seas will part, answers will come, cures will emerge,

New ways of believing will sprout up and take root,

A universal love that mirrors God’s love for every living creature

And for our world.

In the book of Exodus we are told that Pharaoh’s sorcerers were able to replicate the plague of frogs. The only difference between Moses and the sorcerers was: only Moses could remove the plague.

When the sorcerers witnessed Moses reverse the plague they cried out: “This is the hand of God.”

The truth is, it doesn’t take any great supernatural powers to bring about a plague. We all have the power to destroy life and to destroy the earth and our atmosphere. But it does take great holy powers to reverse a plague, to heal the sick, to heal our planet, to heal hatred and war. The Healing Hand of God acting through us is what will save us and lead us from constriction to wide open spaces, from fear to faith, from darkness to light, from worry to peace of mind, from economic hardship to abundance, from illness to health.

Let us raise a glass and drink a Cup of Praise to the Soul of Souls who fills us with the power to end all plagues.

And let us say, Amen.