



## Frogs Here, Frogs There: The Ten Plagues in the Torah and the Haggadah

RRC President's Council Teaching Call With  
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### Reference Texts

#### 1. Exodus 7:3-5

But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that I may multiply my signs and marvels in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh does not heed you, I will lay my hand upon Egypt and deliver my ranks, my people the Israelites from the land of Egypt with extraordinary chastisements. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand over Egypt and bring the Israelites from their midst.

#### 2. Exodus 11:6-7 (killing of the first-born)

And there shall be aloud cry in all the land of Egypt, such has never been or will ever be again; but not a dog shall snarl at any of the Israelites, at man or beast --- in order that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

#### 3. Traditional Haggadah (citing *midrashic* tradition)

Rabbi Yose of Galilee said: 'How can we establish that if the Egyptians were smitten with ten plagues in Egypt, they got another fifty at the Red Sea? On Egypt, the verse says: "and Israel saw the great hand which the Lord laid on the Egyptians" (Exodus 14:31). With "one finger" they were smitten with ten plagues; "a hand" at the Red Sea, must have produced another fifty plagues.'

Rabbi Eliezer said: 'How do we know that each of the ten plagues that God brought on the Egyptians was the same as *four* plagues? From the verse: "God sent upon them his fierce anger-- - wrath, indignation and trouble, a visitation of messengers of harm" (Psalms 78:49). Wrath is one; indignation makes two; trouble, three; the visitation, four. So you see that there were forty plagues in Egypt, which would make two hundred at the Red Sea.'

Rabbi Akiva said: 'How do we know that each of the ten plagues that God brought on the Egyptians was the same as *five* plagues? From the same verse quoted by Rabbi Eliezer, but adding the general phrase "fierce anger" to the other four. So there were fifty plagues in Egypt, which would yield two hundred and fifty at the Red Sea.'

#### **4. Babylonian Talmud Megillah 10b**

God is not happy at the downfall of the wicked. When the angels tried to sing songs of praise to God at the Red Sea, God silenced them: "My handiwork, my own creatures, are drowning in the sea and you want to sing a song of praise?"

#### **5. *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah***

**Edited by Rabbi Joy Levitt (RRC '81) and Rabbi Michael Strassfeld (RRC '91)  
Reconstructionist Press**

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The wise child says, "We spill the wine from our cup because our salvation came at the expense of the suffering of others. At the crossing of the sea, the ministering angels wanted to sing praises to God. But God silenced them, saying, 'My children are drowning in the sea and you want to sing before me?'"

The vengeful child says, "We spill the wine from the cup because *our* blood has been spilled. There was a dispute in heaven about how much mercy God should show the Egyptians, until the angel Gabriel showed God a brick from Egypt with a baby entombed in it. 'Master of the world,' he said, 'thus did they enslave the Israelites.'" God immediately sentenced the Egyptians and drowned them in the sea."

The innocent child says, "We spill the wine from the cup because our blood was spilled and their blood was spilled. We are all diminished when blood is shed."

The unaware child enjoys spilling the drops.