

have a

Nageela Shabbos

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Thanks G-d! Sincerely, Pharaoh

By Rabbi Dani Locker

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People often ask me about the point of the ten plagues. It's one of the top *ten*...

After all, on a scale of one to ten on how difficult it would have been for G-d to simply have the Jews waltz out of Egypt (or perhaps hora out would have been more appropriate)? The number is probably somewhere between easy- shmeesy and no- sweat (technical terms often used by actuaries). So again, why all the drama? Okay it would have made a pretty boring movie plot otherwise, but our seder would certainly have been shorter! "We were slaves. Then we weren't. Let's eat!"

Here is a list of a couple of answers (some better than others).

- G-d purchased His 'getting out of Egypt kit' at Costco, and didn't want to waste it.
- Nah
- The Egyptians made the Jews suffer so much over the years, they deserved a little payback.

OK, I can dig that! But why the creative, nature altering plagues? Why not just make them eat sardines or something?

- G-d wanted to show his complete control over the world. Weather, livestock, health, economy, wind, wild beasts. Once He did that, nobody can question his abilities. (Ramban)

Now we're talking! Is there something more?

- G-d got a real laugh out of frogs and it all sort of flowed from there.



*Are you feeling okay, Locker?
Get it? Flowed...*

- *Huh?* It was actually being nice to the Egyptians!

No, really. They did bad stuff. Had G-d just said, "Game over, exit Jews," they would not have had the chance to improve. This way, G-d gave them chance after chance- "Hellooooo, wake up Pharaoh. You're evil.

Please change your ways or else I'll beat you up."

- It's kinda like a parent who finds out their kid did something really damaging. A lazy parent just cleans up the mess and doesn't mention it to the child. A proactive parent takes the time to explain to the child where they went wrong, and provides consequences if they refuse to improve.

- Although the Egyptians may not have realized it at the time, the plagues were (at least partially) for their benefit! Ironic. (Seferno).

Never would have thought of that

So it wasn't just, "Hey Egyptians, you just wait until my big brother finds out you've been bullying me and then you'll be sorry." It actually made a lot of sense for the evil Egyptians, who, after all their wickedness, are still children of G-d, too.

VERY PUNNY

What do you get when you cross a horse and a radish?

A squashed radish! What did you think?

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Four Kids, For Kids

We love Passover! We love the seder! With all the excitement surrounding the various items at the seder, it's easy to forget the main purpose. We lean, dip, bite, crunch, sip, drip, roast, grind, hide, seek eat, sing, speak, laugh, and sometimes even fall asleep. Why do we spend all this time and effort? What's it all about? Of course, it's our way of remembering that during a really dark period in our history, we almost disappeared as a nation, and thanks to some pretty spectacular miracles (fire inside ice? wicked!), we were transformed into a free, independent nation of 'Hebrews' committed to G-d and following His instructions. Well, that was a pretty long sentence, excuse me while I take a sip of water (yes, even I drink water upon occasion). Anyway, the main point of the haggadah is telling the story. Actually, the word haggadah means "telling." (come to think of it, saying something like "telling the Haggadah story" is kind of like "using the ATM machine..." think about that one). Something doesn't fit. In the process of talking about the great things that happened way back then, the Haggadah takes a little break to praise G-d for talking about four different kind of kids. One is wise, one is wicked, then comes a simple son and one that is unable to ask. Why are they randomly mentioned here, and why do we praise G-d for it? The Torah is unbelievably cool. It can be understood by a pre-schooler on a simple level, and can also be studied by the most brilliant minds. When it comes to the Haggadah, this is especially important. The Passover seder is the method we use to transmit our convictions to our children; that only works if we have the tools to talk to all different types of students, wise and simple. We praise G-d during the Haggadah for the ability He gave us to communicate Torah ideas to multiple levels.

The Original Scavenger Hunt

There have been multiple movies centered around grand scavenger hunts. The DaVinci Code, National Treasure and others. Apple's App Store hosts more than 50 scavenger hunt apps.

What's the origin if the scavenger hunt? Who knows?

Many believe it has its roots in early hunting games. It's widely believed to have been popularized again in the 1930s.

In Camp Nageela West, we have the DaNiSH, a popular and wacky hunt.

But Jews have always done a Passover scavenger hunt... Well, 2 actually.

The Mishna, compiled nearly two thousand years ago describes the annual candle- lit search for chametz on the night preceding Passover. This year, it's tonight, and we search every spot where we might have brought leavened- grain based (non matzah) products.

Probably of more recent origin, but still fairly common is the children's hunt for the afikoman at the Seder (Monday and Tuesday nights respectively, this year). According to some, this practice may also be alluded to in the Mishna.

At any rate, we've been doing this hunting thing for ages!

Happy Passover, and Happy Hunting!

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