CHAGIM BATNUA:

An interactive proposal to know, dialogue, think, learn and connect with our holidays.

The Story of Desach







A few years ago, Yosef and his family arrived in the land of Egypt.

Although at the beginning they were very few people, after they settled, Bnei Israel became more and more, both in number and strength.

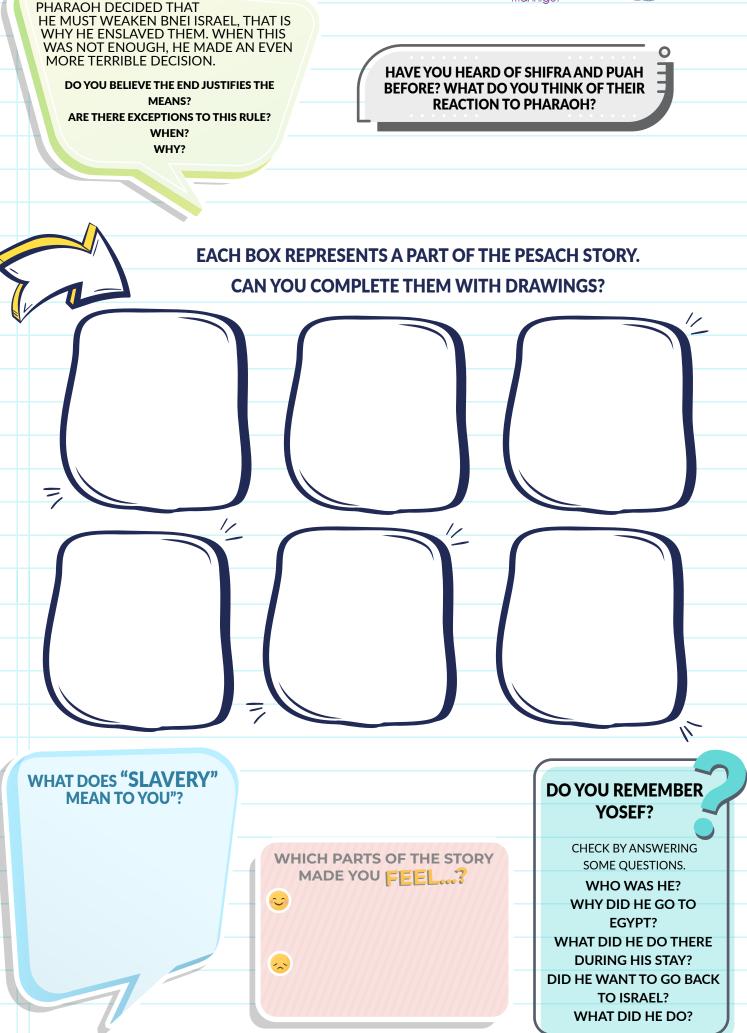
When Pharaoh realized what was happening, he feared that someday the Israelites would be vigorous enough to take away his power. For this reason, he decided to give Bnei Israel more and more hard work. In his plan, if they were working all the time, they would not have time to form large families, and then he could prevent them from continuing to grow and become stronger. Although the plan sounded very clear and logical, this was not what happened in practice. Pharaoh's first plan simply did not work.

Pharaoh analyzed the situation again and understood that not only had he not achieved his objective, but that Bnei Israel had continued in full development. Faced with such disappointment, Pharaoh took a much harsher and cruel measure: he ordered the death of all Hebrew boys.

When Pharaoh told his plan to Shifra and Puah, two midwives whom he commanded to perform this act, they told him that they were not going to carry out this task since the Hebrew women knew how to give birth alone without the help of midwives.

After Shifra and Puah refused to carry out his orders, Pharaoh authorized all Egyptians to carry out his law.







Within Bnei Israel, there was a family composed of Amram and Yocheved, Aaron and Miriam. Shortly after Pharaoh enacted his cruel law, a baby was born and was hidden for three months so that the Egyptians could not find him.

The baby grew, and the family understood they could no longer hide him. That is why Yocheved made a basket and put the baby inside. At night, the mother carefully placed the basket in the river and asked Miriam to take care of the baby until it arrived in good hands. Miriam did so during the long hours of the night.

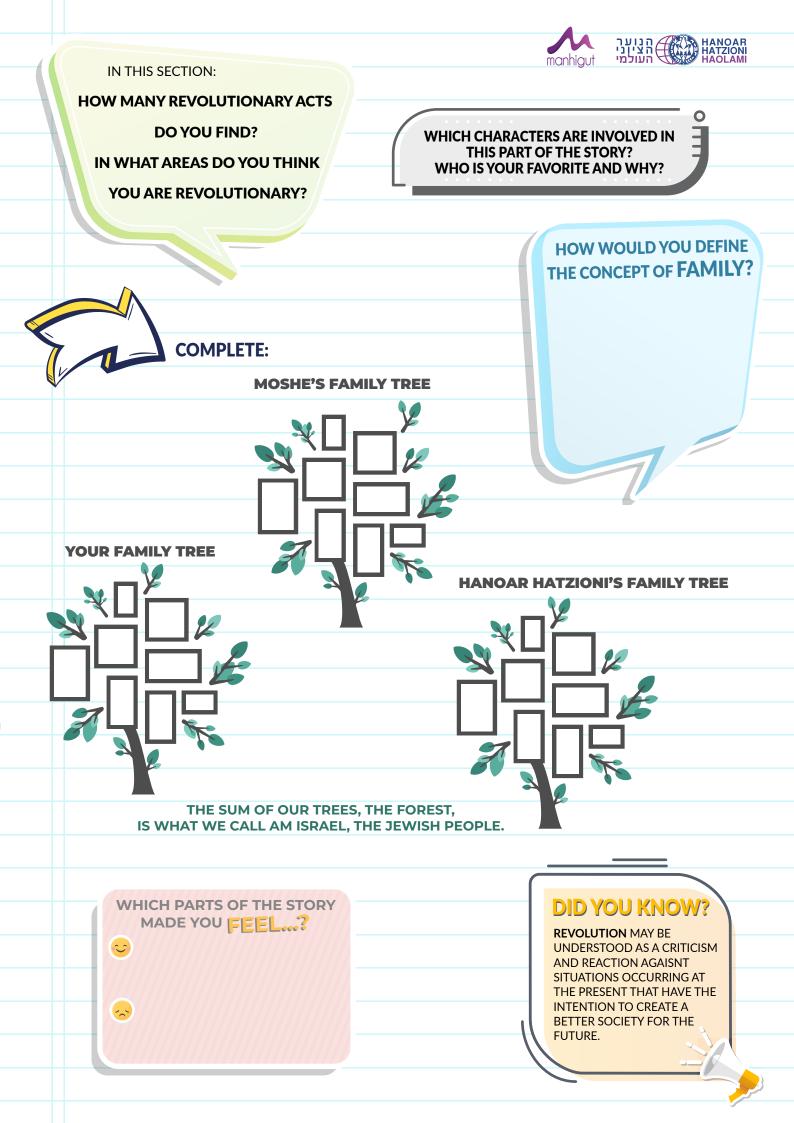
In the morning, Pharaoh's daughter, Batya, went out to the river with her servants. Suddenly she saw a black basket in the water. Batya asked her servants to bring her the basket to see what was inside.

Pharaoh's daughter opened the basket and saw a Hebrew baby crying. When Miriam realized that Batya spared the life of the baby, she came out of her hiding place and asked Batya if she wanted her to find a Hebrew woman who could breastfeed the baby. Pharaoh's daughter accepted her proposal.

Miriam ran to her house and asked her mother to introduce herself to Pharaoh's daughter quickly. When she arrived, the woman asked Yocheved to take the baby home and breastfeed him until he grew up.

Yocheved took care of the baby until he grew up, and even though they were very happy with him, it was time to say goodbye. Yocheved brought her son to Batya, who adopted him as her own.

Pharaoh's daughter took care of the baby, loved and pampered him. She named him: Moshe.





Moshe grew up and became a brave and strong young man, yet he was sad as he saw how Bnei Israel worked hard as slaves.

One day Moshe left the palace and saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave terribly. Moshe, wanting to defend the Hebrew man, hit the Egyptian and covered him with sand.

The next day, Moshe left the palace and saw two Hebrew men fighting with each other. Moshe asked one of them, "Why are you fighting with your partner?" The Hebrew man replied, "Who are you to be a judge among us? Do you plan to kill us as you did the Egyptian? "

Moshe understood that his actions had become known and that if Pharaoh found out what had happened, his life would be at risk. So he fled to the land of Midian. Upon arriving in Midian, he looked for a water well; there he refreshed himself and rested.

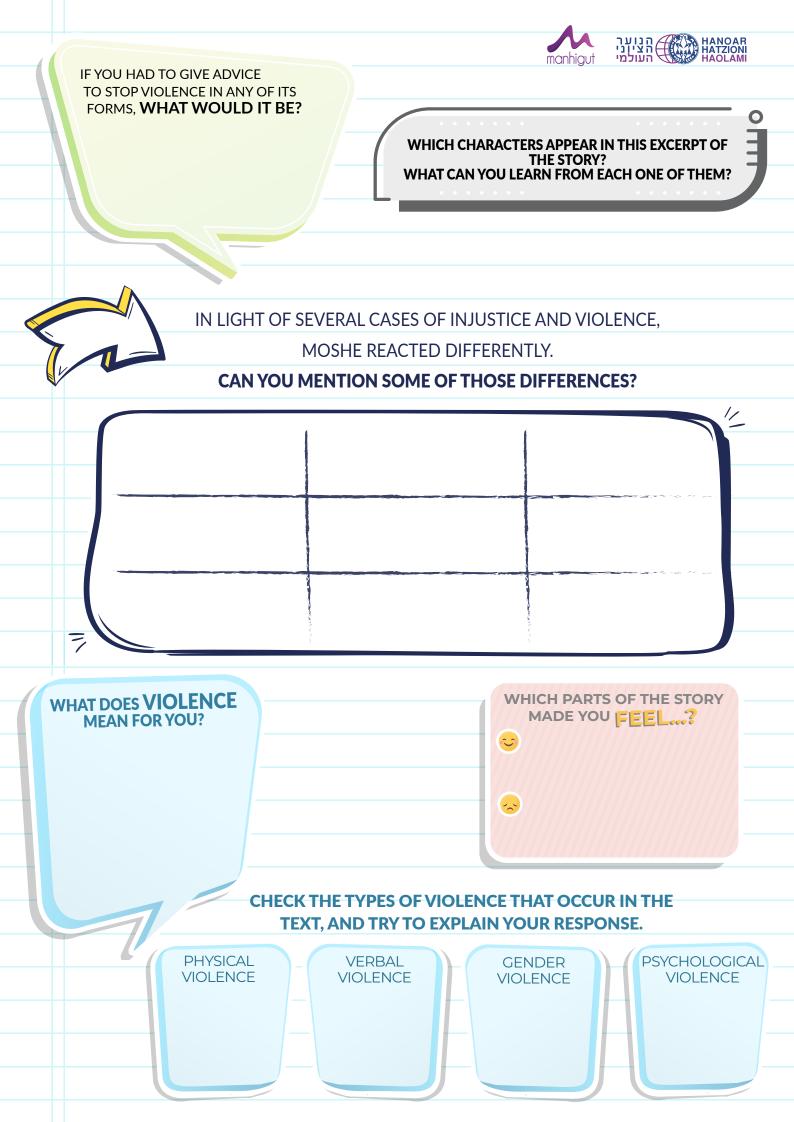
Suddenly, seven shepherdesses approached with their sheep to the water well, and after them, other shepherds arrived who drove the shepherdesses out of the place to let their sheep drink first.

Moshe, seeing this bad behavior, got up to defend the women. He expelled the shepherds and helped the shepherdesses give their animals water.

The women returned to their homes while Moshe stayed by the water well. Yitro, the girls' father, was surprised to see them return so early, so his daughter told him what had happened.

Yitro asked his daughters to go back to find Moshe and invite him for dinner at their house. So it was, and from this day, Moshe stayed there. Later, Moshe married Tzipora, Yitro's daughter.

Tzipora had a son whose name was Gershon since Moshe was "ger" (foreigner) in this land.





Moshe was a shepherd in Midian, but he was not planning on staying there forever.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, Pharaoh died. The new Pharaoh was even more evil than the previous one and enslaved Bnei Israel with greater cruelty, so much so that God heard their cry.

One day Moshe went out with his sheep to a mountain near Midian. As he thought about the suffering of his people, he saw an incredible image before his eyes: a burning bush that was not consumed by the flames!

Moshe approached slowly until suddenly, he heard a voice calling him: "Moshe, Moshe." Moshe answered: "Here I am!" Moshe took off his sandals after God told him that he was standing in a holy place.

God said to Moshe: "I saw the suffering of my people and heard their cry. The time has come to get Bnei Israel out of the land of Egypt and take them to a sweet land that emanates milk and honey. Go to Pharaoh's house and ask him: 'Let my people go.'"

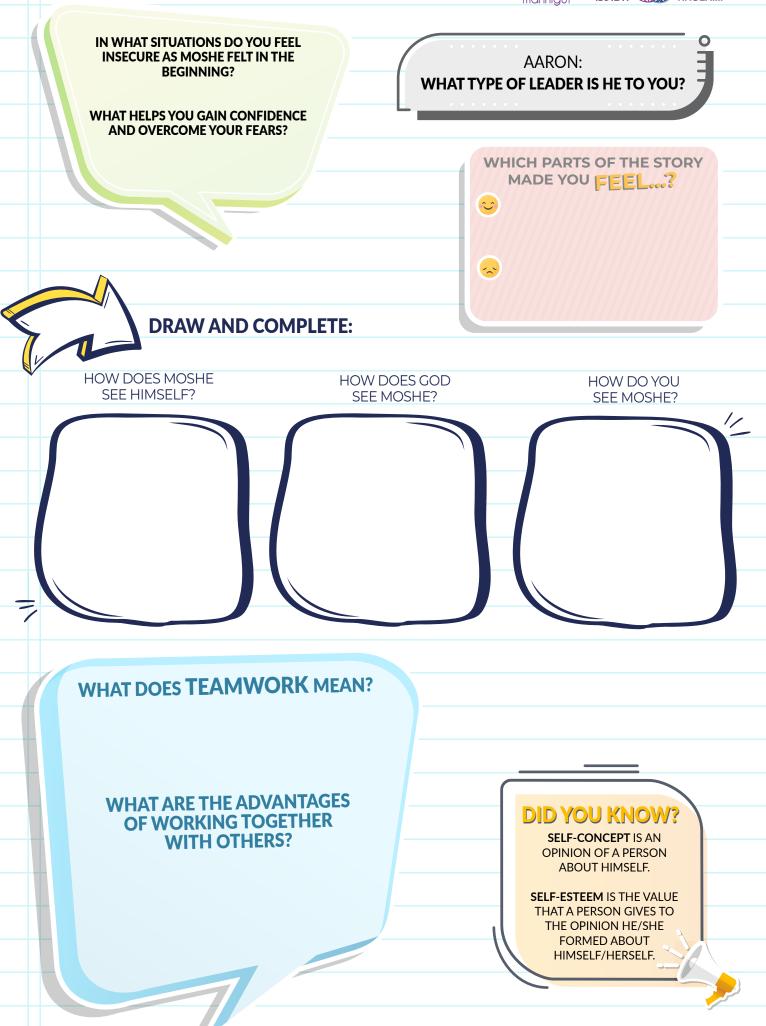
Moshe answered God: "Who am I for Pharaoh to listen to my words?" Seeing that Moshe did not trust himself, God encouraged him, saying that he would accompany him.

For Moshe to prove to Bnei Israel that he was really sent by God, God gave Moshe three incredible signs: The first one was that his staff would become a snake when thrown on the floor, and when the snake was grabbed by the tail, it would again become a staff. The second one was that when Moshe would take his hand out of his pocket, it would be leprous, and only after putting it back inside the pocket would it become normal again. The third was that Moshe was to take the water of a well and transform it into blood.

But Moshe still did not feel secure and confident about fulfilling God's mission, especially since it was very difficult for him to speak and express himself clearly. But God still believed that he was the right person.

Moshe insisted once again: "God, please find someone better than me to free Bnei Israel from Egypt." God understood that Moshe needed someone to help him, so he suggested that this person be Aaron, his older brother. Only then did Moshe accept the mission.







Moshe returned to Yitro's house to prepare his things and set out on his way back to Egypt.

Moshe told Yitro that he needed to go back to Egypt. His father-in-law thought that Moshe missed his family because many years had passed since he had left his land, so he let him go.

Before leaving Midian, God spoke to Moshe again and said, "Moshe, tell Pharaoh to let my people go. But know that he will not agree because I will harden his heart. Only after Egypt gets what it deserves for all of the sufferings it has caused Bnei Israel - Pharaoh will liberate them."

Moshe met Aaron and told him what God had told him. Together they traveled to Egypt and talked to Bnei Israel. Aaron relayed to them that God sent Moshe to free them from slavery and showed them the three signs that God had given Moshe.

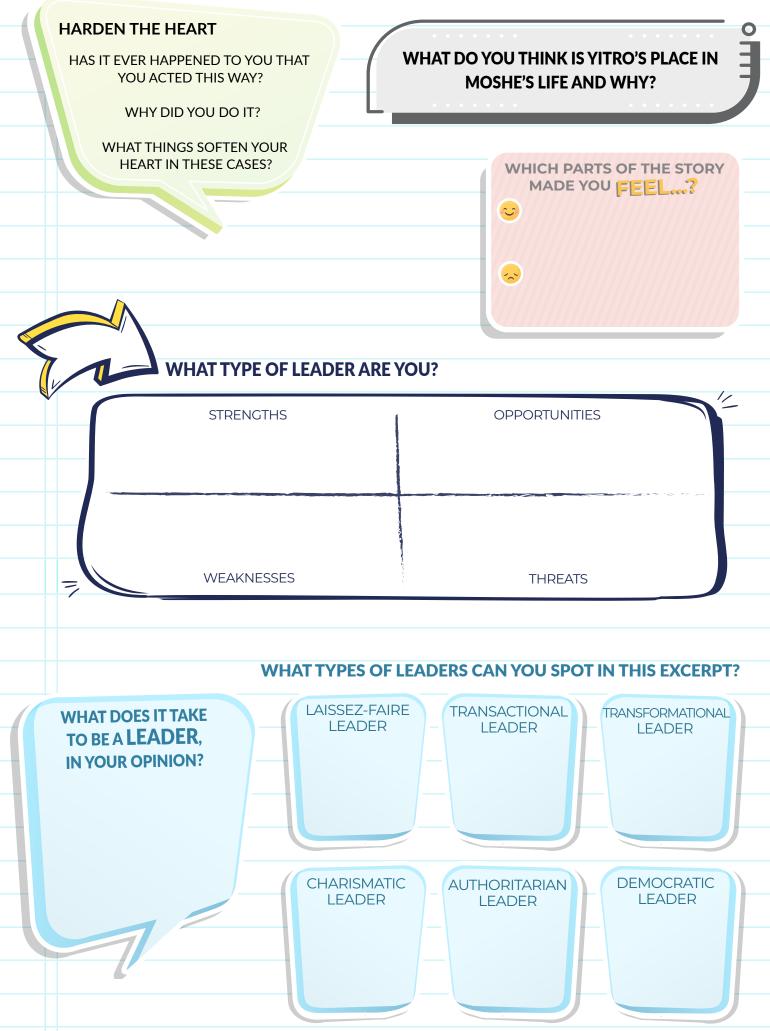
Bnei Israel believed Aaron and Moshe and were filled with joy and excitement, but now it was time to meet with Pharaoh and tell him what God had asked for.

God told Moshe, "Go and tell Pharaoh: 'Thus said the God of Israel: "Let my people go." But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and therefore, he will not agree. I will punish him for all the suffering he caused Bnei Israel. This time, when you go see Pharaoh, show him the signs I gave to you."

Aaron and Moshe appeared in front of Pharaoh. Aaron threw his staff at Pharaoh, and it turned into a snake. Pharaoh called his sorcerers so they could do the same, and they succeeded. But the incredible thing was that Aaron's snake swallowed Pharaoh's sorcerers' snakes.

Pharaoh was surprised; he had never seen anything like that. However, he did not authorize the departure of Bnei Israel from Egypt. Now Pharaoh was going to receive the punishment he deserved.







Moshe and Aaron arrived in the palace and told Pharaoh: "Thus said the God of Israel: 'Let my people go." Pharaoh listened and said: "Who is this God that I should obey him and let the people of Israel go? Of course, I will not let them go."

Moshe and Aaron tried to convince Pharaoh to let Bnei Israel go, even if it was only for three days to go to the desert and offer sacrifice, but Pharaoh did not accept this either.

After Moshe and Aaron left the palace, Pharaoh asked his secretaries to impose much more work on the Israelites than before and still carry out their daily tasks. In his eyes, if Bnei Israel could think of offering sacrifices to their God, it was because they had too much free time.

The Egyptians became even more aggressive, and it was impossible for Bnei Israel to comply with Pharaoh's demands.

Bnei Israel were angry with Moshe and Aaron: "Why did you make Pharaoh angry at us?" Moshe heard the new sanctions that Pharaoh had imposed and was saddened.

Moshe spoke to God: "Look at what is happening with Bnei Israel. Since I spoke with Pharaoh, things have gotten worse, and now they are sadder than before". God reassured Moshe and said to him: "Soon, you will see what happens with Pharaoh. Not only will Pharaoh let them go, but he will demand for them to leave Egypt."

God told Moshe: "Tomorrow morning, go to the river with your staff. There you will find Pharaoh and say to him: "Thus said God, 'Let my people go." But Pharaoh will not agree. Therefore, Aaron will touch the river with the staff, and the water will turn into blood.

Morning came, and Moshe and Aaron headed to the river. Next to it, they saw Pharaoh and told him: "God of Israel sent us to ask you to let his people go, and if you do not, he will turn the water into blood".

When Pharaoh refused, Aaron touched the water with his staff, and it turned into blood. The Egyptians could not find pure water for seven days.

FOR THE EGYPTIANS,

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WATER WAS SOMETHING SAFE, EVIDENT AND NATURAL, NEVERTHELESS, FROM ONE MOMENT TO ANOTHER, ALL THAT CHANGED AND THEY HAD TO FACE A NEW AND UNKOWN SITUATION.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A SIMILAR SITUATION?

WHAT FEELINGS AND SENSATIONS HAS THIS SITUATION GENERATED IN YOU?

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST WAY TO ACT IN LIGHT OF CHANGES THAT WE DID NOT CHOOSE, BUT WHICH ARE IMPOSED ON US?



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WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BNEI ISRAEL'S BEHAVIOR IN THIS CHAPTER?

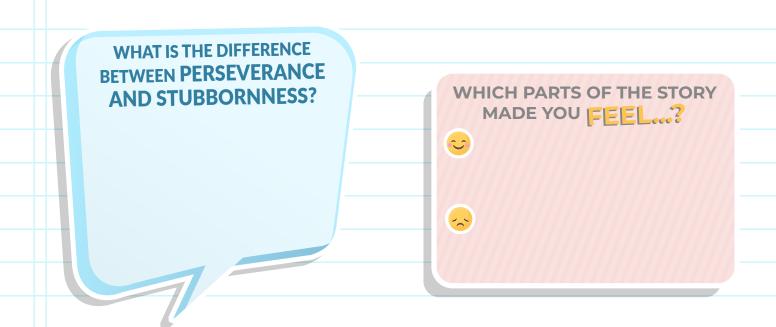
WHAT OTHER THINGS DO YOU THINK WOULD HAVE HELPED BNEI ISRAEL TO GET OUT OF THE SITUATION IN WHICH THEY WERE FOUND?

MOSHE AND AARON NEED TO FREE BNEI ISRAEL FROM EGYPT, BUT

PHARAOH DOES NOT AGREE TO DO SO.

WHAT STRATEGIES DO THEY USE TO RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST STRATEGY OR TOOL TO RESOLVE A CONFLICT WITH ANOTHER PERSON?





Aaron and Moshe returned to Pharaoh and said to him: "This is what God said: 'Let my people go,' and if you do not agree, all the land of Egypt will be filled with frogs." Pharaoh refused again. Aaron raised his staff, and frogs began to come out of the river nonstop. The entire land of Egypt was filled with frogs. This time, Pharaoh started to feel it was too much for him and asked his servants to call Moshe.

Moshe and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh, and he begged them to ask God to stop the plague, and if he did, he promised to fulfill God's request to free Bnei Israel.

Moshe asked God, and the frogs disappeared immediately. At that moment, Pharaoh regretted what he had promised. For this reason, God brought other plagues: lice, wild animals, pestilence, boils, thunderstorms of hail and fire, locusts.

After each one of these plagues, Pharaoh called Aaron and Moshe to intercede before God and ask him to stops the plagues. So it was with all the plagues.

One morning, no Egyptians could leave their houses because God brought a terrible plague: total darkness. The Egyptians could not move for three days because it was impossible to distinguish between day and night. But Bnei Israel had light since God protected them from all the plagues.

Pharaoh could no longer endure these plagues. He called Moshe and Aaron to tell them that they could all leave without their cattle. Moshe did not agree since Bnei Israel did not plan to return to Egypt. Enraged Pharaoh said to Moshe: "Get out of my sight and never return." Moshe replied: "So it will be. You will never see me again."

God brought nine plagues upon Egypt and told Moshe: "After the tenth plague, Pharaoh will expel you from the land of Egypt."

Now Bnei Israel had to prepare for their departure from Egypt. God explained Moshe what they were to do.

Moshe told Bnei Israel: "In ten days, you will have to sacrifice a lamb, mark your doors with its blood and eat the entire lamb that same night. Do not eat it with bread, but with matza and maror. You will have to eat fast, like people who will soon be free. But do not leave your houses until the morning."

THE VALUE OF WORDS

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PHARAOH PROMISES TO FREE BENI ISRAEL IF GOD STOPS THE PLAGUES.. HOWEVER, HE NEVER KEEPS HIS WORD.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO FULFILL A PROMISE?



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HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE PHARAOH?

IF YOU HAD TO DEFINE THE CURRENT PLAGUES, WHAT WOULD

THEY BE?





It was midnight, and the last plague arrived: the death of the firstborn sons of Egypt. Yet, the firstborn Israelites lived because God passed over (Pasach) the houses of Bnei Israel.

Upon discovering the death of his eldest son, Pharaoh left the palace and said to Moshe: "Leave Egypt; leave quickly." But Bnei Israel did not leave immediately because God had said they could only leave in the morning.

In the morning, Bnei Israel left their houses. They left in a hurry, and the bread they prepared did not have enough time to rise since the Egyptians were urging them to leave. Every family left with their belongings and the unrisen dough from which they made matzot. In memory of this, we eat matzot on Pesach to this day. Everything was going well until, suddenly, they reached the shores of the Red Sea. Meanwhile, Pharaoh had already regretted letting them leave Egypt, so he sent his guard to chase them and force them to return.

When Bnei Israel saw this situation (the sea ahead and the Egyptians behind), they began to complain to Moshe. Moshe, understanding the gravity of the situation, decided to pray to God and ask for his help.

God, observing the situation, explained to Moshe that this was not the time to pray, but to take concrete actions. At this moment, Nachshon ben Aminadav bravely entered the water, and at that moment, a wonderful miracle occurred: the water of the Red Sea parted in two, leaving a path in the middle so Bnei Israel could reach the other shore. And so they did.

The Egyptian guards quickly entered the seabed to chase and catch them, but at that moment, the water closed again, drowning them all.

From here, Bnei Israel began a great adventure in the desert, where they received the Torah, the Tablets of the Law and the Ten Commandments in Mount Sinai, and where they wandered for 40 years until they reached the Promised Land, the land of Israel.

This concludes our story of the Departure from Egypt.

We hope you have learned a lot! Now it is your turn to tell the story of Pesach in the Seder with your family! Chag Pesach Kasher ve'Sameach!



CHAGIM BATNUA:





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