

BO (Go)

The Ten Plagues



Exodus 10:1 And יהוה said to Moses, go in to Pharaoh: for I have hardened **את** his heart **את** and the heart of his servants, that I might show My signs before him: 2 And that you may tell your son and your son's son, **את** what I have done in Egypt **את** and My signs which I have done among them; that you may know that I am יהוה. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה harden Pharaoh and his servants' heart? The reason why **את** hardens Pharaoh's heart is so that Moses may tell his descendants what **את** did in Egypt, so that the Israelites and Egyptians may know יהוה Father. **Romans 9:17** For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." 18 Therefore has he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. C-MATS

Question: Was it unjust for יהוה to harden the heart of Pharaoh and then punish Egypt for what Pharaoh did as a result of his hardened heart? Pharaoh was not an innocent or righteous man. He was a brutal dictator overseeing the terrible abuse and oppression of the Israelites, who likely numbered over 1.5 million people at that time. The Egyptian pharaohs had enslaved the Israelites and ordered male Israelite babies be killed at birth (Exodus 1:16). Pharaoh and Egypt had horribly sinned against יהוה. It would have been just if יהוה had completely annihilated Egypt. The plagues, as terrible as they were, actually demonstrate יהוה's mercy in not completely destroying Egypt, which would have been a perfectly just penalty. We have all sinned against יהוה (Romans 3:23), and the just penalty for that sin is death (Romans 6:23). Therefore, יהוה's hardening and punishing a person is not unjust; it is actually merciful in comparison to what the person deserves.

3 And Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, יהוה Elohim of the Hebrews said, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go that they may serve Me. 4 If אתה you refuse to let go את- My people, tomorrow I will bring locusts onto your coast. C-MATS



Question: Why did יהוה send locusts to punish Egypt? יהוה punishes “measure for measure.” The Egyptians forced their Hebrew slaves to grow crops, so the locusts devoured the crops. (Chumash)

5 And they will cover את- the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see את- the earth: and they will eat את- the rest of what has escaped which remains from the hail and they will eat את- every tree which grows in the field: 6 And they will fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians; neither your fathers nor your father's fathers have seen this, since the day that they were upon the earth to this day. And Moses turned and left Pharaoh. 7 And Pharaoh's servants said to him, How long will this man be a snare to us? Let go of את- the men that they may serve את- יהוה their Elohim; don't you know that Egypt is destroyed? 8 And they were brought again את- Moses ואת- and Aaron to Pharaoh: and he said to them, Go serve את- יהוה your Elohim: but who will be going? C-MATS

Question: How was the Yah-head working together in this verse? It is rare that you see the wording “יהוה את and Elohim” mentioned all together in scripture but in Exodus 10:7-8 Pharaohs’ servants tells Pharaoh to let go of את men so that they may go serve את יהוה their Elohim. Again this is a perfect picture of the Yah-head, יהוה Father working through את Yahshua, together as ONE. C-MATS

Question: Pharaoh was stubborn and would not let the Hebrews go. What is the difference between being principled and being stubborn? Being principled means having a clear set of well thought out values and being willing to make sacrifices to uphold them. It is a very positive trait. Stubbornness is the negative trait of being unwilling to compromise or change one's mind simply out of a desire to have one's own way.

Question: If we run into a stubborn person how can we help him get 'unstuck'? Often a person's stubbornness is his way of saying he feels like he isn't being heard. If we make an extra effort to try to understand his point of view and let him know we do, he will often become much more open to hearing our side of things. We should also be willing to compromise wherever we can, and be sure we aren't acting a bit stubborn ourselves

9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds; for we *must hold a feast to* יהוה. C-MATS

Question: Why must all the men, women, and children go worship יהוה? The Torah requires the same of every boy and girl once they come of age as it does for the men and women. All commandments are equally binding on everyone, and when the nation is asked to bring offerings to יהוה, everyone must participate. (Chumash)

Question: Why did Pharaoh only want the men to go with Moses? Pharaoh was willing to let the men go, as long as the children remain behind; because as long as the younger generation remains "in Egypt", there would be no future for the people of Israel. (Chumash)

10 And Pharaoh said to them, יהוה *must be with you as I will let go, אתכם you ואת and your little ones! Watch out because evil is before you (I cannot trust you).* C-MATS

Question: What did Pharaoh see in the future? There is a star named Evil (Ra'ah). Pharaoh's astrologers had shown him that that star signifying a bloody end would govern Israel's destiny in the Wilderness where they were seeking to go. Moses alluded to this prediction after the sin of the Gold Calf. As part of his prayer, he said that if יהוה destroyed the Hebrew people, the Egyptians would say that Pharaoh's astrologers had foretold Israel's bitter end, for they would say יהוה took them out under the astrological influence of the star called Evil. The truth was that the "blood" would be that of the mass circumcision of the nation under Joshua's leadership after Israel crossed the Jordan into Israel. (Chumash)

11 It will not happen! Go now with the men and serve יהוה את; for אתם that אתה you did desire. And אתם they were driven out גאת from presence of Pharaoh. C-MATS

Question: Pharaoh kept making the same mistake of not listening to Moses and letting the Hebrew slaves go free, so he had to pay the price of not listening by plagues destroying Egypt. Why do you think people repeat mistakes? A big reason is that they don't think about what went wrong the first time, and why. So when the same circumstances arise, they're bound to make the same wrong choice. With a little reflection and forethought, a person can save himself a lot of grief.

Question: A wise person learns from his mistakes. Do you think there can be an even higher wisdom than that? While it's good to learn from mistakes, a real wise person doesn't have to live them - but can rather observe the mistakes others make, see where they went wrong and take steps not to fall into the same trap.

Question: Does learning from mistakes mean that we should try to accomplish something once, and then if it fails, never try the same thing again? While we should learn from 'what went wrong' and adjust things if we can - sometimes it just takes persistence and a lot of tries before things work out.

12 And יהוה said to Moses, stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat אֶת every herb of the land, even אֶת all that the hail has left. 13 And stretched forth Moses אֶת his rod over the land of Egypt and ויהוה brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all *that* night; and *when* it was morning, the east wind brought אֶת the locusts. C-MATS



The land was darkened

14 And the locusts went out over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the coasts of Egypt: they were very terrible; there were never locusts like these and neither will there be again. 15 For they covered אֶת the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate אֶת every herb of the land וְאֵת and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained no green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field through all the land of Egypt. 16 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron quickly; and he said, חָטָאתִי I sinned to לַיהוָה your Elohim and against you. 17 Now please forgive חָטָאתִי my sin only this once and to לַיהוָה your Elohim that he may take away from me this אֶת death. 18 And Moses went out from Pharaoh and asked יהוָה. 19 And יהוָה turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away אֶת the locusts and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוָה turn the locusts away from Egypt? Jasher 80: And יהוָה sent and brought numerous locusts into Egypt, which devoured all that the hail had left remaining. Then the Egyptians rejoiced at the locusts, although they consumed the produce of the field, and they caught them in abundance and salted them for food. And יהוָה turned a mighty wind of the sea, which took away all the locusts, even those that were salted, and thrust them into the Red Sea; not one locust remained within the boundaries of Egypt.

Question: What gods of Egypt were defeated through the plague of locusts? There were many gods associated with the crops of Egypt, for the crops and the Nile were the source for all life in the country. There was Nepri, the god of grain; Ermutet, the goddess of childbirth and crops; Thermuthis, the goddess of fertility and the harvest; and Seth, another god of crops. There have been discoveries of many amulets in the shape of a locust that were probably worn by the Egyptians to ward off the swarms that would ravage their crops. The locusts were so numerous that Exodus 10:15 says **For they covered אֶת the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened.** The locusts would not have just destroyed crops but also the trees and the fruit of the land.

20 But hardened יהוָה אֶת the heart of Pharaoh, so that he would not let go אֶת Children of Israel. 21 And יהוָה said to Moses, Stretch out your hand toward heavens, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may be felt. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוָה bring darkness upon the Egyptians? Jasher 80: At that time many of the people of Israel died who had rebelled against יהוָה and who would not listen to Moses and Aaron, and did not believe in them that יהוָה had sent them. And who had said, "We will not go out from Egypt lest we perish with hunger in a desolate wilderness," and who would not listen to the voice of Moses. And יהוָה plagued them in the three days of darkness, and the Israelites buried them in those days, without the Egyptians knowing about them or rejoicing over them. And the darkness was very great in Egypt for three days, and any person who was standing when the darkness came, remained standing in his place, and he that was sitting remained sitting, and he that was lying continued lying in the same state, and he that was walking remained sitting upon the ground in the same spot; and this thing happened to all the Egyptians, until the darkness had passed away.

Plague Of Darkness

22 And stretched forth Moses אֶת־ his hand toward heavens; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. C-MATS

Question: When Moses stretches forth his hand, it is actually אֶת hand of authority that brings the plague of darkness upon Egypt for 3 days. This is a beautiful picture of man walking in covenant with אֶת יהוה because we become an extension of the Yah-head. BUT why a Plague of Darkness and why 3 Days? This could only be a type and foreshadow of אֶת Yahshua our Messiah's death at Calvary and 3 days later His resurrection provides freedom to all those who repent and enter into covenant through His blood with Father because right after אֶת Plague of Darkness is the death of the first born and Israel is SET FREE! C-MATS

Question: What gods of Egypt were defeated with the plague of darkness? The plague would have been a direct attack against Pharaoh, for he was the divine representation of the sun god Ra. Ra was the chief deity of Egypt and the sun god and their son Khons was the god of the moon. The sun god Ra was considered to be a great blessing to the land for his faithfulness in providing the warmth and light of the sun each day without fail. Horus was the god of light who personified the life-giving power of the Sun. He was usually represented as a falcon-headed man wearing a sun disk as a crown. There was also the god Ptah, the one who created the moon, the sun and the earth; Atum, the god of the sunset; and Shu, the god of sunlight and air. Khepre, who often appeared in the shape of the scarab, was a form of Ra.

23 They could not see one אֶת־ another, neither could anyone get up from his place for three days: but all the Children of Israel had light in their houses. 24 And Pharaoh called to Moses and said, Go and serve אֶת־ יהוה; only let your flocks and your herds stay: let your little ones also go with you. C-MATS

Question: Why did the Hebrews have herds? Even in enslavement, the Hebrews maintained the right to own herds, and they had considerable wealth. Wealth is no guarantee that there would be no persecution-or even the murder of their children. (Chumash)

25 And Moses said, **אֵתָהּ** *You must give us our sacrifices and burnt offerings that we may sacrifice to לַיהוָה our Elohim.* 26 Our cattle will go with us also; not a hoof *will be left behind; because we must take them to serve אֵתָהּ יהוָה our Elohim; because we will not know how we must serve אֵתָהּ יהוָה until we arrive there.* 27 But hardened יהוָה **אֵתָהּ** *the heart of Pharaoh and he would not let them go.* 28 And Pharaoh said to him, Go away from me; be careful not *to come before my face any more; because in the day that you see my face, you will die.* 29 And Moses said, You have spoken well I will *not* see your face again. C-MATS



Borrow from your neighbor jewels

Exodus 11:1 And יהוָה said to Moses, I will bring one *more* plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; then he will let **אֶתְכֶם** *you* go: when he lets you go, he will drive **אֶתְכֶם** *you* out of here completely. 2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow **מֵאֵת** *from* his neighbor, and every woman **מֵאֵת** *from* her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. 3 And gave יהוָה **אֶתָהּ** *favor* the people in the sight of the Egyptians. Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt in the sight of Pharaohs servants and in the sight of the people. C-MATS

Question: Moses was the greatest person who ever lived, yet he was also the most humble. How could this be? Moses was well aware that he had talents and attributes beyond any of his peers. However he also realized the source of those talents: יהוָה. So he didn't take his greatness 'personally', as a reason to be haughty, rather he felt privileged that יהוָה had chosen to give them to him, and this made him extremely humble.

Question: What should a person do if he feels himself growing haughty, and wants to eliminate this negative trait? One effective technique is to temporarily go to the other extreme, and act extra humble. For instance, we could let people go ahead of us in line, even if we don't feel like it. Another thing is to try to grow in our awareness of יהוה. The more we become aware of His greatness and awesome power, we will realize that we don't have that much to be haughty about.

Question: Moses had a good reputation among the Hebrews and Egyptians. The 'crown of a good name' is more valuable than a monarch's crown of rulership. How do you understand this idea? A big part of having a good 'name' or reputation is being someone others know they can trust to keep his word. When we are straight, honest and trustworthy, we give great pleasure to יהוה, influence others to do the same and help in a real way to improve society and the world. **Proverbs 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favor rather than silver and gold.**

Question: Are there things that are genuinely necessary for us to be happy? Happiness, in truth, is an attitude that comes from within. One person can have everything and still feel miserable. Someone else can seem to have nothing yet feel happy and content. So what is necessary for our happiness is essentially to develop the attitude of appreciating what you have, rather than relying on any specific circumstances. By learning to rely on יהוה and to be happy with whatever situation He sends us, we can literally always be happy.

4 And Moses said, יהוה said about midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt: 5 And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sits upon his throne to the firstborn of the female servant that is behind the mill and all the firstborn of beasts. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה carry out the plague? יהוה Himself, not an angel, would carry out the plague, for two reasons: 1) because of His love for Israel, and 2) since even the firstborn of males would die. Only יהוה could know their identity. (Chumash)

Question: Why were the firstborn sons of the female Egyptian servants killed? The servants were also enslaving the Israelites and were happy about their misfortune. (Chumash)

Question: Why were the firstborn animals killed? Because the Egyptians worshipped them, and when יהוה punishes any nation, He punishes its deity. (Chumash)

Question: Which gods of the Egyptians were defeated during the death of the firstborn? This plague was directed against "all of the gods of Egypt" (Exodus 12:12) and would show the total inability of the gods of Egypt to protect their subjects in the face of unparalleled tragedy. The death of the firstborn son would cripple a family legally and emotionally. This would have been humiliating to Isis, the winged goddess of fertility; Meskenet, the goddess who presided at the birth of children; to Hathor, one of the seven deities who attended the birth of children; to Min, the god of procreation; to Selket, the guardian of life; and to Renenutet, the cobra-goddess and guardian of Pharaoh. Not only is this an attack against the gods but also against the Pharaoh. It undermined his immortality through his inability to protect his son, who was a god as well, and it undermined his ability to provide unity and protection over the land of Egypt.



The Angel of Death, a painting by Jules-Elie Delaunay.

6 And there will be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as never heard before and never will be heard ever again. 7 But a dog will not growl against any of *the* Children of Israel or against man or beast that you may know that יהוה does put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. 8 And your servants will come down to me and bow down themselves to me saying, Get out אתה you and all the people that follow you: and after that I will go out. And Moses went out from Pharaoh *with* great anger. 9 And יהוה said to Moses, Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. 10 And Moses and Aaron did את all these wonders before Pharaoh: and hardened את the heart of Pharaoh, so that he would not let את Children of Israel go out of his land. C-MATS



Question: Why do you think that יהוה often conceals the good things He's doing for us, rather than giving them to us straight out? A lot depends upon how you define 'good'. If we equate good with being easy or comfortable, indeed it would seem like the straight path would be preferable. However a much deeper and more satisfying form of 'good' is attaining character development, and a spiritual outlook on life. The very process of grappling with challenges, holding strong to our trust in יהוה, and seeing the good emerge, helps develop and acquire this ultimate spiritual good.

Question: What personal qualities do you think would help a person to be able to successfully navigate through confusing times, when the good in his life is hard to see? One very important quality is humility, or an ability to admit to one's self that there are things that are simply beyond our capacity to understand. By realizing that we can't understand the reasons for everything that happens and building a more trusting relationship with יהוה, we will have achieved a much deeper spiritual outlook on life that will serve us well, both in good times and times of darkness.

Spiritual exercise: Can you think of something that seemed bad at first but then turned out to be good? **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love יהוה, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28.** יהוה will only bring good to you, His child. You may feel at times like TOO MANY things have happened that don't look very good to you. You will eventually find out that they were ALL good for you. Look for the good in things that happen to you that may seem to be bad today.

Question: Who do you think would maintain a greater appreciation of life: someone who is blessed with many good things like good health, wealth, etc., or someone who is lacking these things? At first glance it would be reasonable to expect that the more a person has been blessed with, the more appreciative he or she is. In fact, often the opposite is true. Often, when we lack something that others may take for granted, do we come to appreciate how valuable these things really are. Sometimes, the lacks in our lives are opportunities to develop an appreciation for life's many gifts.

Question: We should make special blessings thanking יהוה before and after eating and drinking. What do you think is the purpose for this? How might it affect our level of awareness and appreciation? When we stop and make a blessing before partaking in something we enjoy, we acknowledge יהוה as having provided it for us. When we do this we become keenly aware of the fact that we are receiving a gift. This process, each time we repeat it, builds our sense of appreciation and gratefulness to all the good that יהוה has given us. Furthermore, as we grow into more aware and appreciative people we come to recognize and acknowledge the people in our lives and all they have done for us. Living life in this way feels great as we come to view everything as a "blessing".

Question: When we feel and express our gratitude to people who have helped us in the past, is it only for their benefit or do we gain something as well? When we teach ourselves to feel and express our appreciation of others, we begin to transform our lives. When we think about it, we start to see how much good we have received from so many people in our lives. This helps us to feel good about them, which in turn leads them to feel good about us. We begin to go about our day feeling surrounded by kindness and in turn begin to act more kindly to others as well. This is a big step toward making the world a better, more pleasant place to live.

Spiritual Exercise: Express your gratitude to a person who has helped you in the past or recently this week. Give him a call or write him a note. Do something in return for him.

Spiritual Exercise: What are some of the little things in life you take for granted that deserve your appreciation? Be appreciative of all the small things that have been given to you. Be more appreciative this week.

Exodus 12:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, **2 This month will be the beginning of months: it will be the first month of the year for you. C-MATS**

Question: What does the word “month” in Hebrew mean? Month means renewal. Just as the moon disappears at the end of each month, but returns and grows to fullness, so Israel may suffer exile and decline, but it always renews itself until the coming of the Messiah. (Chumash)

Question: What calendar did יהוה begin for the Hebrews? The Hebrew calendar is based on the moon, and it is regulated by the sun. The length of the months is 29 or 30 days. A “leap year” adds a thirteenth month to the year seven times every nineteen years so that Nissan always remains in its proper season. (Chumash)

Question: Why was the lunar calendar changed to a solar calendar? The ancient Egyptians used a lunar calendar exclusively until they adopted the first solar calendar. The Egyptians changed the calendar based on their worship of Ra, the sun god. Julius Caesar adopted the Egyptian calendar and spread the Julian Calendar through the Roman empire, and later forced it on the Jewish people who lived in the Roman Empire.

3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel. saying, In the tenth day of this month every man will take a lamb according to house of their אבות fathers, a lamb for each house. C-MATS

Question: What does the word “lamb” mean here? The Hebrew word refers to both the young of both sheep and goats. There is no one-word translation in English. (Chumash)

Question: What is meant by “the father’s house”? The father’s house is what is known today as an extended family, such as grandparents with the families of their children. If this group was so large that one animal would not provide the minimum required amount of meat for each participant, then an animal should be used for each household. (Chumash)

4 And if the household is too small for one lamb, then let him and his neighbor next to his house share it according to the number of persons; dividing it according to the number of people eating the lamb. 5 Your animal should be without blemish, a one year old male: you can take it from the sheep or goats: Prophecy Fulfilled-Ex. 12:5 A Lamb without blemish-1 Pet. 1:19. 6 And you will keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel will kill ארו it (him) in the evening. C-MATS

Question: Why was it important to calculate how many lambs were to be prepared for each house? The people who will participate in the eating of each offering must be calculated according to how much they can eat, because all of the meat must be eaten that night or thrown away. יהוה does not want you to waste any food. (Chumash)

Question: Why was Moses fearful to slaughter the lamb in Egypt? Now the Egyptians had a strange custom: they worshiped sheep. No one dared to do anything to offend a "holy" sheep. To actually eat one was unthinkable. So when יהוה told Moses to tell the Israelite people to all take sheep and publicly roast and eat them to celebrate their going out of Egypt, the people were afraid. "But what will the Egyptians think?" they asked. "Don't worry," said Moses, "יהוה wants to show the Egyptians once and for all that their 'sheep-gods' have no power at all and that it's foolish to worship an animal instead of the Creator." On that night יהוה slew the Egyptian firstborn and the Israelites slaughtered their Passover lamb and ate it.

Question: How can a person learn to become courageous like that? One way is to ask ourselves in every situation 'What is the right thing to do?' instead of asking ourselves 'What will people think?' It takes courage, for sure, but we'll see that most of the time, people will also think better of us, when we show we have the guts to do what is right.

Question: What is your definition of 'courage'? There may be many definitions, but there is no greater courage than to be willing to live life according to our deepest values and convictions regardless of what other people think.

Question: How can a person discover what his or her deepest convictions are? One wise man advised to consider what we would be willing to die for - and then go out and live for these things!

Spiritual Exercise: What would you be willing to die for?

7 And they will take the blood and smear it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses in which they shall eat אֶת־הַדָּם it (him). 8 And they will eat אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר the flesh that night roast it with fire and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. C-MATS

Question: Whose flesh were the Israelites eating that night? It is אֶת־הַדָּם flesh they will be eating that night as the Passover Lamb. Exodus 12:13 and 12:23 states it is אֶת־הַדָּם blood of the Passover Lamb that will be placed on the door post and Exodus 12:17 claims that it is the אֶת־הַמַּצֵּה Unleavened Bread which they are commanded to observe this אֶת־הַמַּצֵּה day as a ordinance forever! C-MATS

Question: Why should you eat bitter herbs? He commanded them to eat bitter herbs in commemoration of "And the Egyptians embittered their lives" (Exodus 1:14). (Chumash)

9 Do not eat it raw or boiled in water but roast it with fire; its head with its legs and with its organs in it. 10 And you will let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remains until the morning you will burn with fire. 11 You will eat אֶת־הַדָּם it (him) with your loin's girded (belt), your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand; and you will eat אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר it (him) quickly, it is to לִיהוָה Passover. C-MATS

Question: Why is the festival called Pesach? The English word is Passover. יהוה brought death to the firstborn of Egypt, but he “passed” or “skipped” over the homes of the Hebrew people. (Chumash)

Question: What does it mean “loins girded”? The Hebrews should have their belts tightened, and be dressed as if they were ready for an immediate journey out of the country. (Chumash)

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will kill all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and I will execute against all the gods of Egypt judgment: I am יהוה. C-MATS

Question: I will execute against all the gods of Egypt judgment. What gods were judged and defeated during the plagues? The Egyptians worshiped over 2000 gods and goddesses, because they were constantly looking for explanations why events happened. Deities represented natural forces and phenomena, and the Egyptians supported and appeased them through offerings and rituals so that these forces would continue to function according to divine order. The authority to perform these tasks was controlled by the pharaoh, who claimed to be the representative of the deities and managed the temples where the rituals were carried out. Egyptians prayed for divine help, used rituals to compel deities to act, and called upon them for advice. Humans' relations with their deities were a fundamental part of Egyptian society. יהוה wanted to show Egypt that there were only ONE Almighty יהוה, and He controlled all things and could destroy Egypt and all their gods at any moment.

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GODS



ANUBIS



ATUM



BASTET



HORUS



TEFNUT



KHNUM



KHONSU



HATHOR



MERETSEGER



OSIRIS



ISIS



ANUKET



PTAH



THOTH



MUT



KHEPRI



SESHAT



SET

Question: What judgment was placed on their idols? The idols made of wood will rot, and the idols made of metal will melt and flow to the ground. The demonic spiritual forces that guided and protected the destiny of Egypt were struck in this plague, so that Egypt would be completely defenseless. (Chumash)

13 And the blood will be אֶתְּ a sign upon the houses where אַתְּ you are: and when I see אֶתְּ blood, I will pass over you and the plague will not come upon you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Ex 12:13 The blood of the Lamb saves from wrath-Romans 5:8.* **14** And this day will be a memorial for you; and you will keep it as a feast to לִיקוּחָהּ throughout all your generations; you will keep this feast as an ordinance forever. **15** Seven days you will eat unleavened bread; on the first day you will take away leaven out of your houses: whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day will be cut off from Israel. C-MATS

Question: When should you take all the leavened bread out of your house? The leaven must be removed before the Pesach-offering may be offered (or cooked). (Chumash)

16 And on the first day there will be a sacred assembly and on the seventh day there will be a sacred assembly for you; no work will be done in those days, except that which every man must do to prepare his food to eat, you may only do that. C-MATS

Question: What kind of work can be done on the first and seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? The necessary work for food preparation is allowed. No other kind of work may be performed on these days, even though work can be performed on the other days of the feast. (Chumash)

17 And you will observe אֶתְּ Unleavened Bread; for in this day I have brought אֶתְּ your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore, you will observe אֶתְּ day, in all your generations by an ordinance forever (*owlam*). **18** In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you will eat unleavened bread until the twenty first day of the month at evening. **19** Seven days no leaven will be found in your houses: for whoever eats that which is leavened will be cut off from the Congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or born in the land. C-MATS

Question: What punishment is given to the person who eats leavening during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? A person will suffer premature death by the hands of Heaven or have no children if he eats leavening during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The sinner must be aware of what he is doing and does so willingly, but one is not liable to this curse if he is unaware that what he is doing is forbidden. (Chumash)

20 You will eat nothing leavened; in all your houses you will eat unleavened bread. **21** Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, Take a lamb according to the number in your family and kill the Passover lamb. **22** And you take a אֶתְּ bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and smear the lintel (*overhead door*) and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; אֶתְּ and you will not go out of the door of your house until the morning. C-MATS



23 For יהוה will pass through to kill את the Egyptians; and when he sees את the blood upon the lintel and on the two side posts, יהוה will pass over the door and will not allow the Destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. C-MATS

Question: What symbol was the Israelites painting on the doors of their homes? Chai (חי) is a Hebrew word and symbol that means "life. "Let these live" was painted on the door posts. Chai is pronounced as if you were saying "hi" in English.



24 And you will observe את this matter as an ordinance for you and your sons forever (*owlam*).
 25 And it will come to pass, when you have come to the land which יהוה will give you, as He has promised, that you will keep את this את service. 26 And it will come to pass, when your children will say to you, what do you mean by את this service? 27 That you will say, it is the sacrifice to ליהוה Passover, who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt, when He struck את the Egyptians את and our houses He delivered. And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Ex. 12:21-27 Messiah is our Passover-1 Cor. 5:7.* 28 And the Children of Israel went away as had commanded את יהוה Moses and Aaron, so they did. C-MATS



29 And it came to pass at midnight and יהוה killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of *the* cattle. C-MATS

Question: Was Bathia, the woman who raised Moses, afflicted by the plagues? Jasher 80: And Bathia the daughter of Pharaoh went out with the king on that night to seek Moses and Aaron in their houses, and they found them in their houses, eating and drinking and rejoicing with all Israel. And Bathia said to Moses, "Is this the reward for the good which I have done to you, who have raised you, and you have brought this evil upon me and my father's house?" And Moses said to her, "Surely ten plagues did יהוה bring upon Egypt; did any evil come to you from any of them? Did one of them affect you? And she said, "No." And Moses said to her, "Although you are the first born to your mother, you shall not die, and no evil will reach you in the midst of Egypt." And she said, "What advantage is it to me, when I see the king, my brother, and all his household and subjects in this evil, whose first born perish with all the first born of Egypt?" And Moses said to her, "Surely your brother and his household, and subjects, the families of Egypt, would not listen to the words of יהוה, therefore did this evil come upon them. " (Chumash)

30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for *there was not* a house where one *was not* dead *in it*. C-MATS

Question: Why did every house have a corpse in it? Jasher 80 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry throughout Egypt in that night, for there was not a house in which there was not a corpse. יהוה also killed the firstborn who were not known to everyone, like those who were the products of incest and immorality. Also the likenesses of the first born of Egypt, which were carved in the walls of their houses, were destroyed, and fell to the ground. Even the bones of their firstborn who had died before this and whom they had buried in their houses, were raked up by the dogs of Egypt on that night and dragged before the Egyptians and cast before them. All the Egyptians saw this evil, which had suddenly come upon them, and all the Egyptians cried out with a loud voice. All the families of Egypt wept upon that night, each man for his son and each man for his daughter, being the first born, and the cries of Egypt was heard at a distance on that night.



The Death of the Firstborn by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema

31 And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron by night and said, Rise up and get out from among my people, both אתם you and the Children of Israel; and go serve את־יהוה as you have said. **32** Also take your flocks and your herds as you have said and be gone, but bless את־י me also. **33** And the Egyptians were urgent with the people that they might send them out of the land quickly; because they said, We will be all dead men. C-MATS



Middlebrow Answer: Death of the First-Born (10th)

Question: It's good to know how to be quick and not procrastinate. יהוה took the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery so fast that they don't even have time to make regular bread. To remember this miracle, the Torah tells us to make the matzah for each Passover so quickly that its dough can't rise. From here we can learn the positive trait of alacrity - doing things quickly - which will help us to get more done and make the most out of life. What is the advantage of having alacrity? On a practical level, we simply get a lot more accomplished when we move fast. Besides this, doing things quickly can fill us up with energy and make life seem more joyful and fun. Procrastination weighs on us and steals our joy. Rising early and working hard all day gives a man satisfaction and contentment.

Question: When could it be better not to have this trait? If going quickly makes us careless, it's likely better to slow down somewhat. Also if we feel tempted to do something we know we shouldn't, a little procrastination is the best thing we could do.

34 And took the people את־ their dough before it was leavened and wrapped their kneading bowls in their clothes on their shoulders. 35 And the Children of Israel obeyed the word of Moses; and they borrowed from the Egyptians jewels of silver and gold and garments. C-MATS

Question: Why did the Egyptians give the Hebrews all their wealth? When the Hebrews came to ask their neighbors to borrow various items, the Egyptians gave them lavish gifts and forced their wealth on them, just so they would leave the country. (Chumash)

36 And יהוה gave אה favor to the people in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them as much as they required. And they plundered אה the Egyptians. C-MATS

Question: Who gave the Israelites favor with the Egyptians? It is אה that gives the Israelites favor with the Egyptians and אה who also allows them to plunder the Egyptians. C-MATS

37 And the Children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about 600,000 men on foot, not counting the children. C-MATS

Question: How many Hebrews left Egypt? 600,000 adult males did not include women, children, and elderly males, which indicates that a total population of about 3,000,000 people followed Moses into the Wilderness. (Chumash)

Question: How many years did the Israelites suffer hard labor? Jasher 81 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides the little ones and their wives. Also a mixed multitude went up with them, and flocks and herds, even much cattle. And the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in the land of Egypt in hard labor, was two hundred and ten years. And at the end of two hundred and ten years, יהוה brought out the children of Israel from Egypt with a strong hand.

Question: What did Paul tell the men of Israel about the Exodus? Acts 13:16 **Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship יהוה, listen to me! 17 יהוה of the people of Israel chose our fathers; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that country, 18 he endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert, 19 he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance.**

38 And a mixed multitude went up אה with them; flocks, herds and cattle in very large numbers. C-MATS

Question: Who were the "mixed multitude" that went with the Hebrews into the Wilderness? A multitude of people of various nationalities converted to worship יהוה and accompanied the Hebrews out of Egypt. (Chumash)

39 And they baked אה the dough which they brought out of Egypt, unleavened cakes, because it was not leavened since they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, neither had they prepared for themselves any meat. C-MATS

Question: What does this verse say about the faith of the Israelites? Israel did not say, "How will we go out into the desert without provisions?" Instead they believed and left. This is what is stated explicitly in the Prophets: **I remember you, the kindness of your youth, אהבתי you loved your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not planted. Jer 2:2**

40 Now the time *the* Children of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of *the* 430 years, on the very same day, it came to pass *that* all the צְבָאוֹת *hosts of* יְהוָה went out from the land of Egypt. C-MATS

Question: What does this mean “*the time the Children of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years*” when they really weren’t in Egypt that many years? The Covenant between the Parts took place 430 years before the Exodus, and that is the period referred to in this verse. At that time, יְהוָה foretold Abraham that his offspring would endure 400 years during which there would be exile, persecution, and servitude-but not necessarily all of them at the same time. Thirty years later those 400 years began with the birth of Isaac, since the prophecy referred to Abraham’s offspring. Thus the Exodus was perfectly calibrated to conform to the prophecy to Abraham, for Isaac was born on the fifteenth of Nissan and exactly 400 years later precisely at the deadline of the prescribed time the Hebrews were liberated. The actual exile in Egypt lasted 210 years. (Chumash)

42 This night was observed by יְהוָה for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is the night to לִיְהוָה to be observed by all *the* Children of Israel in their generations. 43 And יְהוָה said to Moses and Aaron, זֶה *this is* the ordinance of the Passover: No stranger will eat it: 44 But every man’s servant *that* is bought for money, *after* you have circumcised אֹתוֹ *him*, then he will eat it. 45 A foreigner and a hired servant will not eat it. 46 In אֶתֶּם *one* house it will be eaten; you will not carry *any* of the *meat* out of the house; neither will you break any of the bones. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Ex. 12:46 Not a bone of the Lamb to be broken-John 19:31-36. C-MATS*

Question: How did Yahshua, our Passover lamb, fulfill this scripture? **John 19:31** Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. **32** The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Yahshua, and then those of the other. **33** But when they came to Yahshua and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. **34** Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Yahshua' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. **35** The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. **36** These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken", **37** and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

47 All the congregation of Israel will celebrate אֹתוֹ *it (him)*. 48 And when a stranger settles with אִתְּךָ *you* and keeps the Passover to לִיְהוָה, let all his males be circumcised *first* and then let him come and keep it; and he will be as one that is born in the land: no uncircumcised person will eat it. 49 The *same* laws will be for him that is native and the stranger that settles among you. 50 So *the* Children of Israel did all as commanded by יְהוָה אֶת־ Moses וְאֶת־ and Aaron. 51 It came to pass the very same day, brought יְהוָה אֶת־ *the* Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies. C-MATS

Question: Who brought the Israelites out of Egypt? Both יהוה and את lead the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt together manifesting physically as the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night that lead them...יהוה Father is represented by FIRE and את Yahshua by the CLOUD, the same manifestation when Abraham was making covenant with the Yah-head that passed over the sacrifices in Gen 15:17. C-MATS

Question: When did the Israelites leave Egypt? What did they take with them? Jasher 80: And the children of Israel delayed going out at night, and when the Egyptians came to them to bring them out, they said to them, "Are we thieves, that we should go out at night?" (They would not even wait until daylight.) And the children of Israel asked of the Egyptians, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and the children of Israel stripped the Egyptians. And Moses rose up and went to the river of Egypt, and brought up the coffin of Joseph and took it with him. The children of Israel also brought up each man's father's coffin with him, and each man the coffins of his tribe.



Exodus 13:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 2 Sanctify (*set aside*) for Me all the firstborn; whatever opens the womb among *the* Children of Israel, *both* of man and beast: *this is* Mine. 3 And Moses said to the people, Remember את day this *in* which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage. *The* strength of יהוה hand brought אתכם you out from this *place*: no leavened bread will be eaten. 4 This day אתם you came out in the month of Abib. 5 And when יהוה brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing *with* milk and honey, that you will keep את- service within הַחַדְשִׁית *this* month. 6 Seven days you will eat unleavened bread and in the seventh day *will be* a feast ליהוה. 7 Unleavened bread will be eaten *for* את seven days; and no leavened bread *will be* seen with you *throughout your territory*. 8 And you will tell your son in that day saying, *This is done* because of what יהוה did for me when I came out of Egypt.

9 And it will be for **אֶתְּ** *sign (a mark)* for you upon your hand and for a reminder between your eyes that יהוה Torah may be in your mouth: with a strong hand יהוה has brought you out of Egypt. 10 You will keep **הָאֵת** *this אֶתְּ* ordinance in His sacred festival (*appointed time*) from year to year. 11 And it will be when יהוה brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and to your fathers and will give it to you, 12 that you will set apart to ליהוה all that opens the matrix (*womb*), every first born male that comes from a beast which you own *will be* יהוה. C-MATS



Redeeming a first born son on the 31st day

Question: Who needs to be Redeemed? A father is obligated to redeem his son who is a firstborn to his mother. If the mother is the daughter of a Levite or a Cohen, or the father is a Levite or a Cohen, a 'redemption' is not needed. If the mother is a daughter of a Cohen but married a non-Jew, the son still needs to be redeemed. A child born through a cesarean birth does not need to be 'redeemed'. If a daughter is born first, then no redemption of a subsequent male child is necessary.

Question: Who should redeem the first born son and when? The obligation to redeem the firstborn son is the father's. A firstborn male who reached adulthood and has not been redeemed is obligated to redeem himself. A child is not considered "established" until the thirtieth day after his birth, so on the thirty-first day he is to be redeemed.

Question: How much should you pay to redeem him? The Torah says the child can be redeemed for five Selaim. Today it is acceptable to use five US silver dollars. This amount may be given to the Cohen in silver or it is deemed invalid.

Question: Did Yahshua keep this commandment? **Luke 2:22** When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to יהוה (as it is written in the Law of יהוה, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to יהוה"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of יהוה: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

13 And every first born male of a donkey you will exchange with a lamb; and if you do not exchange *it*, then you will break his neck: and all the firstborn males among your children will you buy back. C-MATS



Redeeming a first born donkey

Question: What happens if the donkey or other firstborn animals were not redeemed? If a man denied redeeming the firstborn of his animals, he would suffer loss for every animal that he did not redeem. When יהוה says, "It is Mine," then He will take it. (Chumash)

14 And it will be when your son asks you *in the days to come* saying, What is זאת *this*? ואמרת And you say to him, by His strength of hand יהוה brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. C-MATS

Question: An overly self-conscious person will never achieve their full learning potential. What do you think this means? Learning by definition is a process of going from a state of not understanding to one of understanding. An essential step in this process is acknowledging when we don't understand something and asking clarifying questions. In fact, the classic method of learning Torah is through rigorous questioning of every point until full clarity is achieved. One who is overly self-conscious will be too concerned about how others will perceive his lack of understanding to ask these necessary questions.

Question: Is there ever such a thing as a bad question? If a question is coming from a sincere and positively motivated desire to know or understand something, then no matter how simple or misguided the question seems, it is a good one. However, there is another type of question which is 'bad.' This type of question doesn't genuinely seek an answer, but rather seeks only to ridicule or put down the speaker or what is being said. This type of question actually isn't a question at all, but a verbal attack. The Torah way is not simply to accept things blindly, but to question everything - as long as our questions are sincerely based on a desire to discover truth. The next time someone says something to you that you don't understand, ask him what he means.

Question: When are we commanded to tell the story of the Exodus? Only at the Passover Seder is it required that the story be told, but at other times one should be ready to respond in the event that your children may ask you a question about the Exodus. (Chumash)

15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would not let us go, that יהוה killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast: therefore, I sacrifice to ליהוה all the males that open the womb; but all the firstborn of My children I buy back. 16 And it will be לָאֵת sign (a mark) upon your hand and for frontlets (on the forehead) between your eyes: by strength of hand יהוה brought us out of Egypt. C-MATS

Question: What does this verse mean? This law only occurs in Exodus 13:16; Deut. 6:8, and 11:18. The meaning of the command to the Israelites, with regard to the statutes and precepts given them, that they should "bind them for a sign upon their hand, and have them as frontlets between their eyes," was that they should keep them distinctly in view and carefully attend to them. But soon after their return from Babylon they began to interpret this injunction literally, and had accordingly portions of the law written out and worn about their person. These they called tephillin or "prayers". The scripture written out on strips of parchment were these, Ex. 12:2-10; 13:11-21; Deut. 6:4-9; 11:18-21. They were then "rolled up in a case of black calfskin, and put into four little cells within a square case, which had on it the Hebrew letter called shin, the three points of which were regarded as an emblem of יהוה." This case tied around the forehead in a particular way was called "the tephillah on the head". We should not interpret this scripture literally, but we should read the scriptures daily and keep them in our heart, so we will not sin against יהוה.



Tephillah on the forehead



John Martin - One of the Seven Plagues of Egypt

Do You Know?

1. The eighth plague was ___ that ate every green thing left in Egypt.
2. יהוה sent the locusts away with a strong west ____.
3. The ninth plague was ___ that could be felt.
4. The land of Egypt was dark for ___ days.
5. The tenth plague was the death of the ____.
6. יהוה came at ____ (what time?) to kill the firstborn.
7. The Israelites asked the Egyptians for their ___ before they left.
8. The Passover sacrifice must be a ___year(s) old male animal.
9. The Passover sacrifice could be either a ___ or ____.
10. The Passover animal was killed on the ___ day of the first month.
11. יהוה asked the Israelites to smear ___ on their doorposts to keep the Destroyer away.
12. The Passover meal was made up of ___ meat, unleavened ___, and bitter ____.
13. The Passover sacrifice was roasted with ____, not boiled or raw.
14. The Passover sacrifice had to be completely eaten before ___.
15. The Feast of Unleavened bread lasts for ___ days and no one can eat unleavened bread during this time.
16. The Israelite had to leave at ___ (what time?) from Egypt, as quickly as they could.
17. ____ (how many?) Israelite men left Egypt, not counting women and children.
18. The Israelites lived in slavery for ___ years in Egypt.
19. An ___ person could not eat the Passover meal.
20. A sign that you love יהוה is keeping seventh-day ___, keeping the ___, and redeeming the ____.

Answers

1. locusts
2. wind
3. darkness
4. 3
5. firstborn
6. midnight
7. riches
8. one
9. lamb, goat
10. 14th
11. blood
12. roasted, bread, herbs
13. fire
14. morning
15. seven
16. night
17. 600,000
18. 210
19. uncircumcised
20. Sabbath, Passover, firstborn

Haftorah

Jeremiah 46:13 The word that יהוה spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon should come *and* strike ארץ the land of Egypt. **14** Declare this in Egypt and proclaim in Migdol and proclaim in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say, stand fast and prepare yourselves; for the sword will devour all around you. **15** Why are your valiant *men* swept away? They stood not, because יהוה drove them away. **16** He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise and let us go again to our own people and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword. **17** They did cry there, Pharaoh King of Egypt *is but* a noise; he has passed the time appointed. **18** As I live, said the King, whose name *is* יהוה of צבאות *Host*, certainly as Tabor *is* among the mountains and as Carmel by the sea, *so* will he come. **19** O you daughter living in Egypt, prepare yourself *to go into* captivity: for Noph will be wasted and desolate without an inhabitant. **20** Egypt *is like* a very fair heifer, *but* destruction comes; it comes out of the north. **21** Also her hired men *are* in the midst of her like fatted bullocks; for they also are turned back and are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity had come upon them and the time of their punishment. **22** The voice of it will go like a serpent; for they will march with an army and come against her with axes, as cutters of wood. **23** They will cut down her forest, says יהוה, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers and are innumerable.

24 The daughter of Egypt will be confounded; she will be delivered into the hand of the people of the north. 25 יהוה of אֱלֹהֵי Host, the Elohim of Israel said; I will punish the multitude of Thebes and Pharaoh and Egypt, with their gods and their kings; even Pharaoh and *all* them that trust in him: 26 And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of his servants: and then it will be inhabited, as in the days of old, says יהוה. 27 וְאַתָּה and you, fear not, O My servant Jacob and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, see, I will save you from afar off וְאַתָּה and your seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob will return and be in rest and at ease and none will make him afraid. 28 Fear אַתָּה you not, O Jacob My servant, says יהוה: for I am אִתְּךָ with you; for I will make a full end of all the nations (*gentiles*) among which I have scattered you: וְאַתָּה and you, I will not make a full end of, but correct you in measure; though I will not leave you entirely unpunished. C-MATS

Finding Courage

It took a lot of courage for the Hebrew slaves in Egypt to do things that publicly showed that the false gods of their Egyptian masters were meaningless to them. And it takes a lot of courage for *us* to publicly stand up for what's true and right even when it's not popular. But that's just what יהוה asked of them - and just what He asks of us.

HOUSE CALLS

Wendy was taking in the sights as she scurried along with her classmates walking home from school. The other kids, who were used to the walk, hardly paid attention, but for Wendy, who'd just moved to town, everything was still new and interesting.

With one eye on the scenery and the other keeping track of which way the kids were turning so she wouldn't get lost, Wendy suddenly felt a tug on her sleeve.

"Crazy Lady's house! Quick, cross the street!" Paula said as she and the others all crossed over to the other side of the street.

"Is anything wrong? Why did we just cross? Who's 'Crazy Lady'?" Wendy asked nervously.

"Oh, we're okay now," Paula laughed. "Crazy Lady - that's the old woman who lives in that little house up ahead - can't reach us now. For the last month or so, whenever we walk by this lady comes limping out the front door of her house and yells, or more like croaks at us with the weirdest voice - but then again," she smiled, "what do you expect from somebody who's crazy?"

Sure enough, as if on cue, Wendy heard a door swing open and a bent-over old woman came limping out the doorway, making strange, loud noises while pointing back inside her house.

"There she is!" the kids half shrieked and half giggled. "She wants to catch us."

"Cra-zee, cra-zeee!" one kid taunted, while banging on the nearby trash dumpster as the others laughed.

Getting over her initial shock, Wendy slowed down and watched the woman closely. It sounded like she was trying to say the words 'help me.'

"Do you think she's okay?" Wendy asked.

"Of course not. She's crazy!" Paula sputtered.

"No, I mean, she looks like she needs help or something. Maybe we should go over there and see."

"Go to scary Crazy Lady's house? No way!" squealed Kate. Anyone who does that must be as crazy as she is!" Wendy felt bad for the woman and also felt it wasn't right the way the kids were making fun of her. She wanted to go try to help, but if she did, what would the others think of her?

The kids, still laughing, began to move on. Wendy was about to join them, then looked back. The woman, now quiet, had put down her arms and looked very sad. It would be easier to just ignore her, but it wouldn't be right...

"Guys, I'm just going over there for a minute to see if she's okay," Wendy called out to their astonished faces. She slowly walked closer to the house and when she was just outside the fence, she smiled and said, "Hello ma'am, can I be of help to you in any way?"

The woman looked up, nodded her head and pointed inside like before. Wendy edged closer to the front door and smelled a bad smell. She peeked inside the house and saw a big pile of sealed-up garbage bags that seemed to take up half the room.

"T-too h-h-hea-vy..." the woman stuttered. "I-I-I had a st-str-stroke and now c-can't lift tr-tra-trash!" Wendy noticed tears streaming down the woman's face. She went on to explain that she lived alone and each day since she'd gotten home from the hospital after the stroke, it was hard for her to walk and to speak clearly. When she'd see the group of school kids passing by she would call to them, hoping they could help her carry out the trash. But they just seemed to laugh at her and run away so now, with no choice, she had to leave all her trash piled up inside her house.

Immediately Wendy grabbed two of the bags and briskly carried them out and across the street to the dumpster. She explained to her friends, who had waited around to see what would happen and they immediately joined her. They felt bad for the woman ... and ashamed of the way they'd acted.

From then on, when the kids would walk home, instead of crossing the street to avoid 'Crazy Lady,' they made it a point to stop in and ask 'Sweet old Mrs. Simmons,' as they discovered was the woman's real name, if she needed any help - all thanks to Wendy's courage to care.

Question: What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story? When Wendy, a new kid in school, saw the rest of the kids making fun of the old woman, she could have taken the easy way out and joined them or at least said nothing. But she bravely took a stand and tried to help and in the end they all saw that it was the right thing to do.

Question: How can a person learn to become courageous like that? One way is to ask ourselves in every situation 'What is the right thing to do?' instead of asking ourselves 'What will people think?' It takes courage, for sure, but we'll see that most of the time, people will also think better of us, when we show we have the guts to do what is right.

Question: What is your definition of 'courage'? There may be many definitions, but there is no greater courage than to be willing to live life according to our deepest values and convictions regardless of what other people think.

Question: How can a person discover what his or her deepest convictions are? One wise man advised to consider what we would be willing to die for - and then go out and live for these things!

Sometimes the good things that come our way are very clear and easy to see. However, there are other times when the good that יהוה sends us comes in a way that at first glance doesn't seem to be good at all. This is what happened to the Hebrew people, as יהוה was preparing to take them out of their slavery in Egypt. In this week's Torah portion, when Moses and Aaron approached Pharaoh to set the people free, not only did he refuse, but he even threw them out of the palace, and threatened to have them killed if they dared to appear to him again! It seemed like things were getting worse instead of better. But this was really all part of יהוה's plan, and in the end, He brought the people out of Egypt with great miracles. We can learn from here that even when things in our lives seem to be going wrong, don't panic. Realize that things often seem to get worse before they get better, and if we're patient and see it through, we will ultimately come to see the good that's on the way.

"VIEW FROM ABOVE"

Michael sat staring at his teacher with a look of total shock on his face, not believing what he was hearing. "Another exam?" he thought. "How can that be? We just had a huge test. What more is there possibly to learn?" The whole class was buzzing and reeling over the announcement. Juniors were extremely busy with all their activities. Constantly studying for geography tests was not among their favorite pastimes. Some of it was interesting, like learning about all the different kinds of rock formations and mountains, but enough was enough. "I just don't know what's gotten into Mr. Barker. He's usually pretty easy-going. What could he be thinking about, giving us another big test only three days from now?" Joe and Manny, his two buddies, just shook their heads with a forlorn look on their faces. "I don't know," said Joe. "But there goes baseball practice this week." The boys groaned and tried to settle down to do their homework. Michael just couldn't concentrate. "I don't want to study again and you know what? I'm not going to. Just because Mr. Barker got in a bad mood doesn't mean that I have to suffer for it. See you later guys. I'm going to ride my bike!" Joe and Manny were speechless.

The three boys had been best friends since second grade, and did most things together, including studying for tests. They all took their schoolwork seriously, even though they liked to play. This was the first time anything like this had happened, and they didn't know what to do. They decided to wait and see if their buddy Mike would change his mind. The next day on the bulletin board in the lobby of the school, the boys saw a notice addressed to the Seniors. They were going to be having a great trip to the big mountain range upstate to explore all the different rock shapes and types. There would be a special guide, a big tour bus, and the best of all - there would be a helicopter ride to see the mountain range from above! The school had never made a trip like this before and the boys wondered excitedly if they would have it again next year when they would be Seniors. That day Mr. Barker mentioned the upcoming exam again and told the kids how important it was that they all do well. "You won't regret the extra work you put into it," he promised. Joe and Manny passed a meaningful glance between them. Would Mike take the teacher's words to heart? That afternoon Joe and Manny seriously hit the books and Mike was seriously hitting the ball at baseball practice. He had a good time, but it was boring without his pals. Being alone gave Mike plenty of time to think. He thought about how strange it was having another test so soon, and about his teacher's cryptic comments. It all really didn't make sense. He was right to blow it off. Or was he? "There must be some reason this is happening," he thought. "This is also part of יהוה's plans, and it must be for the best. I can't really change the situation, so maybe I really should just try to see it through." Mike pictured his friends, and thought about them studying together and how great they would feel, and how he would feel too when they pulled good grades. The more he thought about it, the more convinced he got. He decided to run over to Joe's. "Hi guys," he said, as he walked into Joe's room. "Got room for one more?" The three exchanged hi-fives all around and settled down to study. Only one more day until the test, and Mike had a lot of catching up to do. Later that night, Mike went to sleep happy. The day after the test, Mr. Barker was all smiles. "Good news!" he said. "I'm sure you all saw the poster for the school trip planned for the Seniors. When I heard about it, I asked the principal if I could bring the Juniors since we were learning the same thing and we all enjoyed the material so much. The principal wasn't sure, but finally he said to me, 'Look. Let's see how seriously they take it. Give them a test, and any student who scores above 90 will be welcome to come on the trip.' I couldn't tell you because the principal warned me not to. I'm happy to say that every single one of you will be going on the trip!" Mike breathed a big sigh of relief. Now it all made sense. Was he ever glad that he had decided to study after all! He had almost missed this great trip. Mike realized that even if we sometimes don't understand it, everything that happens is truly for the best, as long as we don't get in our own way!

Question: What made Mike change his mind and decide to study? He considered the situation, and realized that even though having to take a second test seemed strange, and unfair, that it must be concealing some sort of hidden good that יהוה wanted him to experience. He followed this intuition, studied hard, and ended up winning in the end.

Question: Does this mean that a person should simply accept whatever happens to him, and not try to change things for the better? Not at all. יהוה wants us to be active participants in our lives, and the world. However, there are times when there is really nothing practical to be done to change what is going on. In such cases, rather than panicking, or letting ourselves get down, we should surrender our will to יהוה's, and the situation He has given us, knowing that it is truly for the best.

A person's word is more valuable than gold and we should always try to keep our promises. Unlike the cruel Pharaoh who, in this week's Torah portion, kept promising to free the Hebrew slaves and then reneging, the Torah way is to be trustworthy and keep our word.

"BIG DEAL"

"Hey Tim, where do you think you're going?" cried out a shocked Suzy as her brother, basketball tucked under his elbow, went prancing toward the front door. "To the opera! Where do you think, genius? I'm going out to play some ball. You have a problem with it?" "No problem at all, bro ... *after* you clear the dishes off the table and wash them, like you said you would. We switched days because I had to go out, remember?" Tim let out a noise that was like a combination laugh and snort. "Dream on. You think I want to mess up my dribbling arm with dishpan hands? I'm outta here. Anyway, when I said it, I had my left hand behind my back when I said I'd switch, so it didn't count. Have fun." "But, Tim, you proommmissed!!!!" Suzy, who was dressed way too formally to tackle a sink of dishes, called out as her laughing brother slammed the door behind him. Tim was on his way to the park to meet his friends at the time they'd arranged, when a sign with an arrow on it caught his eye.

SPORTS CARD COLLECTOR'S FAIR. TODAY ONLY!

If Tim liked one thing better than playing ball, it was collecting sports cards. As he made a sharp turn on his bike toward the sale and away from the park where his friends were waiting, the thought briefly entered his mind that he was the one who said he'd bring the ball today and if he didn't show, the guys would be stuck. *But ... it really was no big deal*, he thought. *A kid's allowed to change his mind, isn't he? And anyway the guys would just find another ball ... somehow.* The thought of his friends searching for a basketball in an empty playground or his dressed-up sister doing dishes was the furthest thing from Tim's mind as he walked excitedly into the auditorium packed wall-to-wall with tables offering all kinds of sports cards. He looked over a couple of tables - nothing special. Then his eyes stuck like glue to a card on display on the next table. He couldn't believe it - a kid he knew from school and had traded with before was selling a rare card for which he'd been looking for years! It was a miracle that no one had snapped it up yet. "Hey, Ken, buddy - how's it going?" Tim said in his best butter-up voice. The kid nodded. "Um, how much you want for that card in the corner over there?" he asked, pointing to his prize. "Dunno. Five bucks I guess." Tim couldn't believe it. What a steal! This was his lucky day! Suddenly a lump fell from his throat into the pit of his stomach. He didn't have any money on him. "I'll take it!" he said. "But I'll have to bring you the cash in a few minutes -that's not a problem, right?" Ken shook his head and Tim started to panic. "But ... but, hey listen. Let's say you just put the card aside for me until I come back. I'll really be back in five minutes." "Yeah, sure, just like that trade we made last summer, right? We worked it all out and even shook hands on it. I turned away three other kids who wanted my cards and then at the last minute you said the deal was off and that you didn't owe me a thing..." Tim started to blush as the memory came back to him. "Cash *up front* or no deal." Seeing he had no choice, Tim raced back home on his bike as fast as he could. He got to his house, dashed wordlessly past his frowning sister who was drying the last dish, grabbed his wallet and groaned. *Only three dollars!*

He ran back downstairs. "Suzy ... um can you lend me a couple of dollars? I really need it and I'll pay you back when I get my allowance tomorrow." The girl wrinkled up her face. "What nerve! Why should I think you'll pay me back this loan any more than the last ones I've been waiting for, for over a month?" "But I promise!" "Huh! *You* promise? What is *your* promise worth? I'm sure your hand is behind your back, or your toes are scrunched up or you're making one of the other million and one 'signs' you have, not to have to keep your promise. No way! I'm going out now - finally. You can go sell your promises somewhere else!" Tim, now alone in the house he stomped out of just a little while ago, sat down on a stool, dejected. He felt bad he'd lost out on the baseball card, he felt bad he hadn't been able to borrow the money, but he felt worst of all about how nobody believed him any more and that was truly his own fault. After a minute he got up. He was tired, but maybe the guys were still waiting for him in the park. He decided it was time to be true to his word and bring them his ball - just like he said he would.

Question: What life-lesson do you think Tim learned that day? He discovered that keeping one's word is the right thing to do, and it is important to be someone who others feel they can believe what you say you will do.

Question: Do you think Tim's use of 'secret signs' to cancel his promises were legitimate? Why or why not? Being trustworthy and keeping our word is a very important value and the fact that a person makes up a 'sign' does nothing to lessen his commitment. In the future if Tim wasn't sure if he could really keep his commitment he could say something like 'I'll try, but I can't promise,' etc.

Question: Do you think it's ever legitimate for a person to change his mind and not do something after he's already committed to do so? It depends. While there are times that circumstances or sober second thoughts make it legitimately hard or unwise to follow through on something we've committed to do, we should take our words and commitments very seriously and only go back on them rarely and for truly legitimate reasons.

Spiritual Exercise: Keep a good name by always being honest and keeping your promise.

Resources:

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS www.AlephTavScriptures.com

"Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com

Book of Jasher or *Book of the Just Man* (Hebrew: סֵפֶר הַיָּשָׁר; transliteration: sēfer hayyāšār)
Joshua 10:13 And the Sun stood still and the Moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jashar? And the Sun stayed in the midst of heaven and delayed not going down about a whole day.

2 Sam 1:18 And he bade them teach the Children of Judah *the song of the bow*: surely, it is written in the book of Jashar:

(The Septuagint translation renders *sefer hayashar* in both cases as 'Book of the Just'. The reference to the bow is here missing, so that the text reads: And he gave orders to teach it the sons of louda: behold it is written in the Book of the Just.)