

The Ten Plagues (and Maybe More?)

From the Haggadah:

אלו עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן :

These are [the] ten plagues that the Holy One, blessed be, brought on the Egyptians in Egypt and they are:

Blood	<i>Dam</i>	דָּם
Frogs	<i>Tzfarde'a</i>	צְפַרְדֵּי
Lice	<i>Kinim</i>	כְּנִים
Hordes [of Wild Animals]	<i>Arov</i>	עֲרוֹב
Pestilence	<i>Dever</i>	דָּבָר
Boils	<i>Sh'chin</i>	שַׁחִין
Hail	<i>Barad</i>	בָּרָד
Locusts	<i>Arbeh</i>	אַרְבֵּה
Darkness	<i>Choshech</i>	חֹשֶׁךְ
Slaying of [the] Firstborn	<i>Makat bechorot</i>	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

For Discussion with older children:

Any naming of modern plagues should be oriented towards reminding us that one person's freedom may be another person's suffering. For example, some purchase fruits and vegetables, flowers, and meats that have been produced abroad, often under brutal labor and environmental conditions; this luxury is someone else's suffering. Our freedom to drive as much as we like "drives" a world market in oil with obvious connections to huge political, military, and environmental problems. Even the clothes on our backs may have been produced in a sweatshop eerily similar to conditions of slavery

Seen this way, the Seder ritual of spilling the wine is a profound moment of introspection and conscience, confronting each of us with the reality that in a rapidly globalizing world, one person can never be disconnected from the systems which literally enslave others and distress our planet. It is in the celebration of our freedom that we find the courage to change our ways and to work for social and environmental justice.

Adapted from Rabbi Neil Joseph Lovinger

Assignment for JEWL:

Send a recording of yourself reciting the Ten Plagues, and another two plagues of today that your family is thinking about.