

PASSOVER פֶּסַח

Leaders Guide

Text Study: The Seeds of Oppression

What motivates Pharaoh to enslave the Israelites?

Torah: Exodus 1:6-14

I. A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are much too numerous for us. Let us deal shrewdly with them, so that they may not increase; otherwise in the event of war they may join our enemies in fighting against us and rise from the ground."

So they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor; and they built garrison cities for Pharaoh:



Pithom and Raamses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they increased and spread out, so that the [Egyptians] came to dread the Israelites.

Rabbi Freedman's notes:

- *The Rabbis debate whether the 'new king' was actually someone new who wasn't aware of Joseph's earlier contributions, or whether it was the same Pharaoh who chose to ignore this history.*
- *Exactly who is Pharaoh afraid may leave, or 'rise from the ground'? The verse can be read two ways: Either the Israelites will leave, or ordinary Egyptians may leave, neither of which is desirable. So the Israelites become a fifth column.*

II. The Egyptians ruthlessly imposed upon the Israelites the various labors that they made them perform. Ruthlessly they made life bitter for them with harsh labor at mortar and bricks and with all sorts of tasks in the field.

Rabbi Freedman's notes:

- *Pharaoh gave the decree, but ordinary Egyptians either went along with oppressing the Israelites or did not stand up to him (aside from the courageous midwives Shifra and Pua). The text uses the plural to hold them responsible.*

North Suburban Synagogue

Beth El
בית כנסת בית אל



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Seder Numbers Trivia!

Feel free to offer snacks or first dessert to those who answer correctly.

1. Where in the Haggadah does the number four appear?

>> (4 cups of wine, 4 questions, 4 sons, 4 expressions of redemption)

2. How many times does the name of Moses appear in the Hebrew text?

>> (1: see the Midrash of the 50 plagues at the sea)

3. How many times does the Haggadah instruct we dip food?

>> (2: Karpas in salt water, and Maror in Charoset)

4. How many Haggadah texts are in Aramaic, the ancient vernacular, instead of Hebrew?

>> (2: Ha Lachma Anya, and Chad Gadya)

5. How many drops of wine do we spill from our cups?

>> (16: the ten plagues, three before, and three after)

6. How many Matzos are placed by the Seder leader and covered?

>> (3: representing the Jewish People - Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael - Priests, Levites, and Israelites)

7. How many items does Rabban Gamliel say are essential for the Seder?

>> (3: Pesach lamb, Matza, and Maror bitter herbs)

8. How many steps are there to the Seder?

>> (14: Kadesh, Urhatz...)

9. How many days are there between the second night of the Seder and the holiday of Shavuot?

>> (50: this is known as counting the Omer)

10. What is the highest number in "Echad Mi Yodea/ Who Knows One?"

>> (13: the attributes of G-d. The song begins [1] and ends [13] with G-d.)



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