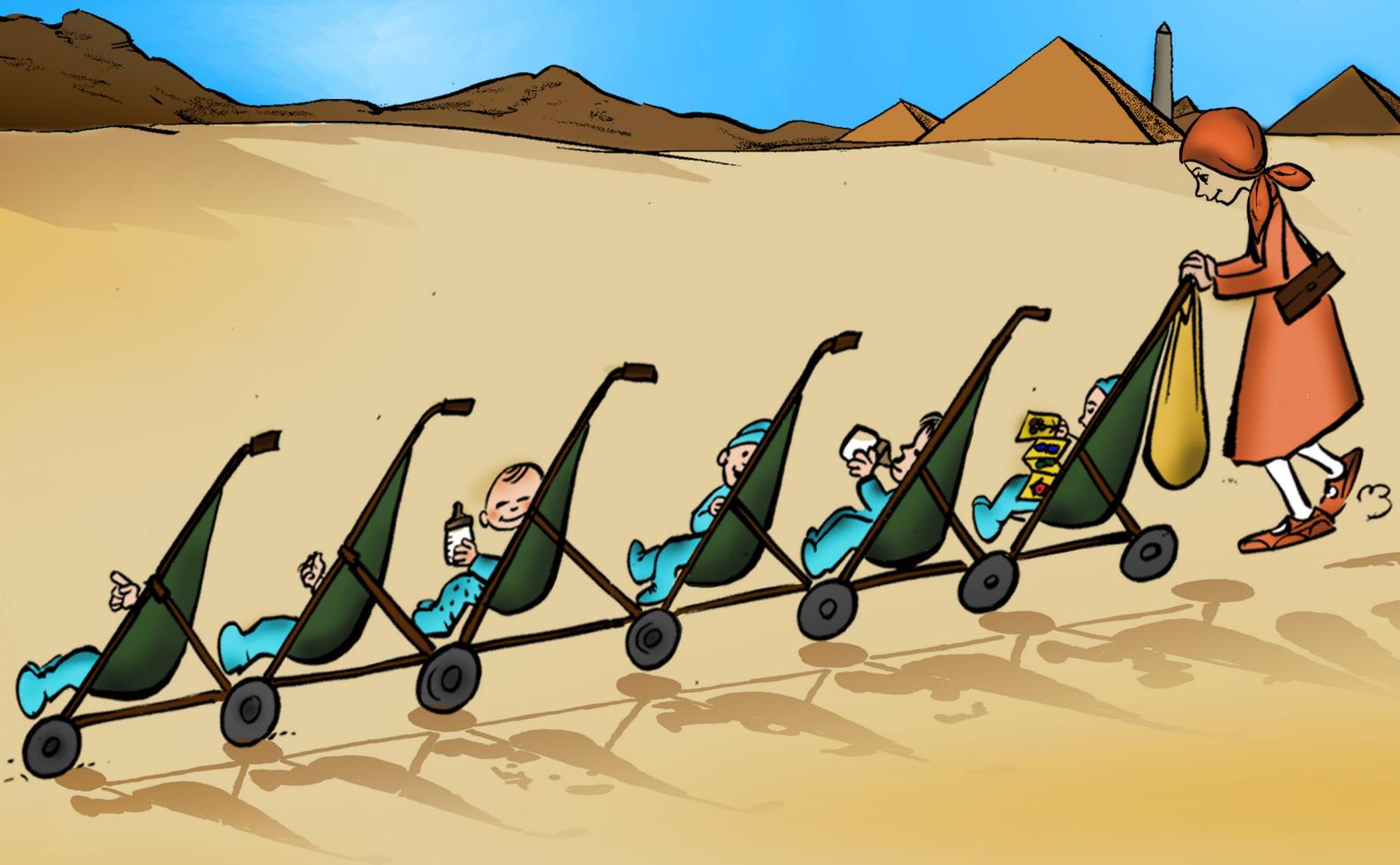


The Story of
**שעבוד
מצרים**



The story of בני ישראל living in מצרים begins with Yosef, the son of Yaakov Avinu, who was the משנה למלך for פרעה in מצרים. His family came down to מצרים to be together with him. They were altogether seventy people. בני ישראל and his sons lived in ארץ גשן in מצרים. The children of Yaakov were called בני ישראל.

Many years later, בני ישראל were still living in מצרים. They became a very big nation with many, many people. Do you know how this came to be? Hashem caused the Jewish ladies to give birth to six babies at a time, instead of giving birth to one baby at a time. This made בני ישראל continue to grow into a bigger and stronger nation.



פרעה, the king of מצרים, forgot about all the wonderful things that יוסף had done for his land when he was משנה למלך. He did not like that בני ישראל were becoming so big and powerful in מצרים. He decided to do something that would weaken בני ישראל before they would become stronger than him! פרעה sought the advice of his advisors. They came up with an idea to make בני ישראל into his עבדים, slaves! Slaves have to work very, very hard. They cannot stop working even when they get tired. Slaves do not get paid. Now בני ישראל were told to be פרעה's slaves. This would make them very weak!!



פרעה

ordered בני ישראל to build two cities for him, רעמסס and פתם. This was very hard work!

פרעה was trying to make בני ישראל weaker. He wanted them to suffer terribly, and they did! Their lives were bitter and difficult from the back breaking work. Hashem made a big נס. The more work פרעה gave to בני ישראל, the stronger they became! פרעה could not figure out why this was happening. Do you know why? Hashem was the one who was making בני ישראל stronger and stronger. They continued to multiply across מצרים!!

פרעה had astrologers. Astrologers look into the stars of the sky and study them well. One day, the astrologers told פרעה an important piece of news. They read in the stars that a Jewish baby boy would be born who would later become the leader of בני ישראל. This leader would take בני ישראל out of מצרים! פרעה did not like this news. He did not want בני ישראל to leave מצרים. He wanted them to be his slaves forever! פרעה decided that he must make sure that this baby boy would never grow up. Who was this baby? פרעה had no idea. It could be any one of the many Jewish baby boys being born.

פרעה had a plan. He commanded the two מילדות, Jewish midwives who helped the Jewish ladies give birth, to kill all the baby boys who would be born. The two מילדות were called Shifra and Puah. Shifra's real name was Yocheved, and Puah's real name was Miriam. Shifra and Puah were more scared of Hashem than they were of פרעה. They knew that Hashem would not allow them to kill the baby boys! Shifra and Puah kept the baby boys alive, even giving them water and food! They also relaxed and comforted the babies. פרעה realized that the midwives were not obeying him. He called them in and exclaimed: "Shifra and Puah, why have you kept the baby boys alive? I wanted you to kill them as soon as they were born!" Shifra and Puah explained that the Jewish mothers were having the babies very fast, even before they could come to help them. פרעה's plan just could not work.





פרעה decided that he

must come up with another plan of how to kill all the baby boys being born. He ordered all baby boys to be thrown into the נילוס River. Newborn baby girls would be allowed to live.

Yocheved, the daughter of Levi, gave birth to a baby boy. Something very special happened when this baby was born. The entire house became filled with light! Yocheved realized from this that the baby would grow up to become a big tzaddik. Yocheved hid the baby boy in her house for three months. She knew that she couldn't hide him any longer because the מצריים would be coming to her house soon to look for a baby boy.

Yocheved thought of a way to keep her baby safe. She made a little תנה out of reeds. She covered the inside of the תנה with clay and the outside with tar. She put the baby in the תנה.

Yocheved placed the little תנה in the נילוס between the tall grasses so that it should not float away. The baby's big sister Miriam stood near the river and watched over the baby.

תרעה had a daughter whose name was בתיה. One day, בתיה went down to the river. She saw the תנה floating in the tall grass, and she heard the cries of a little baby. בתיה stretched out her arm to reach the תנה.



Hashem made a נס, and her arm stretched long enough for her to be able to reach it. בתיה opened the תנה and peeked at the little crying baby boy. She had רחמנות on him, and offered him milk to drink. The baby refused to drink non-kosher milk; he only drank the kosher milk of his own mother Yocheved! Basya took the baby as a son into her palace when he grew a little older. She named him “Moshe”, which means “taken out” of the water.



The work in

מצרים was becoming unbearable! בני ישראל cried out

to Hashem for help, begging to be freed from פרעה's terrible slavery!

Hashem chose Moshe to be his messenger to go and tell פרעה that he must let בני

ישראל leave מצרים. Moshe asked Hashem to allow Aharon to go with him to talk to פרעה. Moshe

did not speak so clearly, and he was worried that פרעה would not understand him. Therefore, Moshe would tell

Aharon what to say, and Aharon would be the messenger to בני ישראל. פרעה were so thankful that Hashem was

hearing their cries and sending משה and אהרן to talk to פרעה! משה and אהרן went to talk to פרעה, hoping that he

would listen to them. They came before him and said: "We are the messengers of Hashem. Hashem commands that

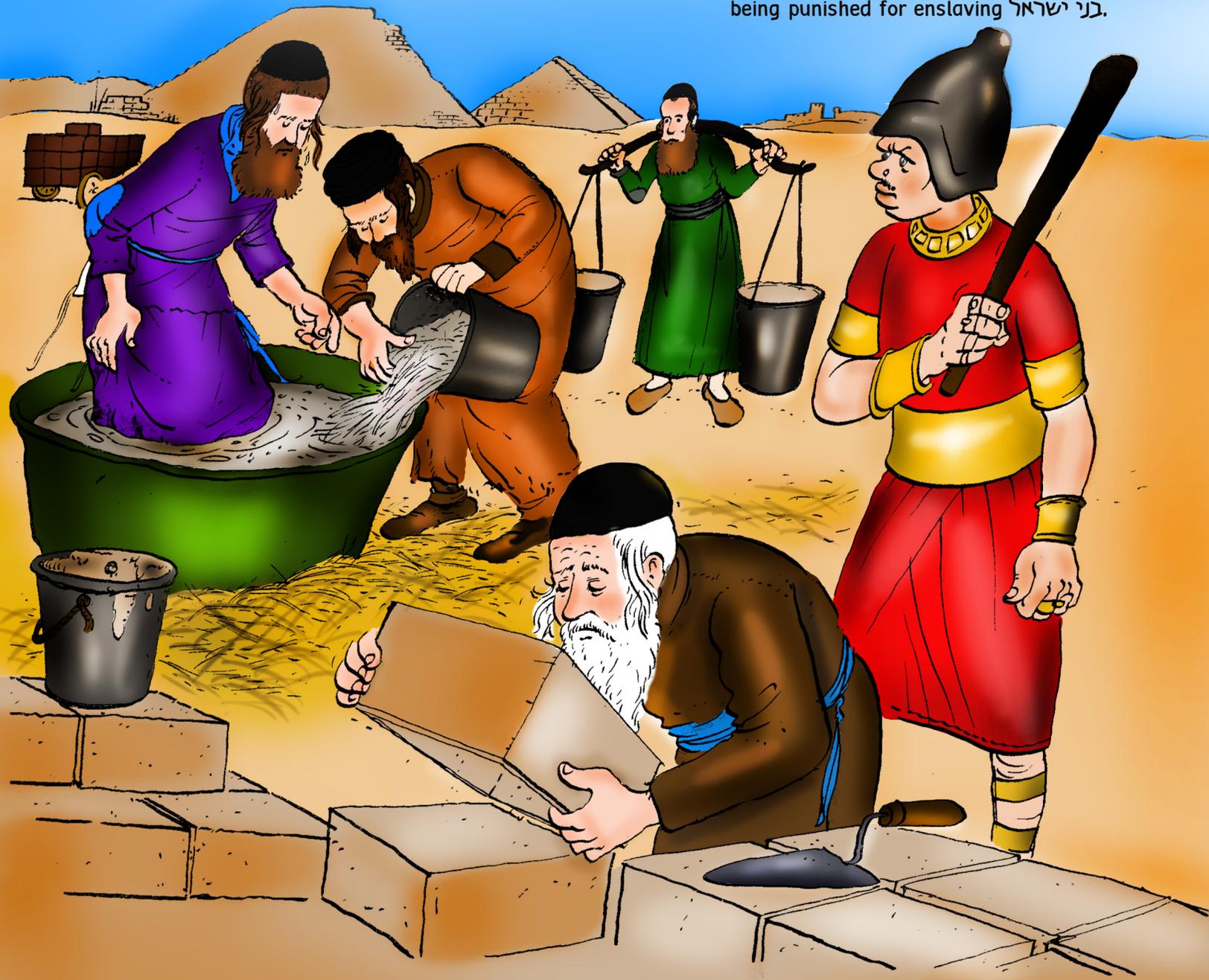
you allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים for three days and go to the מדבר (desert) to celebrate a חג for Him." פרעה an-

swered them angrily: "No, I will not allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים for three days! Why are you disturbing the work of my slaves? Don't come back to me again!"

פרעה decided to make the work even harder for בני ישראל. He commanded the policemen who were supervising to stop giving the slaves straw to use for making bricks. Now בני ישראל had to first find straw, and then make it into bricks to use for building the cities. That was impossible work that took a very long time! Hashem saw how wicked פרעה was becoming. Hashem was going to punish פרעה with a strong hand, and He will also take בני ישראל out of מצרים with a strong hand!

Hashem gave משה a sign to show פרעה that would prove that he is truly a messenger of Hashem. משה took אהרן's מטה, stick, and hit the ground. It then turned into a snake. פרעה's magicians were able to do the same. However, משה's stick was able to swallow up all the sticks of פרעה's magicians! Even though it was so clear to פרעה that Hashem demands of him to immediately allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים, he acted very stubbornly and refused to listen.

Hashem commanded משה and אהרן to go again to פרעה and warn him that if he does not allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים, Hashem, in His might, will punish him and the entire people of פרעה. פרעה was extremely stubborn and he refused to listen! פרעה was warned for three weeks about being punished for enslaving בני ישראל.



Hashem told משה to go to the נילוס in the morning and speak to פרעה again about allowing בני ישראל to leave מצרים. משה should warn פרעה that if he does not listen, a very bad מכה will happen.

Sure enough, משה and אהרן went down to the river when פרעה was there. פרעה refused to change his mind about allowing בני ישראל to leave מצרים, and so, the first punishment – מכה – was about to begin!

Hashem told משה to tell אהרן to take משה's מטה and hit the waters of מצרים. Do you know what happened after that? All the water in מצרים turned into "דם" – BLOOD! This was terrible for all the people in מצרים for many reasons: All the fish in the river died. The bloody water smelled very bad. There was no water in the entire מצרים to drink! There was no water to be used for cooking food. There was no water for taking a bath! Every bit of water in מצרים turned into דם! This מכה lasted for seven days. [Do you know why.... אהרן hit the water with משה's מטה

instead of משה hitting it? משה had "הכרת הטוב" to the water. He was very "thankful" to the water for protecting him when he was a little baby in the תבה. Therefore, he did not want to be the one to "punish" the water. אהרן punished the water instead!] Even though the דם was so terrible, פרעה still refused to allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים. Therefore, another מכה was on the way...



פרעה had three weeks of warning, but he still did not listen! Hashem sent משה again to פרעה to command him to let בני ישראל leave מצרים. Otherwise, another מכה would be brought upon מצרים. The entire land would be filled with צפרדע. The צפרדע will go everywhere in מצרים; into the houses, the bedrooms, the beds, the ovens, and into the dishes and pots!

פרעה did not heed the warnings, and so, the second מכה to מצרים was on its way! אהרן raised his hand, holding משה's מטה, over the waters of מצרים, and the מכה began! One huge frog came out of the river. When it was hit, swarms and swarms of frogs came out and streamed across the entire land of מצרים – everywhere!! The צפרדע were so eager to help Hashem punish פרעה that they were even willing to jump into the burning hot ovens! After six days of frogs jumping and screaming everywhere, פרעה just could not take it anymore! He called to משה and אהרן and begged them to ask Hashem to take away the frogs. He promised that he would allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים when the צפרדע go away. משה listened to פרעה and he cried out to Hashem, asking him to remove the צפרדע the next day. Sure enough, the next day, all of the צפרדע died.

And what do you think happened to פרעה after the צפרדע died?





פרעה did not

receive any warning before the next

מכה came. **אהרן** lifted **משה's** **מטה** and hit the earth with it.

All of the soil in **מצרים** turned into creeping, crawling lice that went all over the

people and the animals of **מצרים**. The people of **מצרים** were miserable, and they realized that this **מכה**

was coming from Hashem. Yet, **פרעה** still refused to allow **בני ישראל** to leave **מצרים**!

Hashem told **משה** to meet **פרעה** in the morning when he goes down to the river and command him to send **בני ישראל**

out of **מצרים** immediately. If **פרעה** refuses, Hashem promised to send another terrible **מכה** upon **מצרים**.

Sure enough, פרעה refused to listen to משה, and מכת ערוב was on its way. It was a real scary מכה! A huge mixture of wild beasts filled the land and homes of מצרים. These scary ferocious animals were everywhere in מצרים. Everywhere that is, except in the city of גשן, where all of בני ישראל lived. Not even one scary wild animal entered גשן. It was the only peaceful and safe location in מצרים!



פרעה

came running to משה and אהרן, promising that he would allow בני ישראל to bring קרבנות to Hashem, but only in מצרים. “We must leave מצרים and go to the מדבר for three days. We cannot bring our קרבנות to Hashem in משה!” פרעה said to בני ישראל. “Fine, I will allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים for three days. Please ask Hashem to take away all of the wild scary animals!” משה listened to פרעה and davened to Hashem, asking Him to take away the terrible ערוב. The ערוב disappeared from מצרים the next day. They did not die in מצרים because if they would have, the people of מצרים would enjoy all the beautiful furs and skins of the animals. Therefore, Hashem made sure to remove every single animal from מצרים!

There was peace at last in מצרים. And . . . פרעה changed his mind! He refused to allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים. Again, he did not keep his word! Hashem once again commanded משה to go and speak to פרעה and give him a message that he MUST allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים!! If not, another מכה will come the next day to מצרים, the מכה of דבר. All of the farm animals in מצרים that are left outside in the fields will die. There will be no more horses, donkeys, camels, cows, and sheep left alive in מצרים. All of the farm animals that belong to בני ישראל will remain alive. This is exactly what happened to the farm animals in מצרים the next day. All of the farm animals left outside in מצרים died. However, not one animal belonging to בני ישראל died in this מכה!



פרעה still refused to allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים, and so the next מכה was on its way! Hashem told משה and אהרן to fill their hands with ashes taken from an oven and go stand before פרעה. משה then took all of the ashes and put them into one hand. He threw them up towards the sky. After he threw the ashes to the sky, the מכה of שחין began. All of the people and animals in מצרים (the ones that were kept indoors by מכת דבר) became filled with painful boils all over their bodies. As terrible as this מכה was, פרעה still refused to allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים!! And so, משה and אהרן went to פרעה to warn him that TOMORROW, Hashem plans to bring upon פרעה and his land the WORST מכה YET.



This was מַטֵּה בָרָד, a dangerous heavy hail that was never seen before in מצרים. Hashem said that all the people and animals that remain indoors will be saved from the מַטֵּה בָרָד. משה raised his hand, holding his מַטֵּה, towards the sky. Hashem then sent loud thunder and icy hail with burning fire inside it, falling upon the entire land of מצרים.

The בָרָד did not fall in גֶּשֶׁן, where בני ישראל lived. The בָרָד killed the people and animals that were left outdoors. The בָרָד ruined the trees and plants that were growing in פְּרֵעָה. משה called to מצרים and אהרן and begged them to daven to Hashem to take away the פְּרֵעָה and בָרָד. משה admitted that he was wrong and he is guilty, and Hashem is the one who is right. He said: "חַטָּאתִי הַכֶּעָם, ה' הַצְדִּיק וְאֲנִי וְעַמִּי הַרְשָׁעִים"



משה

told מצרים that he will go out of פְּרֵעָה and daven to Hashem to stop the בָרָד (fire and hail). פְּרֵעָה will then know that the earth belongs to Hashem! משה davened to Hashem, and the thunder and בָרָד (hail) stopped immediately. Even the hail that was in midair did not reach the ground! פְּרֵעָה AGAIN changed his mind. He did not keep his word that he would allow בני ישראל to leave מצרים!!

משה and אהרן came to פרעה to warn him that if he does not allow בני ישראל to leave, Hashem will bring on another terrible מכה. How long can פרעה refuse to listen? For how long can פרעה be the cause of so many מכות in the land of מצרים? Yet, פרעה refused to change his mind. He finally agreed to allow only the men to leave מצרים for three days. פרעה refused to give permission to the rest of בני ישראל to leave.



Hashem was ready to bring forth מכת ארבה — swarms and swarms of ארבה (locusts) that would fill up the land and eat everything in sight. There will be so many ארבה that מצרים would appear dark all day. Even the houses will become full of משה! ארבה stretched his hand upwards toward the sky. Hashem sent a strong wind coming from the east that blew throughout the day and night. In the morning, the wind carried swarms of ארבה into מצרים. The ארבה darkened the land and ate up all of the growing plants everywhere in פרעה! פרעה hurried to call to משה and אהרן. He admitted his mistake of not listening to Hashem, and he begged Hashem to forgive him. משה listened, and he davened to Hashem to remove the ארבה from מצרים. Hashem sent a wind from the west that blew all of the ארבה out of מצרים. Not even one ארבה was left! And what do you think happened to פרעה when the מכה was over??

He changed his mind, and he refused to send בני ישראל out of מצרים.

The next מכה came without any warning to פרעה. This was משה. מנת חשך stretched his hand toward the sky, and a very, very intense darkness came over the entire מצרים for three days. The darkness was much darker than a regular night, and this scary darkness hung over מצרים even during the day! Nobody was able to see at all! The next three days of מנת חשך were even worse! The darkness became very thick, and nobody in מצרים was able to move. If somebody in מצרים was sitting, they could not stand up during those three days of thick darkness.



פרעה called to

משה after the six days of מנת חשך, and ordered בני ישראל to leave מצרים! Finally, פרעה is actually commanding בני ישראל to get out of מצרים. But ... he said that only the people can leave, yet all of their animals must remain in משה. מצרים explained to פרעה that Hashem wants בני ישראל to take all of their animals with them. פרעה refused to allow this. He got very angry at משה and exclaimed, "I am warning you, משה, you must never ever come speak to me again!"

Hashem began to speak to משה again even before he left פרעה's palace. Hashem told משה about the last מכה that he would bring upon פרעה and פרעה. פרעה will end up chasing בני ישראל out of מצרים during this משה! מכה told פרעה that at midnight, חצות הלילה, Hashem will pass through מצרים and kill every בכור in the land! (A בכור is the firstborn, the oldest in the family) Guess who was a פרעה? בכור! That means that מכת בכורות will be very scary for him...



Hashem warned that there will be a lot of noisy screaming in מצרים during מכת בכורות, but there will be peace and quiet among בני ישראל. Not even one dog will bark at בני ישראל! The people of מצרים will come running to משה, begging him and all of בני ישראל to leave מצרים.

Hash-

em commanded בני ישראל

to do a special מצוה, the

מצוה of קרבן פסח. On the tenth day of ניסן,

ניסן, each family should take home a שֶׁה, a baby lamb or

goat. The שֶׁה should be a perfect one, free of blemishes. It should be a

זכר (male), and it can be up to one year old. The שֶׁה must be watched for four days

until י"ד ניסן, the 14th day of ניסן. It cannot get any מום, blemish, in order for it to be usable

for the בני ישראל. בני ישראל tied the שֶׁה to a bedpost (the foot of a bed) so that it shouldn't get bumped or

hurt. The קרבן will be brought in the afternoon of י"ד ניסן.

בני ישראל will roast the meat of the שֶׁה on a fire, and eat it together with מצה and מרור. Hashem commanded them to eat the קרבן quickly so that they can be ready to leave מצרים as soon as they are told.

בני ישראל had a special מצוה do with the blood of the שֶׁה. They were supposed to take the blood of the שֶׁה and put it on their מזוזות, doorposts, and on the top of the door. This will serve as a sign that members of בני ישראל live in this house. Hashem will pass through מצרים, killing the בכור in each house.

However, He will skip over the Jewish houses that have "דם" on the doorposts, and each בכור among בני ישראל will be saved!

And so it was, on the fifteenth of ניסן at midnight, all of בני ישראל were busy eating their קרבן פסח, while every בכור in מצרים was being killed.

Pharaoh woke up to a huge uproar in מצרים. When he realized why everyone was screaming, he became very, very frightened! "Oh my", he thought, "I am a בכור. I will also be killed in בכורות!"



פרעה

ran through the streets of מצרים, desperately looking for משה and אהרן. He demanded that בני ישראל leave מצרים immediately. "Just leave now! Take all of your people, your animals, and your property, and GO!!" פרעה finally found משה and begged him to leave immediately with all of משה בני ישראל: "No! We will not leave in the middle of the night. We will leave in the morning in broad daylight, so that every-one can witness us being freed from this land!" Only when בני ישראל were finished the מצוה of קרבן כסח did they prepare to leave מצרים. They had dough prepared to bake into bread, but because פרעה was rushing them out of מצרים, there was no time! They carried the dough and the leftovers of the קרבן כסח on their shoulders and went on their way. בני ישראל did as משה told them to do, and asked the people of מצרים for silver and gold on their way out. At long last, בני ישראל were on their way out of מצרים. They were free! There were six hundred thousand people among בני ישראל who left מצרים, thanks to the wonderful miracles that Hashem had done for them! The dough that בני ישראל carried out on their shoulders got baked by the hot blazing sun of the מדבר (desert) and became מצות. בני ישראל ate these מצות after they left מצרים. They traveled out of דעמסס and went to camp in סכות.

Each year we remember the time that we were freed from being slaves in מצרים by celebrating חג הכסח, beginning on ט"ו ניסן. For seven days we do many מצוות on חג הכסח to remember all of the מצוות that Hashem did for us in מצרים.



Finally, after 210 years of being slaves in מצרים, בני ישראל were now free from מצרים. משה רבינו led the way. They travelled in the מדבר towards the ים סוף, the Red Sea. בני ישראל travelled from סכות on ט"ו ניסן, and they reached איתם בני ישראל. בני ישראל were fully protected in the מדבר! Hashem led the way for them with a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night!

Three days after בני ישראל left פרעה, פרעה regretted that he chased בני ישראל out. Now he had no slaves to work for him, and he wanted them to come back! And so, פרעה, in his excitement to bring בני ישראל back to מצרים, prepared his own chariot to go chase after פרעה! בני ישראל promised his people that if they come along with him, he will reward them greatly. It was the 19th day of ניסן, and they were off to bring בני ישראל back to פרעה. פרעה led the way! They charged after בני ישראל in their chariots, hoping to catch up to them.

Can you imagine how frightened בני ישראל were when they turned around and saw all of מצרים chasing after them and almost catching up to them? Yet, in front of them was the ים סוף, a huge ocean. If they continue walking ahead, they will drown in the ים סוף. But if they turn around, they will fall into the hands of the מצריים. What should they do?? They davened to Hashem and begged to be saved from the משה. בני ישראל told מצריים: "Do not fear! Just stand here and you will see how Hashem will save you today. Hashem will fight for you and Hashem will protect you!"

Sure enough,
Hashem spoke to משה and
told him to tell בני ישראל to
walk towards the ים סוף, and
He will perform a great נס.
משה stretched out his hand
holding his מטוה over the ים
סוף. A tzaddik by the name
of Nachshon was the first
man from בני ישראל to be
so brave and willingly step
into the Yam Suf. Suddenly,
an amazing נס took place.
The ים סוף split into two,
and a huge wind began to
blow. The waters of the ים
סוף stood up as two strong
walls. There was now a strip
of dry land in between the
two walls. בני ישראל walked
across the strip of dry land
to safety. The people of
מצרים followed right
after them, thinking
that they too can
travel on this
“new” land! But
they were
mistaken!!



As soon as the מצריים entered the ים סוף, Hashem caused the cloud pillar that led the path for בני ישראל to turn the sand of the dry pathway into mud. The pillar of fire that followed בני ישראל at night made the mud very hot! The chariots and the horses began sinking in the mud. After that, Hashem told משה to stretch his hand toward the ים סוף. The walls of water that were standing up then tumbled down over פרעה and all of the מצרים, and the ים סוף became an ocean again!

Now בני ישראל were safe and sound on the other side of the ים סוף. They watched in awe as the tall walls of water were now a big, wavy ocean once again. Best of all, בני ישראל were now free and safe from פרעה and all of his men!

בני ישראל were overjoyed with all of the amazing נסים that Hashem had performed for them. They broke into joyful songs of praise to Hashem together with their leader משה רבינו. משה רבינו's sister, separately gathered all the women together and led them also in singing songs of praise to Hashem, dancing and playing drums in celebration.

Hashem had brought a complete "ישועה" (salvation) to all of בני ישראל. They were now ready to continue their travels in the מדבר until they received the תורה at הר סיני!

