

THE SEA DOES NOT STAND IN YOUR WAY

PARTS

Narrator

Pharaoh

God

Person #1

Person #2

Person #3

Person #4

Person #5

Person #6

Moses

Pharaoh's Counselor

Egyptian General #1

Egyptian General #2

Egyptian General #3

Miriam

Narrator: In last week's Torah reading, after the first-born of Egypt had died, Pharaoh said to Moses:

Pharaoh: Get up! Get out! Get away from my people, you and the Children of Israel! Go! Serve your god! Take your flocks and your herds and get out! Just get out!

Narrator: And so God led the people out of Egypt. But God did not lead them directly through the land of the Philistines, which would have been the shortest route. For God said:

God: If I send them through the land of the Philistines, and they see that they have to fight to keep their freedom, they may just change their minds and decide that they want to go back to Egypt. I will send them by way of the wilderness to the Reed Sea.

Narrator: It wasn't that the people didn't have weapons. They came out of Egypt armed with swords. But they didn't have the heart. They were not ready

yet to put themselves in Gods' hands. They were not ready to trust in God's promises.

- Person #1:* Why are we going this way? I thought we were going. . . .
- Person #2:* It's a detour.
- Person #1:* How come?
- Person #3:* Who knows? . . . Did you see the box they're carrying up in the front?
- Person #4:* What box?
- Person #5:* What's in it?
- Person #6:* The bones of Joseph.
- Person #1:* Who?
- Person #6:* Joseph! There was a man who wasn't afraid.
- Person #1:* But, what's that got to do with. . . .
- Person #2:* Don't you remember what he said?
- Person #3:* God will surely remember you, and at that time you will carry up my bones with you. . . .
- Person #4:* He made his sons promise that they would bring him out of Egypt.
- Person #5:* And so?
- Person #6:* And so, now it's happening. God has remembered us. So we're carrying Joseph out of Egypt.
- Person #1:* Do you really think that God is going to save us?
- Person #2:* I don't know! How can we believe in some promise that was made a long time ago?
- Person #3:* Who knows if it will be fulfilled?

Person #4: Especially when we get out there
[POINTING] in the wilderness? Oy! What then?

Person #5: And what about when the food runs out?

Person #6: And the hordes attack us?

Person #1: How would I know? Do I look like an expert?

Narrator: But God guided them . . . with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. And the people came to camp by the Reed sea at the edge of the wilderness. [ALL PEOPLE SIT DOWN]
Meanwhile, back at the palace. . . .

Pharaoh's Counselor: [HURRYING IN FROM LOBBY] Your Majesty! Your Majesty! The children of Israel have been sighted!

Pharaoh: Where?

Pharaoh's Counselor: By the edge of the Reed sea at Baal Tzphon.

Pharaoh: So! They've gotten themselves tangled up in the wilderness, have they? Good! We should never have let them get away in the first place.

Pharaoh's Counselor: But, your majesty, you sent them away! You yourself gave them their freedom!

Pharaoh: Yes, but I didn't imagine they would become so desperate. Now I see that we were too hasty in our decision. . . .

Pharaoh's Counselor: What?

Pharaoh: Now that their path to freedom is cut off . . . now that their wonderful God has been defeated, they will be driven back to me.

*Pharaoh's
Counselor:*

Your majesty?

Pharaoh:

Look at it this way: On the one side is the sea, which they cannot cross. And on the other side is . . . Baal Tzyphon.

*Pharaoh's
Counselor:*

Then they can go by way of Baal Tzyphon.

Pharaoh:

Into the desert? Where the Egyptian god of death and evil lives? Trust me. They won't go that way. But . . . we must be careful to get them back quickly, as soon as possible, before they get out of their desperate position. We will use any means possible. We will transport the whole army in wagons, if we have to.

Narrator:

But all the time God was saying:

God:

Yes. Pharaoh will follow after them. But in due time, he and all his army and all of Egypt will come to recognize that I am God!

Narrator:

By this time, Pharaoh should have learned his lesson. He should have shown more respect for the rights of the Children of Israel. After all, Israel had gone out of Egypt as free independent human beings. And now he wanted to drag them back by force. So he said:

Pharaoh:

Go! Get my entire army ready. I want them under my direct command.

*Pharaoh's
Counselor:*

Yes, your majesty.

Pharaoh:

NOW! Bring my chariot around. I want to get it ready myself.

*Pharaoh's
Counselor:*

Yes, your majesty.

Pharaoh: Yes, it's all very well. The wilderness has closed them in. They're trapped. . . .

Narrator: And so Pharaoh took 600 of his captains and 600 chariots and, putting his own chariot in the front in command of everything, he went after the children of Israel, who were camped by the edge of the sea.

Person #1: [STANDING UP] Look!

Person #2: What is it?

Person #1: I'm not sure. See! There! All along the horizon!

Person #3: [EVERYONE STANDS UP] It looks like smoke.

Person #1: [AS IF PUZZLED] No . . . it's not smoke . . . it's dust!

Person #4: What's that noise? [COVERING EARS] It sounds like thunder.

Person #5: [PUTTING EAR TO FLOOR] The earth is shaking. It must be an earthquake.

Person #6: Oh my!

Person #1: What?

Person #6: It's not an earthquake. It's horses.

Person #1: It's the Egyptian army!

Person #2: God help us! Where can we go?

Person #3: We were fools to come out here. How could we have been so stupid? Moses and his mission for God. Where is he?

All Persons: MOSES!

Narrator: But even though things looked very bad, the Children of Israel managed to keep their sense of humor. And they said to Moses:

Person #1: So! There weren't enough graves in Egypt. You had to drag us out here to die?

Person #2: Yeah, didn't we tell you in Egypt to leave us alone?

Person #3: We were better off being slaves to Pharaoh than dying out here in the wilderness.

Moses: Don't be afraid! Calm yourselves. God is going to save you. God will fight for you. You'll see. After today you won't have to see these Egyptians any more. The only thing you have to do is calm down and stand ready.

Person #4: Calm down, he says.

Person #5: In the face of the whole Egyptian army?

Narrator: Moses had mistakenly thought that the people wouldn't have to do anything except wait for God to save them. And Moses prayed to God:

Moses: I thought you were going to destroy Pharaoh and his army!

Narrator: And God said:

God: What are you crying to me for? This is not the time to be praying long prayers when the people is in trouble. Tell the people to go forward! The sea will roll back. But it's not going to roll back before an angel of God, but rather before human beings putting their trust in God. You have to take the first step. The sea does not stand in your way.

Person #6: Oy! Where will we go?

Person #1: Where's there to go? We're trapped!

Person #2: What'd I tell you? Didn't I tell you that leaving Egypt was a bad idea?

Person #3: What difference does that make now?

Person #4: There must be some way out!

Person #5: There's only one way to go.

All Persons: Where?

Person #5: Into the water.

All Persons Except #5: Into the WATER!?. . . . [PERSON #5 GOES SLOWLY DOWN MIDDLE AISLE AS IF WADING INTO THE WATER]

Person #1: Are you out of your mind? Come back! [PERSON #2 AND PERSON #3 FOLLOW SLOWLY DOWN MIDDLE AISLE AS IF WADING INTO THE WATER]

Person #4: Stop! Reuvein—come back!

Person #2&3: No. Join us! . . . Hold my hand! [HOLDING OUT HANDS]

Narrator: And then God said:

God: Moses, lift up your staff and stretch it out over the sea and part the sea, so that the children of Israel can walk on the dry land. You will see that in spite of all his chariots and horsemen, Pharaoh and all of his army and all of Egypt are going to recognize that I am God.

Narrator: So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea [MOSES RAISES STAFF OVER MIDDLE AISLE] and God made the sea go back by a strong east wind [ALL PLAYERS MAKE WIND NOISE] all that night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were split.

Narrator: And the Children of Israel went into the middle of the sea on dry ground, and the water rose up on both sides of them.

Person #2: [LOOKING UP] What is that?

Person #3: It's the water. It's solid like a wall.

Person #5: How? [REACHING OUT TO TOUCH IT]

Person #6: Come on, who cares? Let's get across while we can.

Narrator: But the Egyptians also saw what was happening to the sea.

*Egyptian
General #1:* The sea is parting!

*Egyptian
General #2:* Come on! Now's our chance! After them.

*Egyptian
General #3:* Don't let them get away!

Narrator: And they chased after the children of Israel with all their horses and chariots into the middle of the sea. But as Israel passed through the sea, there were terrible earth-shaking storms. And the Egyptians were thrown into confusion.

*Egyptian
General #1:* Hey! Something's wrong with my chariot . . . I can't seem to drive. . . .

*Egyptian
General #2:* The wheels are coming off!

*Egyptian
General #3:* I'm sinking. I'm sinking. My wheels are sinking in the sand.

Egyptian

General #1: Flee for your lives. It's God who is fighting against us.

Narrator: Then God said to Moses:

God: Stretch out your hand over the sea, and the waters will return.

Narrator: So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and in the morning, the sea returned to its original position, and God overthrew the Egyptians. Our rabbis have said that we must be careful to not to rejoice over the death of the Egyptians, for they were also God's creation. At the same time we are commanded to experience the joy of being saved. And the Children of Israel were grateful to have been saved. And they said:

Person #1: This must be yad g'dolah!

Person #2: The Great Hand of God!

Person #3: It's a miracle.

Person #4: There is truly only one whom we should fear and trust and that is God.

Person #5: Who is full of love and justice.

Person #6: Now, we will put ourselves in God's hands.

Narrator: Thus God saved Israel on that day out of the hands of the Egyptians. And the people did trust in God and in Moses, his servant. And so the people overcame their fear, as we must in our generation and in every generation that would be free. For the human task is to find hope and to overcome. And as the people came out from the water and as the light of dawn broke, they wept and sang, led by Miriam, the sister of Moses: