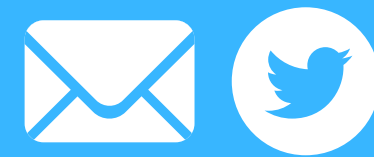




PARSHA PAGES



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Created by Adele Nemirov

בא - BO

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

At the beginning of **Parshas Bo**, Hashem tells **Moshe** to go to **Pharoah** and tell him that He will bring a plague of **locusts** to Egypt to show His power. Pharoah's servants tell him to let the Jews leave, and Pharoah calls back Moshe and Aharon but ends up refusing their request. The locusts devour all of the plants in Egypt, and Pharoah asks Moshe and Aharon to remove the plague, but he still doesn't let the Jews leave. Then, Moshe brings the plague of **darkness** for 3 days for the Egyptians, but the Jews are unaffected. Pharoah again refuses to let the Jews leave. To prepare for the last plague, the Jews are instructed to borrow silver and gold objects from the Egyptians. Moshe warns Pharoah about the plague of the **death of the firstborn**. Hashem tells Moshe to command the Jews about **sanctifying of the month**, and to take a **lamb** for each household and slaughter it on the **14th** of the month, a few days later. Then, they are to put the lamb's **blood** on their doorposts and eat the **roasted** lamb with **matzah** and **maror**, bitter herbs. They have to eat the meal quickly, fully dressed with shoes on their feet and their staffs in their hands. The blood on the doorposts will act as a sign that they are different from the Egyptians, and protect them from the plague. They are to commemorate this night in future generations with the **7 day holiday of Passover** when they are prohibited from owning any **chametz**, leavened bread. Moshe commands the Jews to stay in their houses for the whole night, and, that night, the plague strikes and Pharoah tells the Jews to leave. The Jews leave **Ramses** and journey to **Sukkos**. The Torah then lists who is allowed to partake in the Passover meal and that the **firstborns** of the Jews have a special status to remember what happened in Egypt.

DID YOU KNOW? There are **three** plagues in this week's Parsha. A way to remember this is that the name of the Parsha, **Bo**, has a **gematria**, or Hebrew numerical value, of **3!**

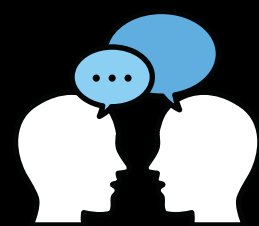
$\text{ב} = 2$
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 $\text{א} + \text{ב} = 3!$



קידוש החודש

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

The first commandment given to the Jewish nation was **קידוש החודש**, *Kiddush HaChodesh*. This is the process by which the Jewish people establish a calendar, following the lunar cycle. **Witnesses** would testify to a court when they saw a new moon, and thus, the calendar and the holidays would be established.

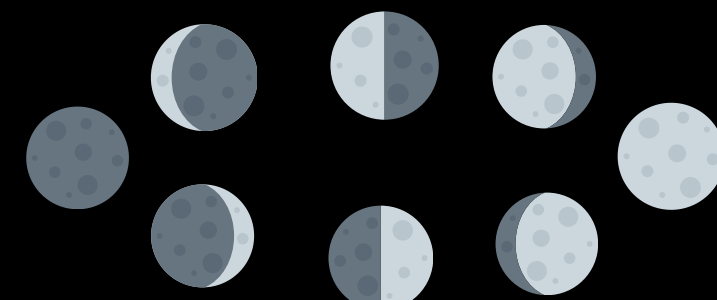


Before learning some ideas, let's

DISCUSS:

If you had the opportunity, what would you choose as the **first commandment** for the new Jewish nation? Why?

Why might Hashem have chosen the **sanctification of the month**?



Sforno, (1475 - 1550, Italy) explains that Hashem chose a commandment that focused on **time**, because, as slaves, the Jews had no control over their time. Now, as a free nation, we are leaders in creating our national calendar. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel** (1849 - 1927, Russia & Israel) explains that Hashem handed over control of the Jewish calendar and holidays to the Jews! So, while the "date" of **Shabbos** was set by Hashem at Creation, the Jews determine the dates of the **holidays**, making us partners with Hashem in bringing holiness into the world. **Rabbi Moshe Grunwald** (1853-1910, Hungary) in the **Arugas HaBosem** compares the Jewish people to the moon, which has cycles of **waxing** and **waning** but never disappears. On an individual and national level, we experience times of greatness, but also times of decline. However, just like the moon, we will always come back fully.

A FUNKY FEAST

The menu for the meal that the Jews ate before leaving Egypt consisted of **three** main things: In the **Haggadah**, **Rabban Gamliel** says that these three things are key to our modern **Passover Seder**.

**פסח**
THE PASSOVER OFFERING

**מצה**
MATZAH

**מרור**
THE BITTER HERB

image from iclipart.com

So, you might be wondering: **why did the Jews have a Passover Seder before they knew they would leave Egypt?** There is another unique component of the meal in Egypt: the Jews had to eat it **fully dressed**, with their **shoes** on, and their **staffs** in their hands. Why would they have to do this if Moshe told them not to leave their homes that night? We learn that this meal was meant to strengthen the **faith** of the Jewish people that their redemption was coming at **any moment**, even when it seemed completely unlikely.



Our Rabbis teach us that

ישועתה' כהרף עין

Hashem's salvation comes in the blink of an eye. Think about a time in your life when you felt that all hope was lost, but the situation suddenly improved. What was that like?