

Beit Chachamin

PARSHAT BO

23RD JANUARY, 2026

COME & LEARN

THE BIG RECAP [PARSHA SUMMARY]

1 – God sends Moses to Pharaoh, saying He has hardened Pharaoh’s heart to display His signs. Moses warns that locusts will cover the land if Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh’s servants urge him to relent. Pharaoh asks who will go; when Moses says everyone, Pharaoh refuses and sends them away.

2 – God tells Moses to stretch out his hand so locusts may come upon Egypt. Moses does so, and locusts cover the land and eat all vegetation left after the hail. Pharaoh calls for Moses and Aaron and asks them to pray for the locusts to be removed. God causes a west wind to sweep the locusts into the sea, but He hardens Pharaoh’s heart again. God then tells Moses to stretch out his hand toward the sky, and thick darkness covers Egypt for three days. The Israelites, however, still have light.

3 – Pharaoh summons Moses and tells him the people may go to serve God but must leave their flocks behind. Moses insists that the livestock must go with them. Pharaoh orders Moses to leave and threatens his life if he sees him again. God tells Moses He will bring one final plague after which Pharaoh will drive them out completely. The Israelites are instructed to ask their Egyptian neighbors for silver and gold.

4 – Moses announces that all Egyptian firstborns will die at midnight, but Israel’s will be spared. God gives Moses and Aaron instructions for the first Passover: each household is to take a lamb, care for it until the fourteenth day, and slaughter it. The blood is to be placed on the doorposts and the lamb is to be roasted and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

5 – Moses instructs the elders of Israel to select and slaughter the Passover lambs and to apply the blood to the doorposts. They are to remain indoors until morning as the Lord passes through to strike Egypt but will “pass over” the marked houses. This practice is to be commemorated and taught to future generations. The Israelites do exactly as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.

6 – At midnight, God strikes down all the firstborn in Egypt. Pharaoh rises in the night and calls Moses and Aaron, urging them to leave Egypt with all their people and livestock to serve the Lord. The Israelites take their dough before it rises, along with silver, gold, and clothing given to them by the Egyptians. They travel from Rameses to Sukkot—about six hundred thousand men on foot, plus women, children, and a mixed multitude. After four hundred thirty years, the Israelites depart from Egypt. God gives further instructions for observance of the Passover sacrifice: no foreigner may eat of it, except for a slave who is circumcised, and it must be eaten in one house.

7 – God commands that every firstborn male be sanctified to Him. Moses tells the people to remember the day they left Egypt by God’s strength. For seven days they are to eat unleavened bread and tell their children that this is because of what God did for them in Egypt. The festival will be a sign on their hands and between their eyes, a reminder of God’s law. God commands the dedication of the firstborn: animals are to be sacrificed or redeemed, and firstborn sons are to be redeemed. The people are to explain that this observance commemorates God’s deliverance from Egypt with a strong hand.

PARSHAT BO

The remembrance of the Exodus is done not only through thought, but through physicality. In this week's parsha many commandments are given to physically symbolize the exodus that many still keep today.

EXODUS 12:13

וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאֵת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שָׁם וְרָאִיתִי אֶת־הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא־יְהִי בְכֶם נֶגֶף לְמַשְׁחִית בְּהַכְּתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

And the blood on the houses where you are staying shall be a sign for you: when I see the blood I will pass over you, so that no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

The Israelites are told to mark their doorposts, a practice that Jews still echo today, though in a different form. Originally, the blood on the doors protected them from the final plague, whereas now Jews affix mezuzot containing scrolls with the Shema to their doorposts, reminding them of the Exodus each time they enter and leave their homes.

EXODUS 13:9

וְהָיָה לָךְ לְאֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וּלְזִכָּרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת ה' בְּפִיךָ כִּי בְיָד חֲזָקָה הוֹצֵאתָ ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם:

“And this shall serve you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead—in order that GOD’s Teaching may be in your mouth—that with a mighty hand GOD freed you from Egypt.

EXODUS 13:16

וְהָיָה לְאֹת עַל־יְדֹכָה וּלְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ כִּי בְחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרָיִם:

“And so it shall be as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol on your forehead that with a mighty hand GOD freed us from Egypt.”

The Israelites are told to mark between their eyes and on their arms. Today this is echoed in the practice of wearing tefillin, which contain scrolls with the Shema and other passages, serving as a daily bodily reminder of the Exodus and God’s commandments.

From marked doorways to *mezuzot* and *tefillin*, the story quite literally stays in our hands, on our homes, and between our eyes. We don’t just remember the Exodus, we carry it with us from generation to generation.