

Tell a story
Parshah Bo
by Julie Zhuk on 2023-04-08

Comments

The name of this parsha translates to Come to Pharaoh. We read it in the book of Exodus, 10:1. This parsha starts out with the last three of the ten plagues that fell upon the Egyptians. There was a swarm of locusts that devoured all of the crops the Egyptians were growing. Everything that was green was turned into a thick palpable darkness that enveloped the land. All of the firstborn of Egypt were killed at the stroke of midnight. This included Pharaoh's son as well. It was on the fifteenth of the month of Nissan. G-d commanded for the first mitzva to be given to the Jews. This was done for them to establish a calendar based on the monthly rebirth of the moon. The Jews were also instructed to bring a "Passover Offering" to G-d. This meant a lamb or a goat to be slaughtered. The blood from these animals were to be sprinkled on the doorposts and lintel of every home belonging to a Jew.

G-d had a plan to pass over these homes when it would be midnight and the firstborns of all Egyptians would be killed. The roasted meat of the offering from the "Passover Offering" is to be eaten at night with matzah and bitter herbs. The death of the firstborns of all Egyptians broke Pharaoh's resistance. Since his own son was killed, this was the last straw that broke the camel's back for Pharaoh. He started driving the children of Israel from Egypt. The Jews ran out of Egypt so fast, there was no time to wait for the dough to rise. They had already set the dough to bake, and when they had a chance to leave they didn't want to stay and wait for the bread to be done. Before they left Egypt, the Jews asked the Egyptians for gold, silver, and garments.

This fulfilled the promise G-d made to Abraham. The promise was, Abraham's descendants would leave Egypt with great wealth. The children of Israel are commanded to consecrate all firstborn. Jews are also to observe the anniversary of the Exodus every year. We do this by removing any leaven bread from their possession for seven days. We eat matzah for seven days and retell the story of the redemption to our children. Jewish men are commanded to wear tefillin on the arm and head of. This is a reminder of their exodus from Egypt and a resultant to the covenant we have with G-d. These are all the basic things to remember what happened with the Jews when they were in Egypt. As well as why they left. The parsha has another point to make, the importance of them fleeing Egypt the way they did. The Rebbe gives us readers an idea of why the Jews left in such a rush.

The parsha tells us that G-d was not afraid of the Egyptians going back on their word of liberation. Instead, G-d feared that the Jews themselves would lose hope of leaving and want to actually stay there. There is an old proverb that goes like, "Better the devil you know." It refers to the Jews taking a giant leap of faith when they ran out of Egypt. They were longtime slaves to the infrastructure in Egypt. The Jews were heading out to the unknown wilderness. Reading this parsha, we can only imagine that the Jews felt they had a roof over their heads and were fed every day. Going into the wilderness, they didn't know what there would be in store for them.

Leaving Egypt and getting to the wilderness, many of the Jews saw there was no water, food, or shelter. They lost hope and came running back to Egypt.

This can happen to all of us, we get comfortable in our little slaveries meaning our daily drudgeries. They may not be ideal, but they are far less intimidating than the challenges we are facing. With time there are new possibilities coming in our direction. There is an old Yiddish proverb that goes like, "May we never get used to what we can get used to. With the passage of time, we become weary and worn down. In the end, what was previously intolerable becomes all too acceptable. We have all experienced missed opportunities, such as not buying the right house or stocks we could have sold. We hesitated and in the parsha we have reached the third proverb, "He who hesitates is lost."

In our Jewish lives, we need to take advantage of many opportunities now available to us when we were younger. We should make time for studying Torah, coming into the synagogue, and doing any new mitzvos. There is so much offered today and we can easily make up for any lost or missed opportunities. It takes courage to grasp the moment and embrace new visions and horizons. When opportunity knocks don't lose your chance.