

## **Devar Torah, Parashat Bo**

**submitted by Staci Boiskin, MidAtlantic Region Community Affairs VP**

The greatness of our people is in our stories. Parashat Bo tells the story of the last three plagues: locusts, darkness and the killing of the firstborn children of Egypt. It then ends with telling us that we must be teachers to our children and share the Pesach story with them. We must be storytellers to all future generations and recount our Jewish historical knowledge.

In Parashat Bo, after the plagues, God instructs B'nai Yisrael on how to remember that we were slaves in Egypt, and how to celebrate our freedom. God teaches us to eat bitter herbs and unleavened bread. God wants us to remember our history and pass it down from generation to generation. It is our responsibility to do so. We need to remember that we were once strangers in a strange land, we need to remember that we all left Egypt together, young and old, flock and herd. We took care of each other, and went into the unknown wilderness. We were led and we followed. This is our history.

In 1936, before he became Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion made a speech in front of the Peel Commission, advocating for a Jewish state, and said "300 years ago, there came to the New World a boat, and its name was the Mayflower. The Mayflower's landing on Plymouth Rock was one of the great historical events in the history of England and in the history of America. But I would like to ask any Englishman sitting here on the commission, what day did the Mayflower leave port? What date was it? I'd like to ask the Americans: do they know what date the Mayflower left port in England? How many people were on the boat? Who were their leaders? What kind of food did they eat on the boat?"

"More than 3300 years ago, long before the Mayflower, our people left Egypt, and every Jew in the world, wherever he is, knows what day they left. And he knows what food they ate. And we still eat that food every anniversary. And we know who our leader was. And we sit down and tell the story to our children and grandchildren in order to guarantee that it will never be forgotten. And we say our two slogans: Now we may be enslaved, but next year, we'll be a free people."

What Ben Gurion said 87 years ago still holds true today. We must teach our Jewish history to our children and create strong Jewish identities. We must share the Pesach story each year and apply it to what is going on in today's world. We must take care of each other, especially in times of uncertainty. And, we must celebrate our freedoms and appreciate all the blessings we have in our lives.

On Pesach we are supposed to invite all who are hungry to come and eat because we are responsible for one another. Some people are hungry for food, while others are hungry for wisdom. Whatever we have we should share as much as we can. At this time of year, many Sisterhoods organize a food drive to help the needy in their communities.

This year, our Women's League theme is "Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Ba'Zeh," - "All of Israel is responsible for one another."

We all stand on the shoulders of over a century of phenomenal women leaders who have shared their wisdom and skills and led our movement, teaching us how to create and organize people and programs, how to be leaders and take care of our communities, and how to infuse our synagogue communities with creativity, innovation and yiddishkeit, all with one eye on the past and one eye to the future.

So, let's all remember to be storytellers and sharers of our Jewish history and values. We can do this at our Seder table, Shabbat table, or any table.

Shabbat Shalom,

Staci Boiskin  
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