SUMMARY OF PARASHAT BO

EIGHTH PLAGUE

Moshe goes to meet Pharaoh and warns him that if he does not allow the Hebrew slaves to leave, Egypt will be devastated by a plague of locusts. After Moshe and Aharon leave the palace, Pharaoh's officials try to convince him to let the Israelites go before Egypt is destroyed. Pharaoh calls Moshe and makes him an offer: allow the Jews to leave, but leave their children in Egypt. Moshe rejects the offer, and Pharaoh then refuses to set them free. Moshe extends his hand, and a plague of locusts falls on Egypt, consuming all the vegetation. Pharaoh asks Moshe to pray to God to eliminate the locusts and assures him that he will let the Jews go. Moshe prays, and the wind carries the locusts out of Egypt, but Pharaoh, having freed himself from the locusts, does not keep his word.

NINTH PLAGUE:

Darkness descends on Egypt. The Egyptians had to be in virtual isolation for three days since they couldn't see each other's faces. But the darkness did not affect the area where the Jews lived. Pharaoh calls Moshe back and offers him a new concession: free the Hebrews, men, women, and children, but leave their cattle in Egypt to ensure they return. Moshe rejects the offer, and at this point, Pharaoh expels Moshe from his presence and threatens him: "for the day you see my face again, you will die." Moshe tells Pharaoh that one more plague will befall Egypt, after which Pharaoh will release them from slavery unconditionally.

REPARATIONS

God instructs Moshe that the Israelites ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold and silver objects as compensation or reparation that in those times was granted to a slave when he was released. The Egyptians quickly gave the Hebrews items of

great value, intending for them to leave so that the plagues would end. Moshe warns Pharaoh that at midnight, God will put to death all the Egyptian firstborns, including Pharaoh's son, the heir to the throne.

THE PESACH SACRIFICE

God dictates his first Mitzvah to the children of Israel: to officially consecrate and announce the beginning of the lunar month, Rosh Chodesh, thus establishing the future Hebrew calendar. God also instructs Moshe that the Jews must take a lamb to sacrifice, roast, and consume along with matzah and bitter herbs before leaving Egypt. With the lamb's blood, the Jews should paint the lintels and doorposts of their homes, so when the last plague affects the Egyptian firstborn, the Jewish firstborn who are inside these residences marked with blood will be protected by God. HaShem also indicates Moshe that future generations should remember this day forever, celebrating the Pesach festival for seven days, during which they may not eat or possess leaven (chamets).

TENTH PLAGUE

At midnight on Nisan 15, a plague kills the Egyptian firstborn, but God protects the Jewish firstborn. Egypt is terrified because they think that the God of the Jews will cause the death of all Egyptians. Pharaoh wakes up and has Moshe brought in and pleads with him to take the Jewish slaves out of Egypt, thereby implicitly granting them their freedom. The Egyptian citizens also pressure the Hebrews to leave as soon as possible. The Jews prepared their provisions: unleavened bread made with non-fermented dough because they had to go fast, and they did not have time to let the dough rise to make ordinary bread. The Israelites leave Egypt at noon on Nisan 15.

FIRST COMMANDMENTS

God instructs the Hebrews to celebrate Pesach in the future by

offering a sacrifice and consuming it similarly to what they did in Egypt. There are other commandments that God gives, all related to the miraculous salvation from the plague that caused the death of the firstborn. 1. To consecrate the Jewish firstborn to Divine service. 2. Matsa should be consumed on Pesach night. 3. Every year on Pesach night, parents will tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt to their children. 4. The firstborn of domestic animals will also be consecrated or redeemed if they are animals unfit for consumption. 5. Jewish men should wear Tefillin, or phylacteries, on their heads and arms, little leather boxes containing four texts that allude to Israel’s love for God, expressed in the liberation from Egypt.