



January 23-24, 2026

ו שבט תשפ"א

Candle Lighting 4:54 PM

Parashat Bo בָּא Exodus 10:1-13:16

Stone - p 340 Hertz - p 248 Etz Hayim - p 374

Haftarah ירמיהו Jeremiah 46:13-28

Stone - p 1151 Hertz - p 263 Etz Hayim - p 395

Kiddush is sponsored
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Shabbat ends 5:55 PM

On This Week's Parashah - Bo

All of us have been in situations when we feel something has fallen short of our expectations. Even trivial things, such as a favorite sports team underperforming, a dessert missing the mark, or a train running late can cause significant frustration. Just imagine the disappointment or sadness one can feel when a much more important matter fails to go as hoped. Moses finds himself in this situation in this week's parashah, as God's promise to free the Israelites has yet to fully play out. How does Moses cope with the fact that his expectations have not yet been met? One especially challenging section of our parashah offers a clue.

Before the Israelites have been freed and Moses announces the final plague, God makes a prediction in [Exodus 11:1-3](#) that seems completely unattainable:

"And Adonai said to Moses, "I will bring but one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; after that he shall let you go from here; indeed, when he lets you go, he will drive you out of here one and all. Tell the people to borrow, each man from his neighbor and each woman from hers, objects of silver and gold. Adonai disposed the Egyptians favorably toward the people. Moreover, Moses himself was much esteemed in the land of Egypt, among Pharaoh's courtiers and among the people." ([Exod. 11:1-3](#))

Is this to say that after the devastating plagues and Pharaoh hardening his heart, the Egyptians all of a sudden will treat the Israelites "favorably"? That Moses, the key figure in the destruction of Egypt, will become its most adored leader? At this point in the narrative, this vision could not be farther from the reality on the ground. In the verses that follow, Moses must snap back to reality to deliver the most devastating news a parent can ever hear to Pharaoh, that God will soon exact the Plague of the Firstborn.

Biblical scholar Robert Alter also struggles with the narrative purpose of these three verses, observing that they "do not seem smoothly integrated into the narrative progress" (Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: The Five Books of Moses*, 257). He points out that chapter ten concludes with Moses saying he will never see Pharaoh's face again ([Exod. 10:29](#)), yet Moses appears before Pharaoh in verses 11:4-8 to announce the final plague. He cites Umberto Cassuto, the 20th-century Italian and Israeli Biblical scholar, "who sees it as kind of a flashback in Moses's mind—of God's initial promise to confound Egypt and to liberate Israel before the annunciation of the last plague" (*ibid.*).

Indeed, Moses had good reason to expect favorable treatment and great wealth. At the Burning Bush, God assured Moses that God "will dispose the Egyptians favorably toward this people, so that when you go, you will not go away empty handed" ([Exod. 3:21](#)). God even promised Abraham that God "will execute judgement on the nation they shall serve, and in the end they shall go free with great wealth" ([Gen. 15:14](#)). Sometimes when real-life is hard, visualizing a more ideal reality for a few seconds can help us feel grounded. Perhaps this "flashback," which validates the valiant and just nature of Moses's original intentions, and certainty of God's promise, helped him cope with disappointing feelings from unmet expectations of freedom. That short dream keeps Moses's eyes on the prize, reminding him to do whatever it takes get his people to the finish line, even if it may not look exactly the way he dreamed it.

Moses falls short of his goals many times as a leader: he probably asks Pharaoh to let the Israelites go at least a dozen times before he succeeds in securing his people's freedom. Moses's ability to "flashback" to a vision of a better future powers his relentless drive. Psychologist Angela Duckworth would call this grit, "passion and perseverance for long-term goals . . . a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do." In order to maintain his grit in a moment where reality has yet to meet his expectations, Moses takes a second to reflect and dream about the better future that he and his ancestors have worked tirelessly to procure.

We can learn from Moses when our own lives take unexpected turns. By keeping himself grounded in the bigger picture, Moses helps the Israelites endure the slow path to redemption. While this is no antidote, taking a step back to remind ourselves about our larger goals can provide a temporary spark of motivation or sigh of relief.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Adam Weissfeld

*Rabbi Weissfeld is Rabbinic Director of Education and Judaics
at Adas Israel Congregation in Washington DC*

POSTPONED

New date: January 31!)

Birthday Celebration

You are cordially invited to
celebrate the birthday of

Gary Wilson

with a kiddush luncheon
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Traude & Gary Wilson

JANUARY

SHABBAT

24

9:30 AM

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Jewish War Veterans Heritage Post 644

12 Millstone Campus Drive
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www.jwvstl.org

Jewish War Veterans Heritage Post 644 of St. Louis is pleased to announce the \$1,000 Ted and Rachael Pevnick Family Scholarship and the \$1,000 Chuck Sandroff Scholarship Awards.

Both scholarships are applicable to either vocational or academic education.

Eligibility

- a. Current Students
 - i. Graduating high school senior applying to college or vocational training, or
 - ii. Current college (undergraduate) or vocational student with at least one (1) semester remaining after award date of May 24, 2026, or
- b. Military
 - i. Currently serving military service member pursuing academic or technical training outside of the military (Active Duty, National Guard or Reserves), or
 - ii. Military veteran separated with honorable discharge applying to college or vocational training or meeting the eligibility requirement for current undergraduate/vocational students.
- c. Applicant has no prior technical certificate, bachelors, or advanced degrees

Applications will be reviewed by Committee members of the Post 644. The application deadline is **April 17, 2026**, with the award being presented on May 24, 2026 during our Memorial Day observance at the Millstone Campus in Creve Coeur, Missouri.

Application process:

- Applicant must be of Jewish faith
- Applicant has a connection to the Greater St. Louis region (at least one of the following three options applies)
 - Grew up in the Greater St. Louis region
 - Parent's live in the Greater St. Louis region
 - Attended high school or is attending college or vocational school in the Greater St. Louis region
- Write an essay (Word or PDF preferred) to include:
 - How your sense of patriotism and being Jewish in the United States affects you and how the Veteran in your family influenced your life.
 - Volunteer service in school or community.
 - Name of school the applicant will be or is currently attending
 - Contact information

Submit Applications to:
[contact @jwvstl.org](mailto:contact@jwvstl.org)

PRAYER

Teach us true freedom, O God of freedom.
Who revealed Yourself with these words:

*“I am your Almighty God
Who took you out of the land of Egypt,
Out of the house of bondage.”*

Many are the slaveries still afflicting humankind:
Ignorance, poverty and fear,
Lust for power, for wealth and for fame.

*Teach us true freedom, O God -
Freedom from selfishness which narrows our vision,
Freedom from hate and poisoning prejudice,
Freedom from gnawing fear and cold indifference.*

Teach us true freedom, O God,
Freedom from sadness and boredom
Through the joy of serving You!

*Teach us the freedom O God,
Which can help us tame our passions
By self-imposed discipline and integrity.*

For only those who place on their shoulders
With their own hands the yoke of the Torah
Are free to carry its life-giving waters
To our parched, barren, thirsty earth.

*Call not a people “Free”
If they be prisoners of fear,
Or prisoners of lust or greed.*

But call people free who love God
And serve the Creator with all their might.

*Call those people free who bind themselves to fellow mortals
For in each person’s freedom all are made free!
Teach us, O God, true freedom.*

Unknown

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Man is a peculiar animal who can read the writing on the wall only when his back is up against it.

Adlai Stevenson