

April 19, 2025 21 Nisan 5785

in the sight of all the Egyptians. For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments (Num. 33:3-4). From Rameses they traveled to Succot, and from Succot to Etham, and from Etham to Pi-hahiroth, in all three days! On the fourth day, And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled (Exod. 14:5). On the fifth and the sixth, And the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon (Exod. 14:9). In the evening of the seventh day, they went down to the sea, as it is written, And the cloud and darkness [were there, but it gave] light by night [to them] (Exod. 14:20). In the morning, Israel went up from the sea, and Egypt sank, and in that hour the Children of Israel said the song, as it is written, Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord (Exod. 15:1). And the day was Thursday, and it was the last festival day of Pesach.

Date	The Event	How Do We Know
Thursday, 14 Nisan Exodus Day 0	Slaughter of the lambs. At sunset on day 14. Eve of day 15.	Exod. 12:6 and Num. 33:3. (See below why this day was a Thursday.)
Friday, 15 Nisan Exodus Day 1	At night, eve of day 15, they leave Rameses and arrive at Succot sometime the next day. By the end of the 1st day, they are at Succot.	Implied by the text, assuming that it took only one day to get there.
Saturday, 16 Nisan Exodus Day 2	They travel from Succot and arrive at Etham sometime that day. By the end of the 2nd day, they are at Etham.	Implied by the text, assuming that it took only one day to get there.
Sunday, 17 Nisan Exodus Day 3	They travel from Etham and arrive at Pi Hahiroth sometime that day. By the end of the 3rd day, they are at Pi Hahiroth.	Implied by the text, assuming that it took only one day to get there.
Monday, 18 Nisan Exodus Day 4	Pharaoh hears that they have escaped. This is the 4th day. He dispatches his army.	This corresponds to Moses' earlier request that they have a three-day

*On the 14th [of Nisan] the Children of Israel slaughtered their Pesach offerings in Egypt, and it was a **Thursday**. And on that night the firstborn [of Egypt] were stricken. From the day after Pesach, which was a Friday, they travelled from Rameses, as it is written: And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succot, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children (Exod. 12:37). And it is written, And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after Pesach the children of Israel went out with a high hand*

² “The Great Order of the World” a second-century chronicle that details the dates of biblical events from creation to Alexander the Great’s conquest of the ancient Near East (333 BCE). It adds no

stories beyond what is in the biblical text and instead fills in gaps and addresses questions that arise in the biblical text, like Isaac's age at the Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22) and the number of years that Joshua led the Israelites. It is referred to often, by direct quotation or allusion, in the Talmud, early midrashim, and early biblical commentaries like that of Rashi. From Sefaria.

	1st day of the Egyptian pursuit.	journey in order to worship God (Exod. 3:18)
Tuesday, 19 Nisan Exodus Day 5	2nd day of the Egyptian pursuit.	When Pharaoh was informed that they were not returning, he concludes that they escaped.
Wednesday, 20 Nisan Exodus Day 6	3rd day of Egyptian pursuit. They catch up to them that evening.	Israelites travel three days. While Israel encamps at the shore of the Sea of Reeds for three days the Egyptians catch up to them.
Thursday, 21 Nisan Exodus Day 7	The splitting of the sea took place at eve of the 7th day. The singing took place the following morning.	The text says all of this happened throughout the night.

How do we know that the **splitting of the sea** took place on the eve of a **Thursday**? The Torah tells us that **after** the **splitting of the sea** the people journeyed from the Wilderness of Shur **for three days** to a place they called Mara because the water there was too bitter to drink. God told Moses to throw a piece of wood into the water to make it potable and it was there that **he imposed law and judgment for them** (Exod. 15:25). **The law in that instance according to the Rabbis, was the law of the Shabbat. While that was not their first Shabbat from the Exodus, it was the first Shabbat during which they were truly free and safe from the possibility of being captured and returned to Egypt.** According to this chronology, they left the safe side of the Sea of Reeds on the same day that it split, and they sang, (i.e. day 7, a **Thursday**) and got to Mara on Shabbat. (3-day journey: Thursday, Friday, Shabbat).

Did Moses know ahead of time that the **splitting of the sea** would occur on the **seventh** day? Consider that when Moses issued the instructions for the festival of Passover **prior to the Exodus**, he says (Exod. 12:16):

וביום הראשון מקרא קדש וביום השביעי מקרא קדש יהיה לכם.
And on the first day, a proclamation of holiness, and on the seventh day, a proclamation of holiness.

Moses was a prophet so of course, it is possible that he knew what was going to happen. But it is also possible to argue that the holiness of the seventh day was already built into the Passover festival, and that the occurrence of the **splitting of the sea** on that day is a profound example of the layering of special events on significant days, something that we see elsewhere in the midrash³ and frankly, in all of Judaism.⁴ But there is probably a much more sensible explanation: **Seven is the key number of the Bible. Seven**

is God's number. Seven days recalls the Creation of the world. Placing the **splitting of the sea on the seventh day of the Exodus tells us that just as Creation culminates with Shabbat, the Exodus culminates with the **splitting of the sea**. The seven days of Passover therefore commemorate a period of **re-creation** for the world and for Israel. The lack of textual proof for this simply demonstrates how self-evident this is.**

Some customs of the Seventh Day of Passover

Several beautiful customs have evolved to commemorate the **splitting of the sea** on the Seventh Day of Passover. Some communities gather at midnight to recite the Song of the Sea verse by verse with festive melodies and dancing. The community of Tzfat during the time of the great mystic, R. Isaac Luria, (1534-1572) would recite the Song of the Sea in the early morning after a night of study, which would have included passages of the Zohar pertaining to mysteries of the **splitting of the sea**. Libyan Jews would gather their entire communities to recite the Song outdoors beside the synagogue. Tunisian Jews would hold their services by the seashore of the Mediterranean, and when they returned to the synagogue they would hold a procession in which two members would dress up as Moses and Aaron, accompanied by songs and dances. Today in Israel there are some communities along the coast and in Eilat that recite the Song of the Sea at the shore. During the Torah reading, some congregations spill water on the floor. Hasidic communities encourage spiritual efforts to strengthen one's awe and trust in God and one's rebbe on the Seventh Day of Passover as a way of reenacting this verse prior to the Song of the Sea:

וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּה' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עֲבָדוּ. (שמי' יד:לא)

and Israel saw the great hand that God had wrought against Egypt. The people held God **in awe; they trusted in God and in Moses his servant. (Exod. 14:31)**

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (1789-1866) the third Rebbe of Chabad invented the idea that the Seventh Day of Passover was the **ראש השנה למסירות הנפש - the New Year of selflessness, devotion, altruism and wholehearted dedication**. This is because (according to midrash) Nahshon ben Aminadav acted in such a manner when he waded into the sea until the waters were at his neck, at which point the sea split. **May we all use this day to strengthen our faith and pledge to live in wholehearted selflessness! Amen! Hag Sameah!**

Today is Day 561. We continue to pray for the return of the hostages being held in captivity in Gaza by evil messengers of destruction during this Festival of Freedom. May God comfort the bereaved, protect the IDF, heal the wounded and shield Israel from continued terror. Amen!

In honor of Yaakov and Gabi on the birth of their daughter on the Second Day of Pesach in Jerusalem. Mazel Tov! Rabbi Eliot Malomet and Kim Pimley

³15 Nisan is also the date ascribed to God's Covenant of the Pieces with Abraham (Gen. 15) and the birth of Isaac.

⁴Tisha B'av is a good example of how calamitous events are layered on a specific date.