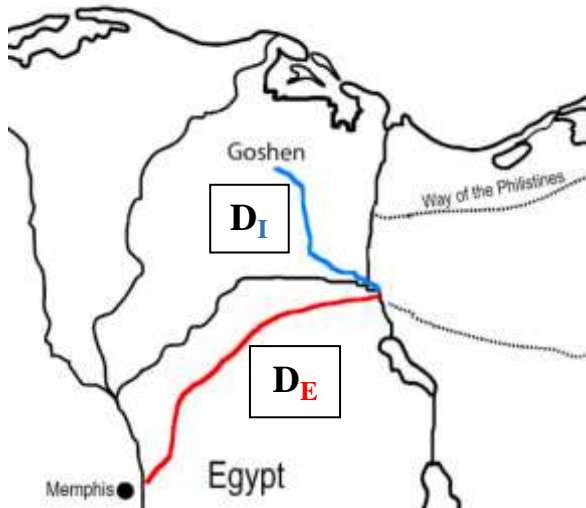


Benchmark: 1850s Oregon Trail wagon trains -

7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (less 1 hour noon rest)

15 to 20 miles a day (depending on terrain)

9 hours @ 2 mph = 18 miles/day



D_I = Israelite distance to crossing

$D_I \approx 55$ miles

D_E = Egyptian distance to overtake

$D_E \approx 75$ miles

	Israelite	Egyptian
$D = R \times T$	55 miles	75 miles
$R = D \div T$	2 mph 18 miles/day	10.2 mph 92 miles/day AS IF
$T = D \div R$	3 days	.81 day

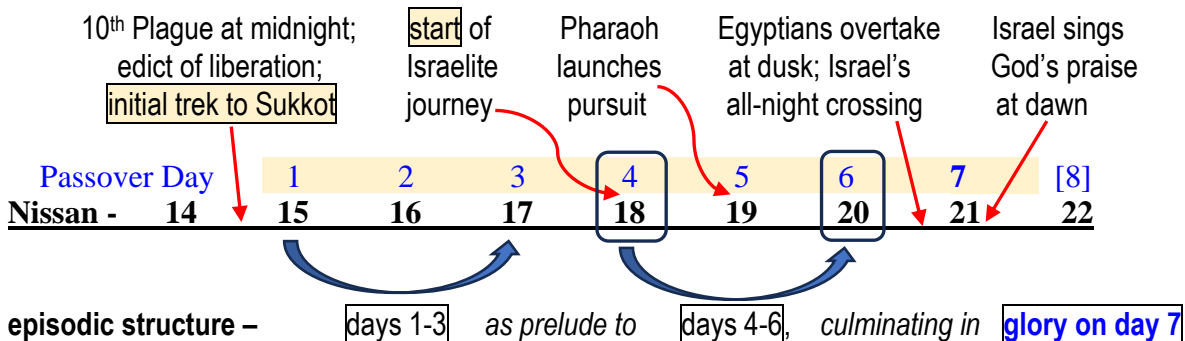
Exodus 12:37 - “[Starting that same night,] the Israelites journeyed from Raamses to Sukkot”

----- time hiatus -----

Exodus 13:20 - “[Setting out from Sukkot,] they next made camp at Eitam, at the edge of the Wilderness.”

Exodus 14:2 - “[Turn back] to encamp at Pi-haCherot, between Migdol and the sea.”

Exodus 14:5, 14:7 - “When the Emperor of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his courtiers had a change of heart about the people. . . and he set out in pursuit of the Israelites.” [at 30-40 miles a day]



Why That Episodic Structure Matters



Genesis 1-2		Exodus 12-14	
<i>when</i>	<i>what God Creates</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>what happens</i>
Day 1 -	time (day & night)	Day 1 -	Israel departs Goshen, and a
Day 2 -	sky and sea	Day 2 -	mixed multitude assembles
Day 3 -	dry land (and plants)	Day 3 -	with them at Sukkot.
Day 4 -	luminaries to tell time // 1	Day 4 -	journey to Eitam.
Day 5 -	fish and birds // 2	Day 5 -	journey to desert edge.
Day 6 -	land animals, and humanity // 3	Day 6 -	overtaken by Egypt at dusk, and the night crossing.
Day 7 -	God consecrates the Shabbat	Day 7 -	the Israelites consecrate themselves to God





OFF-RAMP TORAH

A JUDICIOUS DEPARTURE FROM
THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION



- April 27, 2024 -

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

TO START: Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: Chol haMo'eid Exodus 33:12-34:26

An excerpt from *Parashat "Ki Tissa"* (in the middle of the Book of Exodus),
which is **traditionally read on Shabbat "Chol haMo'eid"**
(intermediate Shabbat of Passover in the Spring, and of Sukkot in the Autumn)
to put both those holidays in context as central to our Covenant faith.

WHERE WE'RE GOING INSTEAD, and why

Exodus 15:1-19

Context: with the annual Torah-reading cycle being at this time of year up to the middle of the Book of Leviticus, during the week of Passover we do "Torah out-of-season" to commemorate the events associated with the drama of the Exodus, and with the establishment of the holiday to be observed by subsequent generations of Israelites.

Content: Today, instead of discussing the institutionalization of Passover from Exodus 33, as traditionally assigned to Shabbat "Chol haMo'eid," we are rewinding to Exodus 15 (and fast-forwarding the calendar) to explore the dramatic passage that will be read in the synagogue next Monday on the Seventh Day of Passover: *the Song of Triumph sung by the Israelites upon crossing through the divided waters of the Sea "On This Day In History."*

15:1a] - Then Moses and the Israelites sang this Song to the Eternal One, all of them together saying:

אָז יִשְׁרַח מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת
הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ
לֵאמֹר

אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָאָה גָאָה **סוּס וְרֹכֵבוֹ רָמָה בַּיָּם**

15:1b] - **Let me sing to The Eternal One**, Who surged like the rising tide;
horse and rider He has overthrown into the Sea!

וַיֹּאסֶר אֶת-רֹכְבוֹ וְאֶת-עַמּוֹ לְקַח עִמּוֹ

A) Exodus 14:6-7, 14:28- Pharaoh harnessed up his chariot, and took his people with him—

וַיִּקַּח שֵׁשׁ-מֵאוֹת רֶכֶב בְּחֹר וְכָל רֹכֵב מִצְרַיִם
וְשָׁלְשִׁים עַל-כֶּלֹו

for he took along six hundred hand-picked chariots (and all the other chariots of Egypt!), with a third man on each.



- more over



וַיָּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם וַיַּכְּסוּ אֶת-הָרֶכֶב וְאֶת-פָּרָשִׁים לְכָל חֵיל פְּרָעָה הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּיָּם לֹא-נִשְׁאַר בָּהֶם עַד-אֶחָד

Then the waters returned to their strength, so that the sea covered up **the chariotry and the horses**— the entire cohort of Pharaoh that had been pursuing after them; not a one of them remained.

וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה

15:2a]- The Eternal One is my strength and might, and has become my Salvation!

אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאֶרְמְמָנָהוּ

15:2b]- This is my God, Whom I will praise;

the God of **my forebears**, Whom I will extol!

עֲזִי וְזַמְרַת יְהוָה
zimar
“sacred
marvel”

עֲזִי וְזַמְרַת יְהוָה

זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶנְוָהוּ

B) Genesis 26:25 -

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ

[God declared to Isaac:] I am **the God of your forebear, Abraham**.

C) Genesis 28:13 -

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ וְאֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק

[God declared to Jacob:] I am The Eternal One, **the God of your forebear, Abraham, and the God of Isaac**.

D) Exodus 3:6 -

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב

[God declared to Moses:] I am the God of **your forebear: the God of Abraham; the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**.

וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיַּחֲזֶקְבּוּ וַיְהִי לְמִטָּה בְּכַפּוֹ לְמַעַן יֶאֱמִינוּ כִּי נִרְאָה אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב

E) Exodus 4:5 - He stretched out his hand and took it by the tail, whereupon it became a staff in his hand. “Which such marvels will be in order that **they will believe that The Eternal One—the God of their forebears**— has appeared to you: **the God of Abraham; the God of Isaac; and the God of Jacob**.”



יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ

[15:3] - The Eternal One is a **Man of War**,

Whose Name is “The One Who Will Always Be!”

יְהוָה אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה

גלית אמר רבי יוחנן שעמד בגילוי פנים לפני הקב"ה

F) Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 42b - Rabbi YoChanan says that [the Philistine giant] Goliat was so named because of his affrontery [*gillu'i panim*] before The Holy And Blessed

- continued

One—

שנאמר ברו לכם איש וירד אלי ואין איש אלא הקב"ה שנא' ה' איש מלחמה



even as it is said in Scripture: “You select yourselves a man, and let him come down to face me” [I Samuel 17:8]; and “a man” signifies nothing other than The Holy And Blessed One— even as it is said in Scripture: “The Eternal One is a Man of War.” אמר הקב"ה הריני מפילו על יד בן איש שנא' ודוד בן איש אפרתי הזה

To which The Holy And Blessed One responded: “Behold, I am going to bring him down by means of the son of a man”— even as it is said in Scripture: “Now David was the son of a man of Ephraim” [I Samuel 17:12].

ה' איש מלחמה - בעל מלחמה

G) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) - “The Eternal One is a Man of War” - **this denotes a capable warrior.**

וכל איש ואישך מתורגמין בעל

So too every time Scripture says איש *ish* “man,” the [Aramaic translators Onkelos and Jonathan both] render it as בעל *ba'al* “one who is masterful.”

וכן וחזקת והיית לאיש לגבור

As a case in point, “Be strong and show yourself an איש *ish*” [I Kings 2:2] signifies “be boldly courageous.”

ה' איש מלחמה - פירוש גם במדת הרחמים עשה מלחמה ולא שישתנה מפני זה ח"ו אלא ה' שמו

H) Chayim ibn-Attar (1696-1742), Or haChayim - “The Eternal One is a Man of War” - the meaning being that **the Divine attribute of Compassion** [associated with the four-letter Name *Adonai*] **obtains even when God makes war**, and that God is not (Heaven forbid!) fundamentally changed thereby— for His Name is still *Adonai*!

על דרך כי אני ה' לא שניתני

This along the lines of “For I, The Eternal One, will not change” [Malachi 3:6].

I) RaMBaM (Musa ibn-Maimun, 1135-1204), Guide for the Perplexed, 1:27 - Onkelos the Proselyte, who was well grounded in the Hebrew and Chaldean languages, made it his task to oppose the belief in God’s corporeality. Accordingly, **any expression in the Torah referring to God, and in any way implying the Deity having some physical form, the translator paraphrases it in consonance with the context.** All expressions denoting any mode of motion or action are expressed by Onkelos to mean the appearance or manifestation of a certain apparition created solely for that occasion, and **not a physical description that defines— and would thereby limit— God’s Own Self.**

יְיָ מְרִי נִצְחוֹ קְרָבִיָּא
The Eternal One
is
Master of victory in battle

וּמִבְּחַר שְׁלֹשִׁי טַבָּעוֹ בָּיָם סוּף
 15:4] - The chariots of Pharaoh, and his hosts, He overturned in the Sea;
 his hand-picked third-men were drowned in the Border-Sea.

סוּף “sea [of]” + סוּף “reed; rush; bulrush; cat-tail”

סוּף סוּף { “Sea of Reeds” (Great Bitter Lake *الْبَحِيرَةُ الْمُرَّةُ الْكُبْرَى*)
 “Red Sea” < Vulgate *Mari Rubro* < LXX *ἐρυθρᾶ* θαλάσση

סוּף “sea [of]” + סוּף “end; terminus; finish”

סוּף סוּף “the Ocean Marking The End of the World”

תְּהַמֹּת יִכְסִימוּ וְרָדוּ בְּמַצּוֹלַת כְּמוֹ אֶבֶן
 15:5] - The depths covered them up;
 they sank into the abyss like a stone.

מִיְמִינְךָ יְהוָה נֶאֱדָרִי בַפֶּחַח מִיְמִינְךָ יְהוָה תִּרְעַץ אוֹיֵב
 15:6] - **Your Right Hand**, O Eternal One, is an irresistible force;
Your Right Hand, O Eternal One, smashes the foe!

קוֹל רִנָּה וַיִּשׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלֵי צְדִיקִים יְמִין יְהוָה עֲשָׂה חֵיל
 J) Psalm 118:15-16 –
 The sound of joyous song and triumph in the tents of the righteous:
 “**The Right Hand of The Eternal One** has done mighty marvels!
 יְמִין יְהוָה רוֹמְמָה יְמִין יְהוָה עֲשָׂה חֵיל
The Right Hand of The Eternal One is raised up!
The Right Hand of The Eternal One has done mighty marvels!”

וּבָרַב גְּאוֹנְךָ תִּהְרַס קִמְיָךְ תִּשְׁלַח חֲרוֹנְךָ יֹאכְלֵמוּ כֶקֶשׁ
 15:7] - In the greatness of Your might, You demolish those who rise against You;
 You send forth Your wrath, and **it consumes them like straw**.

Job 41:21 - כֶּקֶשׁ נְחֹשֶׁבֶת תּוֹתָח a cudgel is nothing more than a **straw**

Psalm 83:14 - שִׁיתָמוּ כֶקֶשׁ לִפְנֵי רוּחַ rendered like straw **before the wind**

Isaiah 40:24 - סָעָרָה כֶּקֶשׁ תִּשְׂאֵם the storm **scatters them** like straw

Jeremiah 13:24 - כֶּקֶשׁ עוֹבֵר לְרוּחַ מִדְּבָר like straw, **blown before the desert wind**

Isaiah 47:14 - הָיוּ כֶקֶשׁ אֵשׁ שָׂרְפָתָם like straw, **which the fire has burned**

Nachum 1:10 - אֶכְלוּ כֶקֶשׁ יָבֵשׁ מְלֵא consumed like **thoroughly dry straw**

ת"ל יאכלמו כקש

K) Midrash M'chilta d'Rabi Yishma'Eil, Shirata 6 - The Scriptural verse reads “You send forth Your wrath, and it consumes them like straw.”

מה הקש כשהוא דולק אין בו ממש

Just as straw, when it burns, leaves no residue,

כך המצריים כשהיו דולקין לא היה בהן ממש מפני פורענות

even so the Egyptians, once they have been destroyed because of the punishment being meted out to them [cf. Genesis 15:14], will leave nothing behind.

נצבו כמו גד

וברוח אפיף נערמו מים
נזלים קפאו תהמת בלב ים

15:8] - With but a snort of Your nostrils, the waters heaped up;

the mightiest current piled up like a mound—

The very deeps froze, within the heart of the sea!

ויט משה את-גדו על-הים ויולך יהוה את-הים ברוח קדים עזה כל-הלילה
וישם את-הים לחרבה ויפקעו המים ויבאו בני-ישראל בתוך הים

L) Exodus 14:21-22 - When Moses reached out his hand over the Sea, The Eternal One moved the Sea by means of a strong East wind all that that night, that turned the sea to dry ground as it cleaved its waters so that the Israelites could come into the midst of the Sea on dry ground.

אחלק שכל תמלאמו נפשי
תורישמו גדי

אמר אויב ארדף אשיג
אריק חרבי

15:9] - The enemy had thought: “Let me pursue and overtake them;

“I will divide the spoils to my heart’s delight!

“I will draw my sword—

“my might will dispossess them!”

צללו בעופרת במים אדירים

נשפת ברוחך פסמו ים

15:10] - You but blasted Your nostril, and the Sea covered them up,

so that they sank like lead into the mighty waters!

מי כמכה נאדר בקדש

מי כמכה באלם יהוה
נזרא תהלת עשה פלא

15:11] - Who is Your like among the gods, O Eternal One?

Who is Your like, wondrous in holiness,

Awesome in praise, and working wonders?

באלים - בחזקים כמו ואת אילי הארץ לקח אילותי לעזרתי חושה

M) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) - “Among the *eilim*” – signifies “among the mighty,” as in the case of “he took away all the mighty of the land” [Ezekiel 17:13] or “O you, Who are my strength, hasten to my help” [Psalm 22:20].

מי כמכה באלים - במלאכי מעלה שהם נקראים אלים מלשון זה אלי ואנוהו

- more over

N) RaMBaN (Bonastruc da Porta, 1194-1270) - “Who is Your like among the gods” signifies **those higher powers who are called gods**, from which vocabulary we derive “this is my God, Whom I will praise” in verse 2.

והקב"ה נקרא אל עליון על כלם וכן ועל אל אלים ידבר נפלאות כמו הוא אלהי האלהים וכן הבו לה' בני אלים

Yet The Holy And Blessed One is called *Eil 'Elyon*, “God Supreme” over all of them. Which is why Scripture can contain such statements as “to the God of all gods he will ascribe awe” [Daniel 11:36], and “He is God of gods” [Deuteronomy 10:17], and “ascribe honor to The Eternal One, O mighty ones” [Psalm 29:1].

תִּבְלַעְמוּ אֶרֶץ

נְטִיתָ יְמִינָךְ

15:12] - You but stretched out Your Hand,
and the earth swallowed them up!

נְחִיתָ בְּחַסְדֶּךָ עִם זֹאת גְּאֻלְתָּ

נְחִיתָ בְּחַסְדֶּךָ עִם זֹאת גְּאֻלְתָּ

[15:13] - You led forth, in Your kindness, this people whom You had redeemed;
You guided them, in Your great strength to Your holy abode!

חֵיל אֶחָז יִשְׁבִי פְּלִשְׁתִּים

שָׁמְעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגָזוּן

15:14] - The nations heard of it, and were anguished:
trembling seized the residents of Philistia;

אֵילֵי מוֹאָב יֶאֱחָזוּ רָעַד

אֵז נִבְהָלוּ אֱלֹפֵי אֲדוֹם

נִמְגּוּ כָּל יִשְׁבֵי כְנָעַן

15:15] - The chieftains of the Edomites became dismayed;
the nobles of Mo'av were seized with shuddering;
All the inhabitants of Canaan were aghast!



- continued

15:1a] - **Then** Moses and the Israelites sang this Song to the Eternal One, saying:

אָז יִשְׂרָאֵל מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת
הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ

אָז	adverb	“then, at that time” “therefore” “ever since”
יִשְׂרָאֵל	verb - future	“will sing” “are to sing” “are yet to sing”

אז ישיר משה - אז כשראה הנס עלה בלבו שישיר שירה

Q) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) - “Then Moses will sing” - [the future tense ישיר signifies:] “then”— having beheld this miracle— it occurred to him that “**he would sing**” a song [on that occasion. RaSHI proceeds to cite illustrations of similar narrative use of the imperfect tense of anticipated action appearing in Numbers 21:17, Joshua 10:12, I Kings 7:8, I Kings 11:7].

אז ישיר משה - והטעם כי מנהג הלשון שהמספר ענין יעמיד עצמו בזמן שיחפוץ וירמוז למעשה ממנו

R) RaMBaN (Bonastruc da Porta, 1194-1270) on Exodus 15:1 - The reason Scriptural texts routinely exchange past-tense for future, and the reverse, is that **it is a literary convention for the narrator of an event to place himself at a certain point of time** which he desires and then to allude to events happening in that moment.

פעם יעמיד עצמו בזמן המעשה וידבר בו בענין הווה ועומד עליו בתחלתו ויאמר ישיר ישראל כאלו משוררים לפניו

At times, he places himself at the moment of the action, and he speaks of it in the present tense as if he is watching it from its very beginning. He would say, “Israel is singing,” as if they were singing right before him.

ופעם יאחר עצמו ויאמר זה נעשה כבר והכל לאמת ענין ולכן רוב שיבא זה יהיה בענין הנבואות

On another occasion the narrator places himself after the event and says, “This has already been done.” It is all a matter of conveying an event realistically. It is for this reason that this interchangeable use of the tenses occurs in matters of prophecy.

תניא אמר רבי מאיר מניין לתחיית המתים מן התורה שנאמר אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל את השירה הזאת לה'

S) Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 91b - It has been taught that Rabbi Mei'ir said: How do we know that the doctrine of resurrection is taught by the Torah? From the verse “Then Moses and the Israelites will sing this Song to the Eternal One” [Exodus 15:1].

שר לא נאמר אלא **ישיר** מכאן לתחיית המתים מן התורה
“Sang” is not said here, but rather “**will sing**”— so the doctrine of resurrection is inferred from the Torah text.

וייראו העם את ה' - שנו רבותינו הקורא את שמע צריך להזכיר קריעת ים סוף

T) Midrash Rabbah Exodus 22:3 - “Then the people were in awe of The Eternal One” [Exodus 14:31a] – our Mishnaic sages have taught that **one who recites the *Sh'ma* is obligated to make mention of the dividing of the Sea.**

ולמה צריך להזכיר קריעת ים סוף באמת ויציב לפי שכיון שקרע להם את הים
האמינו בו שנאמר ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו

For what purpose must one make mention of the dividing of the Sea as part of the “*Emet v'Yatziv* - True and enduring” [*Ge'ulah* prayer following the paragraphs of the *Sh'ma*]? It is because they believed in God only once He had divided the Sea for them that— even as it is said in Scripture: “then they believed in The Eternal One, and in His servant, Moses” [Exodus 14:31b].

ובזכות האמנה שהאמינו זכו לומר שירה ושרתה עליהם שכינה שכן כתיב
אחריו אז **ישיר** משה

But it was due to the merit of that belief which they came to believe that they deserved the privilege of reciting this great Song, so that the Divine Presence also sang over them. For even so is it written immediately after [that verse in chapter 14, juxtaposed as the opening verse of chapter 15]: “Then Moses and the Israelites **are to sing**....”

לכך צריך אדם לסמוך גאולה לתפלה כשם שהם הסמיכו שירה אחר האמנה
והקריעה

It is on that account that a person juxtaposes the *Ge'ulah* prayer to the recitation of the *T'fillah*, just as [our long-ago forebears on the shore of the Sea] sang their song of praise immediately after the belief they acquired from witnessing the dividing of the waters.