

Pesach Day 7 Nuggets

Crossing the Sea: Faith, Fear, and Freedom

Life Lessons from the Splitting of the Sea

Objective:

To explore the themes in the Torah reading for the Seventh Day of Pesach and extract practical wisdom for daily life, enriched by the teachings of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

Welcome & Introduction (5 min)

Today is the Seventh Day of Passover—a day that commemorates the miraculous Splitting of the Sea (Kriyat Yam Suf) and the final stage of the Exodus from Egypt. It's not just about ancient miracles—it's about what it means to walk through fear, face the unknown, and emerge into freedom.

We'll focus on 5 Nuggets of Torah Wisdom that apply to our lives today. These may sound short and simple—but they're packed with meaning.

ASK:

- “What do you already know about the splitting of the sea?”
 - Ask someone to read a brief summary from Exodus 13:17–15:26.
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Nugget #1: Step Into Fear

Primary Text: Shemot (Exodus) 14:22

“The Children of Israel went into the sea on dry land, and the water was a wall to them on their right and on their left.”

Discussion Points:

- The sea only split after the Israelites began walking into it.

- The Midrash teaches that Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped in first—his courage sparked the miracle.
- Faith doesn't require the absence of fear—it means moving through it.

Rabbi Sacks Insight:

“Faith is not certainty; it is the courage to live with uncertainty.”
(Covenant & Conversation: Exodus, p. 118)

Life Application:

- Ask: “What helps you move forward even when you're scared?”
- Reflect on times when action preceded clarity or comfort.

NUGGET: Step Into Fear

Nugget #2: Win With Compassion

Primary Text: Shemot (Exodus) 14:30

“Thus HaShem saved Israel that day from the Egyptians... and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.”

Discussion Points:

- A moment of victory can also be a moment of loss.
- The Midrash teaches that the angels were stopped from singing—because even oppressors are HaShem's creations.
- Justice doesn't mean abandoning empathy.

Rabbi Sacks Insight:

“Never forget that your enemy is also human. To be free, you have to let go of hate.”
(Haggadah: A New Translation with Commentary, p. 102)

Life Application:

- Ask: “Have you ever struggled to feel compassion for someone who hurt you?”
- Explore how we hold our humanity even in triumph.

NUGGET: Win With Compassion

Nugget #3: Sing Your Story

Primary Text: Shemot (Exodus) 15:1

“Then Moshe and the Children of Israel sang this song to HaShem...”

Discussion Points:

- This was the first song in the Torah—Shirat HaYam.
- Singing expressed not just joy, but transformation.
- Miriam and the women joined in with instruments and dance.

Rabbi Sacks Insight:

“We are the story we tell about ourselves... In Judaism, to be is to tell a story.”

(A Letter in the Scroll, p. 34)

Life Application:

- Ask: “What’s one challenge you’ve come through that you could now ‘sing’ about?”
- Reflect on the power of storytelling and gratitude.

NUGGET: Sing Your Story

Nugget #4: Leave Egypt Behind

Primary Text: Shemot (Exodus) 14:12

“It would have been better for us to serve Egypt than to die in the wilderness.”

Discussion Points:

- The Israelites were physically free but mentally stuck.
- It’s often easier to cling to what’s familiar—even when it’s harmful.
- HaShem challenges us to shed the “slave mindset.”

Rabbi Sacks Insight:

“Freedom is not given; it has to be taken. It is not the end of a journey but the beginning of one.”

(Radical Then, Radical Now, p. 87)

Life Application:

- Ask: “What’s your ‘Egypt’—a comfort zone you need to leave?”
- Identify internal beliefs or habits that hold you back.

NUGGET: Leave Egypt Behind

Nugget #5: Sweeten the Struggle

Primary Text: Shemot (Exodus) 15:23–25

“They came to Marah, but could not drink the water... HaShem showed Moshe a tree... and the water became sweet.”

Discussion Points:

- Right after a miracle came a hardship—bitter water.
- Life after freedom still contains challenges.

- HaShem shows that solutions can be close—if we're open to seeing them.

Rabbi Sacks Insight:

“The Hebrew word for test—nisayon—also means to lift. We are lifted by the tests we overcome.”

(Lessons in Leadership, p. 138)

Life Application:

- Ask: “Can you recall a time when sweetness came from a bitter experience?”
- Encourage looking for growth even in hard moments.

NUGGET: Sweeten the Struggle

5 Nuggets Recap

1. Step Into Fear – Take courageous action even when afraid.
 2. Win With Compassion – Let empathy guide your victory.
 3. Sing Your Story – Celebrate your journey with gratitude.
 4. Leave Egypt Behind – Let go of limiting beliefs and comfort zones.
 5. Sweeten the Struggle – Seek hidden blessings in bitter moments.
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Closing Blessing

“May we have the courage to step forward, the grace to lead with compassion, the joy to sing our stories, the strength to release our past, and the wisdom to find sweetness in every stage of our journey.”