



## AS WE FACED THE SPLITTING SEA

*Embodying courage on the precipice of change*

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Each year, we tell the story of our ancestors' exodus from Egypt—their emergence from slavery to freedom. One of the most dramatic moments in the story takes place on the banks of the Red Sea. With their tormentors at their backs and a foreboding body of water ahead, the Israelites hesitated—still unaware that the waves would split for them to cross on dry land. But as the *midrash*<sup>1</sup> recounts, one individual, **Nachshon ben Aminadav**, stepped courageously into the sea—and only then did the waters begin to part so the Israelites could walk on to freedom.

This past year was also an exodus. A departure from the lives we knew, and a sudden and trying voyage to a different reality—one filled with turmoil and loss. In many ways, when COVID-19 emerged we stood like the Israelites on the edge of uncharted waters—with no choice but to take that first step forward.

*And in ordinary and extraordinary ways, we stepped up to the challenge. We channeled Nachshon's courage, caring for the vulnerable around us and putting their health and wellbeing first... finding creative ways to build community in the face of isolation... and continuing to stand up for human rights at home and worldwide. Together, we rose to this moment—we took action in the face of unprecedented change, and we led the way toward repairing our broken world.*

*As you prepare for Passover or gather around your Seder table, we invite you to reflect:*

**This year...**

**What's one way you embodied bravery?**

**How did you "step into the sea"?**

**What did you learn about yourself?**

**How will you use the lessons of this past year to fight for a more just world?**

As we celebrate Passover this year, let us reflect on our inner Nachshon and use our voices and our actions to bring about a more just and equitable world.

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<sup>1</sup>Commentary on the text of the Torah



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