

# Entering Unknown Waters: A Passover Meditation for Courage

After the Israelites fled Egypt, they rushed to the shores of the Sea of Reeds. Suddenly, they found themselves at an impasse. Behind them was Egypt, where they had been slaves. In front of them was a gigantic obstacle standing in their way of freedom. How did the Israelites get over their fear in order to take their first steps into the sea?

**There is a legend we retell at Passover about a man named Nachshon (*Nakh-shone*) who was the first Israelite to step into sea, even before Moses parted it:** With the Pharaoh and his army rapidly approaching, Moses commanded the Israelites to keep going. Each of the tribal leaders hesitated declaring, "I do not want to be the first to enter the waters." Nachshon, a leader of the tribe of Judah witnessed this hesitation and entered the waters. He walked deeper and deeper, until the waters rose almost above his head. People began to follow him. God commanded Moses' attention. *"Look, my beloved people are drowning in the sea, and you stand in place and pray?!"* Moses asked, *"Source of the World, what should I do?"* God told Moses, *"Lift your staff, spread your head over the waters. They will part and the people will emerge from the sea on dry land."* Following Nachshon's lead, all the Israelites entered the sea and the waters parted. Nachshon was blessed mightily for his courage and leadership in making the first move toward freedom, and for setting a brave example for others.

We too, can receive the blessings of understanding our strength, inspiring others and creating a legacy when we practice courage. Honeymoon Israel welcomes you to this Nachshon Meditation, a meditation for courage.

Before you begin find a comfortable position for yourself. One that supports your natural alignment and where it is easy to take some deep breaths. It can be sitting or lying down. When you are ready begin this guided meditation.



## This resource was lovingly written and designed by:



Joshua Lesser, beloved HMI Atlanta Rabbi, has proudly served as the Senior Rabbi at a progressive and creative synagogue Congregation Bet Haverim for over 20 years. He currently serves on the board of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and is the Chair of the City of Atlanta's Human Relations Commission. He has been a committed advocate for racial justice working on issues of mass incarceration, bail reform, and challenging systems of white supremacy. He is the rabbinic editor of Torah Queeries, a Weekly Bible Commentary and the founder of the Southern Jewish Resources Network for Gender and Sexual Diversity.

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