

# פרשת בשלח - Parashat Beshalah

## Be the first into the Red Sea.

This Passover, Progressive Jewish Alliance invites you to think about how you can build a *Kehillat Tzedek* – a Community of Just Action. During these troubling times, we stand together at the edge of a rising tide that threatens to overwhelm us - like the Israelites at the shore of the Red Sea, Egyptians closing in behind us, our dreams of freedom so close, yet so far away. We face the dawn of a new era that tests our courage, faith, and convictions. Like the Israelites, we can draw inspiration from Nahshon Ben Aminadav, who was willing to act first and on faith, encouraging all to follow. We invite you to consider the story of Nahshon and discuss during your Seder how you each might be that first Israelite willing to step into this modern Red Sea.



*Esh Kodesh - Sacred Fire, Torah from the Years of Fury (1939-1942)*  
*The Rebbe of Piacezna, Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, Poland (1889-1943)*

We can learn from the fact that the Red Sea did not split for Israel until the whole tribe of Benjamin had jumped in. Nahshon Ben Aminadav went into the water until it rose above his nostrils, as we learn from Midrash. Why was such a leap of faith necessary? When the Jews stood before the sea, God said to Moses, "Why cry to me? Speak to the people and tell them to start walking." Rashi explains: God said: "The faith that the people have put in Me, in leaving Egypt and following me into the wilderness, is sufficient to merit splitting the Red Sea for them."

From this we can learn that moments of great danger and trouble are also times when we are being tested. Can our belief in change redouble and take on yet more strength?

**Consider these Four Quotes and these Four Questions. Discuss either or both.**

- 1) "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." - *Barack Obama*
- 2) "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." - *Franklin D. Roosevelt*
- 3) "Were people not in possession of courage, foresight and trust, which are the general conditions of faith, there would be no activity." - *Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel*
- 4) "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - *Margaret Mead*
- 1) How is this economic crisis different from all other economic crises?
- 2) How will you contribute to the parting of this new Red Sea?
- 3) Who are the modern-day Israelites? Who are the Egyptians?
- 4) To truly make change in the world you must live it. What can you do today to make real change?

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Answer: (4) There are many ways to make change. Here is one. [www.pjalliance.org](http://www.pjalliance.org).