

פרשת  
במדבר  
*Parashat Bamidbar*

*Bamidbar / Numbers 1:1-4:20, Hosea 2:1-22  
Luke 16:1-17:10*

### Handling the Faith Carelessly

In this week's Torah portion we read the following from *Bamidbar / Numbers 4:15-20*, וכלה אהרן ובניו לכסת את־הקדש ואת־כל־כלי הקדש, בנסע המחנה ואחרי־כן יבאו בני־קהת לשאת ולא־יגעו אל־הקדש ומתו אלה 4:15 *When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sacred objects and all the furnishings of the sacred objects at the breaking of camp, only then shall the Kohathites come and lift them, so that they do not come in contact with the sacred objects and die. These things in the Tent of Meeting shall be the portage of the Kohathites.* ופקדת אלעזר בן־אהרן הכהן שמן המאור וקטרת הסמים ומנחת התמיד ושמן המשחה פקדת כל־המשכן וכל־אשר־בו בקדש ובכליו 4:16 *Responsibility shall rest with Eleazar son of Aaron the priest for the lighting oil, the aromatic incense, the regular meal offering, and the anointing oil—responsibility for the whole Tabernacle and for everything consecrated that is in it or in its vessels.* וידבר יהוה אל־משה 4:17 *The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:* וזאת עשו להם וחיו 4:18 *Do not let the group of Kohathite clans be cut off from the Levites.* ולא ימתו בגשתם את־קדש הקדשים אהרן ובניו יבאו ושמנו אותם איש איש

ולא-יבאו לראות כבלע את-הקדש ומתו 4:19 *Do this with them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most sacred objects: let Aaron and his sons go in and assign each of them to his duties and to his portorage.*

ולא-יבאו לראות כבלע את-הקדש ומתו 4:20 *But let not [the Kohathites] go inside and witness the dismantling of the sanctuary, lest they die.* Notice in *Bamidbar / Numbers 4:18* the Lord instructs the Levites to not let the Kohathite clans be cut off. This demonstrates a responsibility of men to seek the welfare of their brothers. This love is shown in the covering of the sacred objects so their brothers would not die. What is it about touching the holy things that will cause one to become guilty before God exacting immediate judgment and death? *Rashi on Bamidbar / Numbers 4:15 Part 3* states, “ומתו [SO THAT THEY SHALL NOT TOUCH ANY THING OF HOLINESS] LEST THEY DIE — because if they do touch they become liable to death by Heaven.” Rashi says when one touches the holy thing they become liable to death by Heaven. *Siftei Chakhamim on Bamidbar / Numbers 4:15 Part 2* states, “Since, if they touch they will be subject. Not that if they do not touch they will die, as is implied by the simple reading of the verse. The word ומתו “and they will die” is not together with the words ולא-יגעו— “they shall not touch,” only with the word יגעו “touch.” Thus we are to infer “they shall not touch,” but if they do touch, then ומתו “they will die.”” We are told in *Bamidbar / Numbers 4:20* if they come and look at the holy things as they are dismantled, this is not to be done under the warning of death. (ולא-יבאו לראות כבלע את-הקדש ומתו:)

Ibn Ezra states the meaning of the word כבלע is that something is being removed and canceled. This is related to God’s Word, the testimony of these holy things, and handling them in a careless manner, even to handling them in our hearts in a careless manner such as is described here in viewing their dismantling. The kabbalistic approach to the words ולא-יבאו לראות כבלע is related to the glory of God that appears in the Tabernacle that is hidden away, where a non-priest could carelessly observe as opposed to the priest who would go in with great care, burning the incense to create the cloud over the mercy seat so as not to endanger himself by trying to get a glimpse of it. *“This was the reason why the High Priest was not allowed to enter the Holy of Holies except on the Day of Atonement. Even on that day he was not allowed to enter that*

*part of the Tabernacle except equipped with the incense, the smoke of which made it impossible for him to see something he was not meant to see. This was also the reason he was not to enter with ready-made incense but he had to ensure that the smoke would be initiated inside the Sanctuary so as to fill the airspace within the Holy of Holies enveloping the kapporet, the site of the attribute of כבוד in the process.”* (Rabbeinu Bahya, Bamidbar 4:20 Parts 1-4) These things speak to us about handling what God has given us in a careless manner. Think about this for a moment. What have we been given? God’s Holy Word (Bible), justice, truth, righteousness, forgiveness, redemption, the Messiah Yeshua, joy, love, and peace. Do we take these things for granted? Are we handling these things in a careless manner? These things that bring life when handled properly (applying to life) become the reasons for our destruction when ignored and disregarded. Note how Judaism has a passionate dedication to the ideal of justice and truth. The moral imperatives of justice, ethics, and morality are taught in the Torah and emphasized by the Prophets throughout the history of Israel. These have become the ideals and obligations for God’s people as opposed to just “*recommendations*” for good behavior. We are obligated to take care of the poor (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:7-8*), the widow, the orphan and the stranger (*Shemot / Exodus 22:20-21*), the Priesthood who did not receive an inheritance, the Levites (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:17-19*) and those who have no land or are in need. The Lord God Almighty warns us against corruption, bribery, misuse of power, and the mistreatment of workers. The Torah provides rights for women and other groups. The Torah teaches the ideal of justice for the benefit of society and the moral guidance of the individual, and also for the benefit of society and the land in which we live. Do we ignore these things or treat these things in a careless manner? It is important to note how these references are also mixed in with other topics relating to justice, holiness, and righteousness, drawing in the context of these things to make the instruction of God complete as a whole for His people. We are instructed to be responsible persons who live together in a community of believers. We are obligated to help someone who is in need (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16, Shemot / Exodus 23:5*); and to be a person who does not take responsibility (*i.e. to behave simply as a bystander or just an observer*) is a Torah-violation. Jewish Tradition states that

every person should exhibit the characteristic of *chesed* (grace, חסד), meaning taking action to go beyond the requirement of the law to help others. Notice how this is something Yeshua taught, we are to go beyond our calling, taking the extra step or going the extra mile. The Talmud states that mercy and kindness should be among the defining traits of every Jew (*Talmud Bavli Yevamot 79a*). These Scriptures today remind us of the importance of God’s Word in our lives. We are not to disregard the ways of God and we are to care for others. This is what it means when we read the Lord instructing us to be faithful in all that we do.

In the opening chapters of week’s Torah portion we read the following, א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: ב אִישׁ עַל-דָּגְלוֹ בְּאֹתוֹת לְבֵית אֲבוֹתָם יַחֲנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִנֶּגֶד סָבִיב לְאֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד יַחֲנוּ: ג וְהַחֲנִים קִדְמָה מִזְרָחָה דָּגְלֵל מִחֲנֵה יְהוּדָה לְצַבְּאוֹתָם וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי יְהוּדָה נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן-עַמִּינָדָב: *Bamidbar / Numbers 2:1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2:2 ‘The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers’ households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. 2:3 ‘Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadav. (NASB)* These few Scriptures reveal to us a number of things. The Hebrew text states, וְהַחֲנִים קִדְמָה מִזְרָחָה “*the ones who were encamped on the east side facing the sun.*” It is important to note that the Tabernacle and later the Temple entrance was pointed in the direction of the east. This brings our attention to position and mentioning of the first tribe and their encampment in relation to the Tabernacle. We are told the Tribe of Judah is to encamp on the east side facing the entrance of the Tabernacle as described at the end of Parshat Terumah (*Shemot / Exodus 27:13*). The flag or standard of the camp is mentioned first (דגל מחנה יהודה) and the Scriptures detail Judah’s descendents as being the most numerous and the most honored of all the tribes. The opening verses here in *Bamidbar / Numbers 2* describe Judah as the most honored of all the tribes by giving them the right to camp near the gate of the King of the universe. When considering the reason why the Lord chose Judah as being honored in this way, we remember what the Lord said prophetically through Jacob, “*Judah,*

*your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples"* (*Bereshit / Genesis 49:8-10*). Jacob describes Judah as a leader and ruler among his brothers and having authority even over his enemies. Considering the rabbinic literature, we are told of the connection of Judah and specifically Nahshon the son of Amminadav to ים סוף (Red Sea). The rabbis connect Judah to a man by the name of נחשון בן עמינא (Nachshon son of Aminadab) who jumped into the Red Sea (ים סוף) to prove his faith in the God of Israel. When we look in the book of Exodus (ספר שמות), we find only a few places where Nachshon (נחשון) is mentioned. What is it that we can learn about Nachshon and the tribe of Judah based upon these Scriptures from this week? We read in Parashat Beshalach the following, *Shemot / Exodus 14:15-16*, טו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה מֵה-תִּצְעַק אֵלַי דָּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ: טז וְאַתָּה הָרֵם אֶת-מִטְּךָ וּנְטֵה אֶת-יָדְךָ עַל-הַיָּם וּבִקְעֵהוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם: *14:15 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. 14:16 'As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. (NASB)* Based upon what we read here, is there a spiritual principle the Lord is trying to teach us? At this point the people of Israel were pinned between the Red Sea and the Egyptian Army. The Lord said to Moshe to tell the sons of Israel to go forward. This sounds like the Lord is telling the people to make a leap of faith and go into the Sea. There are two basic human emotions that are the driving force behind every thought and action in our lives; those things are fear and love. At some point in our lives, there comes a time when we have to make a decision when the Spirit is leading us to do something. Our decision is to do as the Spirit leads or to be complacent. We have to decide to either take a risk or play it safe. This is called taking a leap of faith, despite the consequences this leap may cause. This was the situation the Children of Israel were in and the Rabbis say Nahshon son of Amminadav was

the first to leap into the waters demonstrating his faith. Note also the Scriptures say the wind blew all night, so the people waited before moving in faith. When it comes to hearing from the Lord and moving forward to do what He is asking us to do, sometimes that can be very scary. But it is when we step out in faith, not knowing what is going to happen, that the Lord moves powerfully in our lives. Let's discuss this further in this week's Torah portion.

This week we are looking at *Bamidbar / Numbers 2:1-34*.

***Bamidbar / Numbers 2:1-34***

*2:1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2:2 'The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. 2:3 'Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadav, 2:4 and his army, even their numbered men, 74,600. 2:5 'Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar, and the leader of the sons of Issachar: Nethanel the son of Zuar, 2:6 and his army, even their numbered men, 54,400. 2:7 'Then comes the tribe of Zebulun, and the leader of the sons of Zebulun: Eliab the son of Helon, 2:8 and his army, even his numbered men, 57, 400. 2:9 'The total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400, by their armies. They shall set out first. 2:10 'On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Reuben: Elizur the son of Shedeur, 2:11 and his army, even their numbered men, 46,500. 2:12 'Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the sons of Simeon: Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, 2:13 and his army, even their numbered men, 59,300. 2:14 'Then comes the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the sons of Gad: Eliasaph the son of Deuel, 2:15 and his army, even their numbered men, 45,650. 2:16 'The total of the*

numbered men of the camp of Reuben: 151,450 by their armies. And they shall set out second. 2:17 'Then the tent of meeting shall set out with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they camp, so they shall set out, every man in his place by their standards. 2:18 'On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud, 2:19 and his army, even their numbered men, 40,500. 2:20 'Next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the sons of Manasseh: Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, 2:21 and his army, even their numbered men, 32,200. 2:22 'Then comes the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the sons of Benjamin: Abidan the son of Gideoni, 2:23 and his army, even their numbered men, 35,400. 2:24 'The total of the numbered men of the camp of Ephraim: 108,100, by their armies. And they shall set out third. 2:25 'On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Dan: Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, 2:26 and his army, even their numbered men, 62,700. 2:27 'Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the sons of Asher: Pagiél the son of Ochrán, 2:28 and his army, even their numbered men, 41,500. 2:29 'Then comes the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the sons of Naphtali: Ahira the son of Enan, 2:30 and his army, even their numbered men, 53,400. 2:31 'The total of the numbered men of the camp of Dan was 157,600. They shall set out last by their standards.' 2:32 These are the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households; the total of the numbered men of the camps by their armies, 603,550. 2:33 The Levites, however, were not numbered among the sons of Israel, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. 2:34 Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, every one by his family according to his

*father's household. (NASB)*

The opening chapters in Parashat Bamidbar (*Bamidbar / Numbers 2*) describe Judah as the most honored of all the tribes by giving them the right to camp near the gate of the King of the universe. When considering the reason why the Lord chose Judah, the rabbis connect Judah to a man by the name of נחשון בן עמינדב (Nachshon son of Amminadav) who jumped into the Red Sea (יַם סוּף) to prove his faith in the God of Israel. The desperate situation the Children of Israel were in, the Rabbis focus upon the kind of faith Nahshon son of Amminadav had in being the first to leap into the waters and thereby demonstrating his faith. When it comes to the life of a believer, of being silent and listening, reading God's Word, humbling ourselves, praying, and hearing from the Lord, at times the Spirit speaks asking us to move forward just as we are reading here in Parashat Beshalach. When the Spirit speaks leading us to move forward to do what He is asking us to do, sometimes that can be very scary. The spiritual principle that we are being taught here is that it is when we step out in faith, not knowing what is going to happen, it is then the Lord moves powerfully in our lives. This is how I have seen the Lord move powerfully in my own life and relationship with the Lord. How about you? Have you experienced the Lord doing this for you too?

A survey of the Scriptures for verses that mention the name of נחשון בן עמינדב (Nachshon son of Amminadav) reveal seven references to his name:

**שמות ו': כ"ג**

(כג) וַיִּקַּח אֶהֱרֹן אֶת-אֵלִישֶׁבַע בַּת-עַמִּינָדָב אֶחָת נְחֹשֹׁן לִוִּי לְאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד לֹו אֶת-נָדָב וְאֶת-אֲבִיהוּא אֶת-אֶלְעָזָר וְאֶת-אִיֹּתָמָר מֶרֶ:

***Shemot / Exodus 6:23***

*(23) Aaron took to wife Elisheba, daughter of Amminadav and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.*

**במדבר א': ז'**



(ז) לַיהוּדָה נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב:

*Bamidbar / Numbers 1:7*

(7) From Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadav.

**במדבר ב':ג'**

(ג) וְהַחֲנִיִּים קָדְמָה מִזְרָחָה דָּגְלַל מַחֲנֵה יְהוּדָה לְצַבְאֹתָם וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי יְהוּדָה נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב:

*Bamidbar / Numbers 2:3*

(3) Camped on the front, or east side: the standard of the division of Judah, troop by troop. Chieftain of the Judites: Nahshon son of Amminadav.

**במדבר ז':י"ב**

(יב) וַיְהִי הַמִּקְרִיב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב לְמִיטָה יְהוּדָה:

*Bamidbar / Numbers 7:12*

(12) The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadav of the tribe of Judah.

**במדבר י':י"ד**

(יד) וַיִּסָּע דָּגְלַל מַחֲנֵה בְנֵי־יְהוּדָה בְּרִאשׁוֹנָה לְצַבְאֹתָם וְעַל־צַבְאוֹ נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב:

*Bamidbar / Numbers 10:14*

(14) the first standard to set out, troop by troop, was the division of Judah. In command of its troops was Nahshon son of Amminadav;

**רות ד':י"ה-כ"ב**

(יח) וְאַלְהָה תּוֹלְדוֹת פֶּרֶץ פֶּרֶץ הוֹלִיד אֶת־חֶצְרוֹן: (יט) וְחֶצְרוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־רָם נָרָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־עַמִּינָדָב: (כ) וְעַמִּינָדָב הוֹלִיד אֶת־נַחֲשׁוֹן וְנַחֲשׁוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־שְׁלֵמָה: (כא) וְשְׁלֵמוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־בְּעֻזָּה וְבְעֻזָּה הוֹלִיד אֶת־עֹבֵד: (כב) וְעֹבֵד הוֹלִיד אֶת־יֵשׁוּי וַיֵּשֶׁי הוֹלִיד אֶת־דָּוִד:

*Ruth 4:18-22*

(18) This is the line of Perez: Perez begot Hezron, (19)

*Hezron begot Ram, Ram begot Ammi-nadab, (20) Amminadav begot Nahshon, Nahshon begot Salmon, (21) Salmon begot Boaz, Boaz begot Obed, (22) Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.*

דברי הימים א ב' י'

(י) גַּרְם הוֹלִיד אֶת־עַמְיַנְדָּב וְעַמְיַנְדָּב הוֹלִיד אֶת־נַחֲשׁוֹן נָשִׂיא  
בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה:

### **1 Chronicles 2:10**

*(10) Ram begot Amminadav, and Amminadav begot Nahshon, prince of the sons of Judah.*

There are very few verses which mention Nahshon and nowhere do the Scriptures direct us to the idea of Nahshon being a man of faith that lead Judah into the sea as the rabbis describe him. The Torah context speaks of the nation of Israel waiting all night before moving forward as the Torah says in *Shemot / Exodus 14:21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided (NASB)*. Note that in the book of Joshua, and in the case of Elisha the waters are described as dividing immediately and their having walked across on dry ground. If the people had obeyed the Lord to move into the sea, the waters would have divided and they could have gone immediately across the Red Sea rather than having to wait all night long. Stepping out in faith would have facilitated a great miracle immediately, as opposed to sitting back and waiting as the Torah describes they did.

The rabbis focus upon the faith of Nahshon and the house of Judah. Let's look a little closer at what the rabbis say beginning with *Midrash Tanchuma Pekudei 2:3*.

### **Midrash Tanchuma Pekudei 2:3**

*R. Jacob the son of Issi asked: Why does it say; I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth? Because the Tabernacle is equal to the creation of the world itself. How is that so? Concerning the first day, it is written: In the beginning God created*

*the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1), and it is written elsewhere: Who stretched out the heavens like a curtain (Ps. 104:2), and concerning the Tabernacle it is written: And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair (Exod. 26:7). About the second day of creation it states: Let there be a firmament and divide between them, and let it divide the waters from the waters (Gen. 1:6). About the Tabernacle it is written: And the veil shall divide between you (Exod. 26:33). With regard to the third day it states: Let the waters under the heavens be gathered (Gen. 1:9). With reference to the Tabernacle it is written: Thou shalt also make a laver of brass ... and thou shalt put water therein (Exod. 30:18). On the fourth day he created light, as is stated: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven (Gen. 1:14), and concerning the Tabernacle it is said: And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold (Exod. 25:31). On the fifth day He created birds, as it is said: Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let the fowl fly above the earth (Gen. 1:20), and with reference to the Tabernacle. He directed them to offer sacrifices of lambs and birds, and it says as well: And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high (Exod. 25:20). On the sixth day he created man, as it is said: And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him (Gen. 1:27), and about the Tabernacle it is written: A man who is a high priest who has been anointed to serve and to minister before God.<sup>3</sup> On the seventh day The heaven and the earth were finished (Gen. 2:1), and with regard to the Tabernacle it is written: Thus was completed all the work of the Tabernacle (Exod. 39:32). Concerning the creation of the world it is written: And God blessed (Num. 2:3), and of the Tabernacle it is said: And Moses blessed them (Exod. 39:43); with regard to the creation it is said: And God finished (Gen. 2:2), and of the Tabernacle it is written: On that day Moses made an end (Num. 7:1); of creation it says: And hallowed it (Gen.*

*2:2), and of the Tabernacle: And had anointed it and sanctified it (Num. 7:1). Why is the Tabernacle equal to heaven and earth? Because even as heaven and earth bear witness concerning Israel, as it is written: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day (Deut. 30:19), so the Tabernacle bears witness in behalf of Israel, as is said: These are the accounts of the Tabernacle, even the Tabernacle of the testimony (Exod. 38:21). Hence it is said: Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth (Ps. 26:8).*

The midrash begins by comparing the Tabernacle of God to the creation days and relates this to the tribe of Judah. They say *“the Tabernacle is equal to the creation of the world itself.”* The Tabernacle is paralleled to the creation events (days) and each part of the Tabernacle (Mishkhan), the instruments in the sacrificial service, and the sacrifices themselves are paralleled to the individual days. The reason the Tabernacle is equal to the creation of the world, is because the creation bears witness of God’s creative hand, the heavens and the earth also bear witness concerning Israel (Parashat Haazinu) and the parallel is the Tabernacle bears witness on behalf of Israel and her righteous works. The Tabernacle bears the testimony of God, and likewise our lives, as the children of God we bear the testimony of God when we humble our lives before Him to obey His commands.

Many places in the Talmud mention נהשון. The specific Sugya (סו"ה גיה) that lists the sources connecting נהשון to the occurrence at קריעת ים סוף are from the *Talmud Bavli Sota 37a*.

### ***Talmud Bavli Sotah 37a:3***

*jumped the prince of Judah, Nahshon ben Amminadab, and descended into the sea first, accompanied by his entire tribe, as it is stated: “Ephraim surrounds Me with lies and the house of Israel with...Rabbi Yehuda said to Rabbi Meir: That is not how the incident took place. Rather, this tribe said: I am not going into the sea first, and that tribe said: I am not going into the sea first.*

*Then, in*

***Talmud Bavli Sotah 37a:6***

*For this reason, because Nahshon and the tribe of Judah went into the sea first, the tribe of Judah merited to govern Israel, as it is stated: “Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion. The... sea saw it and fled” (Psalms 114:2–3). The baraita interprets the verses in this manner: What is the reason that Judah became His sanctuary and Israel came under His dominion? It is because “the sea saw it and fled.”*

The Talmud describes the prince of Judah (Nahshon) as being the first to descend into the sea which was then accompanied by all of the tribe of Judah. One man led many men in righteousness and faith into the sea believing in the Word of the Lord by “*moving forward.*” The rabbis say that the tribes argued about not going into the sea first, and for this reason Nahshon and his entire tribe decided to go. It was for this reason Judah had merited ruling over Israel and why Judah became God’s sanctuary. The sea fled because of their faith in the Lord God of Israel. What this teaches is the kind of faith we should have as the children of God. Yeshua said *Matthew 17:20* *And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. (NASB)* Was this the kind of faith Yeshua was thinking of when he explained to his disciples on the mustard seed and the mountain? Did the faith of Nahshon influence Yeshua’s understanding of faith and this important principle of being faithful to the Lord, believing, and nothing being impossible?

This seems to be consistent with what we read from the *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 5:18*.

***Mishnah Pirkei Avot 5:18***

*Anyone who brings merit to the many, sin does not result from him. And anyone who brings the many to sin is not given enough [time] to repent. Moshe -- who was*

*meritorious and brought merit to the many; the merit of the many is appended to him, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 33:21), “He fulfilled the righteousness of God and His statutes with Israel.” Jeroboam -- who sinned and caused the many to sin; the sin of the many is appended to him, as it is stated (I Kings 15:30), “for the sins of Jeroboam that he sinned and that he caused Israel to sin.”*

The Mishnah teaches of one who brings merit to many by demonstrating the way of righteousness by believing in God’s Word by faith and acting upon one’s faith. This speaks of leading and teaching many in the righteous way of God as opposed to leading many to sin. Note how the Lord God of Israel Himself expected בני ישראל (the sons of Israel) to go forward by taking a leap of faith. (*Shemot / Exodus 14:13-14, (13) But Moses said to the people, “Have no fear! Stand by, and witness the deliverance which the LORD will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you will never see again. (14) The LORD will battle for you; you hold your peace!”* Reading all of The Talmud Bavli Sota 37a, the conclusion is *“He replied to him, Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand etc. For that reason Yehuda was worthy to be made the ruling power in Israel, as it is said, Yehuda became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion (the Temple was in the kingdom of Yehuda. ‘His dominion’ is understood as Yehuda’s rule over Israel). Why did Yehuda become His sanctuary and Israel His dominion? Because the sea saw [him] and fled...”* These rabbinic conclusions drive forward the idea on the importance of faithfulness where Nachshon ben Amminadav jumped (into the Red Sea), and his tribe followed him into the sea. The concept of meriting the kingdom is related to being obedient and receiving the blessing of God, a Torah principle laid out in the book of Deuteronomy. These things are paralleled to our taking a leap of faith and the Lord moving powerfully in our lives.

Considering all of these things, what are the Who, What, When, Where, and Why for taking a leap of faith like Nahshon?

1. *His name, he is remembered for all of time because he jumped into the waves of the ocean (נחשול בים) [Found*

*in Midrash Rabbah on Shemot / Exodus]*

2. *The rabbis say he merited having five incredible descendants: David, Daniel, Chananiya, Mishael and Azariyah [Found in Midrash Rabbah on Shemot / Exodus] This suggests the Lord increases our children because of our faithfulness to Him and His word.*
3. *His faith led to being given the kingship of the sons of Israel and of His tribe (Judah).*
4. *The rabbis say it is because of Nahshon's faithfulness the Messiah will come from his descendants [Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar 8:11] note this is true based upon the NT account in Matthew 1:4 and Luke 3:32-33.*
5. *Nachshon was also the first of the Nisi'im to bring a korban (sacrifice) in the Mishkan [Bamidbar / Numbers 7:12] His faithfulness is illustrated in being the first to bring a korban.*
6. *He is considered one of the 70 zekeinim suggesting there is a hidden meaning in what he did. The very thing we are discussing today.*

These six qualities are something all of us should aspire for in our lives. Why Hashem did not include more discussion in the Scriptures on Nachshon remains a mystery, but one thing is for certain, the reason may be designed for us to seek and find the hidden meaning behind a life of faithfulness and not being afraid to take a leap of faith in our walk with God. Sometimes the outcome of a Scripture appears to be uncertain. However, with the proper level of faith and perseverance in the study of God's Word one can gain clarity in what the Lord is wanting to teach us. The children of Israel saw the Red Sea as an impossible barrier to pass while Nahshon had faith to move forward as the Lord wanted in his life. What this teaches us is that it may feel as though stating one's faith in the midst of a crowd is a fearful thing and that

it would be better to remain silent than to make known one's beliefs about God and His Messiah Yeshua. The Lord however wants us to make that leap of faith. The opening chapters in Parashat Bamidbar (*Bamidbar / Numbers 2*) describe Judah as the most honored of all the tribes by giving them the right to camp near the gate of the King of the universe because of their faith. Our faith draws us nearer to the Lord. The rabbis say this right was given because of נחשון בן עמינדב (Nachshon son of Amminadav) who jumped into the Red Sea (ים סוף) to prove his faith in the God of Israel. Israel demonstrated a lack of faith by waiting all night long before moving forward in faith into the Red Sea (*Shemot / Exodus 14:21*). The Lord calls us to have the kind of faith Nahshon son of Amminadav had in being the first to leap into the waters and thereby demonstrating our faith in the Word of the Lord. When it comes to the life of a believer, we are not called to be silent. We are called to make known our faith and to lead others to know the Lord God of Israel and His Messiah Yeshua. When the Spirit speaks asking us to move forward just as we are reading here in Parashat Beshalach and Parashat Bamidbar, we are to do what He is asking us to do. When we “*move forward*” we can expect the Lord to work in powerful and mighty ways. Just as Yeshua explained regarding the mustard seed and faith in *Matthew 17:20 ... for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. (NASB)* This spiritual principle that we are being taught is that it is when we step out in faith, not knowing what is going to happen, it is then the Lord will move powerfully in our lives. If the Spirit is calling you to do something, do not hesitate, for the Lord will work in powerfully and mightily on your behalf!