

Agents of Hope

**THE WOMEN AT  
THE HEART OF**

**Passover**



Passover is an opportunity to bring the story of resilient, courageous, and hopeful Jewish women into your home in a way that sparks connection and meaning for your family. While Moses often takes center stage, the women of the Exodus story—midwives, mothers, and leaders—were the quiet forces of change, turning fear into action and uncertainty into hope. Just like them, you have the power to shape the future by bringing their stories to life for your children.

With these stories and recipes, rituals and meaningful conversations, you'll have everything you need to create lasting memories and inspire the next generation. Momentum is here to support you to make Passover not just a holiday, but a moment of deep connection, empowerment, and joy.



# The Women Who Birthed Redemption

Hope in Jewish tradition is not about waiting—it is about acting in the face of the unknown. The women of the Exodus did not accept the suffering of their people; they took bold steps to secure the future.

## Shifra and Puah

These midwives refused to follow Pharaoh's cruel decree, risking their own lives to save Israelite babies. Their defiance is one of the earliest recorded acts of civil disobedience, proving that hope often begins with ordinary people refusing to do the wrong thing.



## Yocheved

A mother's love became an act of radical hope. Knowing she could not keep Moses safe, she took the impossible risk of setting him afloat in a basket, trusting that her bravery and faith would lead to something greater.

## Batya

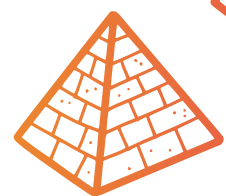
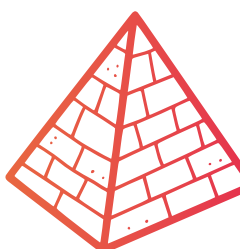
An Egyptian princess who defied her father's orders and rescued Moses, raising him as her own. She used her privilege not for self-preservation, but to save a life and shape history.



## Miriam

From childhood to old age, Miriam was an unshakable agent of hope. She watched over her brother, led the Israelite women in song at the Red Sea, and later ensured that the Jewish people were sustained with fresh water in the wilderness.

Passover teaches us that hope is an inheritance passed from generation to generation. The women who ensured our survival in Egypt gave rise to women throughout history who have continued this legacy.



# Weaving Women's Stories into Your Seder

Passover is not just a night of remembering—it is a night of experiencing. Across Jewish communities worldwide, women have infused the Seder with traditions that make the story come alive for children and families. By incorporating Sephardi and Mizrahi customs, we deepen our understanding of Jewish resilience and honor the women who have passed these traditions forward.

## BIBHILU: A MOROCCAN SEDER RITUAL

In Moroccan Jewish homes, the Bibhilu ritual is a physical and joyful reenactment of the Exodus. The Seder leader takes the Seder plate, waves it over each person's head, and everyone chants together:

בְּהִילוֹ יֵצְאוּנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

*Bibhilu yatza'nu mi'Mitzrayim ha'laila ha'zeh b'nei chorin. L'shana ha'ba'ah b'eretz Yisrael b'nei chorin.*

**In haste we left Egypt; tonight, we are free people. Next year, may we be free in the land of Israel.**

This tradition is a powerful way to engage children in the urgency of the Exodus. Consider inviting mothers, grandmothers, or daughters to take on this role, reinforcing the idea that women have always been at the heart of transmitting Jewish memory.



Photo by: Steven M. Lowenstein



Photo by: Staci Valentine

## A TASTE OF WOMEN'S STORIES: IRAQI HAROSET RECIPE

Haroset symbolizes the mortar used by enslaved Israelites in Egypt, but its flavors vary widely across Jewish traditions. Preparing Iraqi haroset, a rich, date-based spread, together with your children creates an opportunity to share a taste of a unique Jewish story.

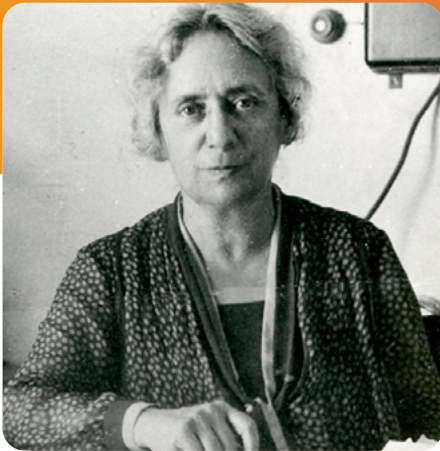
### IRAQI HAROSET RECIPE

- 2 cups pitted dates
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom
- 1/4 cup sweet red wine or grape juice

Simmer the dates until soft, mash them into a thick paste, then stir in the spices, walnuts, and wine. Serve as part of your Seder and share how different Jewish communities have preserved their traditions through food.

## Agents of Hope in Every Generation

Hope is a chain—one generation's courage ignites the next. These women did not accept the limitations of their time; they forged new paths, saved lives, and inspired change, showing us what it means to be an agent of hope in action.



### Henrietta Szold (1860–1945)

Founder of Hadassah, she saved thousands of Jewish children from the Holocaust, offering them a future in Israel. Her vision for education, healthcare, and women's leadership transformed Jewish life worldwide.



### Hannah Szenes (1921–1944)

A poet, paratrooper, and resistance fighter who parachuted into Nazi-occupied Hungary to try to rescue Jews. Knowing she might not survive, she went anyway—because hope sometimes requires sacrifice and unwavering belief in a better future.



### The Women of the Hostage Families Forum (2023–Present)

Mothers, sisters, and daughters who have refused to be silent, working tirelessly to bring their loved ones home. Their strength is a testament to the power of hope in action—never letting the world forget those still in captivity.

## A PASSOVER PRAYER FOR THE HOSTAGES

Invite someone to read aloud at your Seder:

As we gather around our Seder table recalling the Exodus and the redemption of the Jewish people, we hold in our hearts those who remain in captivity today. Just as we pray for the day when all who are oppressed will be free, we pray for the safe return of all remaining hostages. May they be reunited with their families speedily and in peace. May their loved ones find strength, and may we never cease to work toward a world where every person knows safety, dignity, and freedom.

# Women's Prayer for the Passover Seder

Inspired by the words of the Israel Public Council members - Miriam Peretz, Lihi Lapid, Rachelle Fraenkel, Aliza Lavie (with a quote from Fanny Neuda, 1855), Mehereta Baruch-Ron, Rivka Carmi, Naama Ore, Penina Agenyahu, Natalie Ophir-Flint, Sonia Gomes de-Mesquita, Orna Hozman-Bechor, BatSheva Moshe, and Miri Michaeli



Every Passover, everywhere in the world, we gather on the same night at the Seder table.

Passover reminds us that freedom is the right of every human being. We seek to redeem from bondage and distress those among the Jewish people, and among all peoples, who are being held captive so that all may live with dignity and freedom.

May our hostages know freedom.  
May our sons and daughters return to their families.  
May our soldiers arrive at their homes with joy.

God, from the place of hardship we currently occupy, bless us with unity and love.

Inspire us to extend our hands, to create a chain of unity that crosses borders and connects hearts.

We pray that the family and friends  
who gather tonight remember - we are part of one large family:  
the Jewish people.

Throughout our history, our strength has been rooted in each other,  
in our shared traditions, and in our values.

May we draw hope from these roots for the sake of building a better future  
for our children and for the entire world.

Once again we face an excruciating trial.

From within this darkness, we together, and only together, will bring forth light.

Be with us God, every day,  
every moment, as in days of old.  
Place love in our hearts.  
Hear our cries.

Bless us God, that together we may find our way home.  
Blessed are You, Adonai, Source of all life.  
Blessed are You, Adonai, who sanctifies your people Israel.

Amen.



## MIMOUNA: A CELEBRATION OF HOPE AND NEW BEGINNINGS

At the close of Passover, many Sephardi and North African Jewish communities celebrate Mimouna, a festival of joy, hospitality, and renewal. Families open their homes, share sweet foods, and embrace a spirit of togetherness.

For ideas on how to bring Mimouna into your family's traditions, check out PJ Library's resource:

[What is Mimouna?](#)

## • Becoming an Agent of Hope

To be an agent of hope means to remember those who came before us and to ensure that their stories propel us forward toward a world of dignity, justice, and peace.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AT YOUR SEDER

- *What does it mean to be an agent of hope today?*
- *How can we carry forward the courage, leadership, and strength of Jewish women in our own lives and communities?*
- *How can we ensure that the voices of Jewish women—past and present—are central to the way we pass down our traditions?*

Passover is a story of redemption, but the work of redemption is ongoing. By lifting the voices of Jewish women—those who came before us and those still shaping our world—we strengthen the unbroken chain of hope that has defined our people.





# Think, Tell, Share

Seder night is a special time for telling the story of the Jewish people, while reflecting, sharing, and storytelling with friends and family. This activity offers 3 themes. Each theme is accompanied by a set of thought-provoking questions, designed to spark meaningful conversations among participants. This activity encourages dialogue and learning across generations. Use it during holiday dinners or family gatherings to connect and celebrate together.

This game was created by educational experts at UnitEd. UnitEd works in partnership with the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs and the Combating Antisemitism with the goal of strengthening Jewish schools around the world and creating a meaningful Jewish learning experience. Enjoy!

## How to Play

### 1. SET THE STAGE:

During the Seder, designate time one or more theme.

### 2. GET READY:

Place a theme circle on the table and arrange questions around it, face down.

### 3. TIME FOR A ROUND:

Each participant takes turns selecting a question and shares their response.

### 4. KEEP IT MOVING:

If someone passes on a question, they can choose another.

### 5. REPEAT:

Return answered questions to the center for others to pick.

## Prepare in Advance

1. Print the activity sheets (You can print on regular printer paper or, even better on thick printer paper like Bristol or Construction paper).
2. Cut out the 3 Circles Themes.
3. Cut out the Stripe Questions.
4. Be sure to keep the questions together with its theme.

# Freedom

## חירות

What does freedom mean to you personally? How do you define it in your own life?

Can you share a personal experience where you felt a sense of freedom? What circumstances led to that feeling?

How has our nation's freedom changed from the time of 'n תל until now? Do you have any ideas on how we can overcome the challenges we still face today to achieve true freedom?

Would you like to live in a world without rules, in complete freedom, or do you need laws?

What are some things that make you feel happy and free?

How do you imagine hostages from October 7th and their family and friends reflect on what it means to be free?

# Telling our Story

הגדה

What is your favorite family story or tradition? Why do you like it?

What stories or traditions do you hope to pass down to your children?

How do you feel when you hear stories about the struggles and triumphs of the Jewish people throughout history till today?

Can you think of a story from the Haggadah or Torah that has a special meaning for you? Why does it resonate with you?

We've seen many heroic stories emerging since October 7th.

Is there a particular one that stands out to you that you'd like to share?

If you could invite anyone, living or not, to join your seder, who would you choose and why?



How do you think hope helps us when we face challenges or difficult times?

How can we spread hope to others who may be feeling sad or discouraged?

Can you recall a time when you felt hopeless, but eventually found hope again? What helped you regain hope?

Imagine you have a magic wand that can make any wish come true. What is one thing you would wish for that would bring hope to the world?

Do you know the words of Israel's national anthem - Hatikva? which words or sentences are meaningful to you?

How have the events of October 7th affected your feelings and connection to the State of Israel and/or the Jewish people living there?