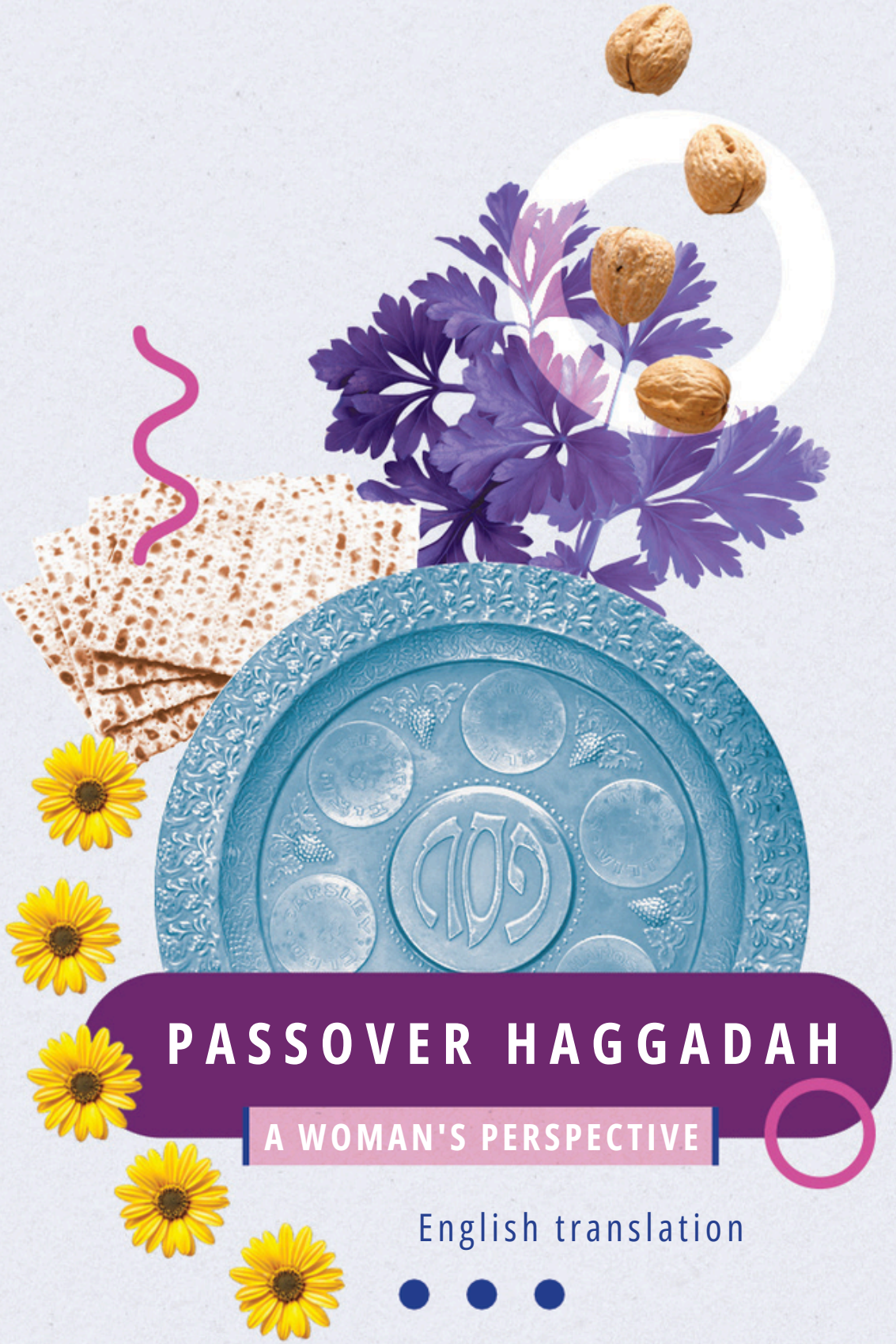
תנועת הנשים של ישראל



PASSOVER HAGGADAH

A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

English translation



"And you shall tell
your daughter"

DEAR READERS,

In every generation, freedom is not a gift that is received — it is a destination toward which we march, with courage and with faith. Just as the sons and daughters of Israel crossed the desert knowing that their strength lay in a shared fate, so too we — the women of Israel in the modern age — know that change begins from within us. We do not wait for someone to open the door for us; we act together to break it open. Sister to sister, shoulder to shoulder, we are building a better world — for ourselves, for our daughters, and for the generations that will come after us.

History teaches us that women have the power to change the face of reality. Yocheved, Moses' mother, chose to tear her infant son away from herself, and in doing so saved both his life and the people of Israel, in an act of immeasurable courage. Miriam the prophetess, who led the women of Israel in song and with drums into the exposed wilderness, displayed leadership and became the wind in the people's sails. Shifra and Puah risked their lives by directly refusing the king's decree, using a shrewd ruse.

These women are a model and an example of the change that takes place when we act together, believe in one another and support one another. Together — there is no challenge we cannot meet and no desert we cannot cross.

"And you shall tell your daughter" — this is not only a commandment, it is a promise. A promise that we will pass the torch of the struggle for justice and equality from generation to generation. This Haggadah is dedicated to every woman who has decided to take responsibility for her life, for her future, and for the future of our society. It is dedicated to the eternal spirit that carries us forward, and to the hope that an equal and free world is not a distant dream — it is a reality we are capable of creating together.

HAPPY FESTIVAL OF FREEDOM

HAGIT PE'ER, INTERNATIONAL CHAIR OF NA'AMAT

A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Four Sons, and Four Daughters

"CONCERNING FOUR SONS THE TORAH SPOKE" — AND WE WILL SPEAK ALSO CONCERNING FOUR DAUGHTERS: "AND YOU SHALL TELL YOUR DAUGHTER."



THE WISE DAUGHTER — WHAT DOES SHE SAY?

The wise one says: "Let us study thoroughly the story of the women in the Exodus from Egypt and in Jewish tradition." In saying this she is really asking that we give those women their place in the story; that we learn and grow wise, and that we too go out into freedom as women who initiate new things and who call for the abolition of the everyday decrees in our personal, social and traditional lives.

The Remaining Three Daughters

THE WICKED DAUGHTER — WHAT DOES SHE SAY?

The wicked one declares: **"What have I to do with Jewish tradition? What have I to do with change? Let's leave the struggle for equality alone, let things stay as they are, and tradition as it is." To the wicked one we answer with a question of our own — "What really do you have to do with this? And could things be otherwise, and better than this?"**

If she finds that perhaps there is a belief that things could be different and better in the reality of her own life, we will suggest that she join the wise one, the simple one and the one who does not know how to ask, and that together they dare to break open her reservations about tradition and her rejection of it, and replace them with the renewal and the change she would want to bring into the world.

THE SIMPLE DAUGHTER — WHAT DOES SHE SAY?

The simple one asks: **"Give me simple explanations, not complicated ones."**

So we will show the simple one the way, and mark out the path for her — brick by brick — so that she can walk confidently in the path of women who carve out and work toward personal and social freedom. We will invite the simple one to step onto the path and to take part in the doing as well, at her own pace.

AND THE ONE WHO DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO ASK —

The one who does not know how to ask is **silent.**

Perhaps she is afraid to let her voice be heard? Afraid of being exposed as ignorant? Or perhaps she is gripped by doubt about her ability to deepen her knowledge or to change reality?

It is our duty to open for her a gate made of courage, and through it to tell the stories of inspiring women, so that she may learn the power of curiosity and the power of action that carves into reality out of the strength of knowing. Perhaps then "the one who does not know how to ask" will become curious, and will dare to ask, to inquire, and to join her sisters.

Yocheved: Mother of Moses and Aaron

The decree of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, hangs over the head of Yocheved, a young pregnant Hebrew woman: if a male child is born to her, she will have to sentence her son to death — or else decide to rebel against the king's order, and in doing so endanger her own life and the life of her son, who is destined to be hunted all his days.

Yocheved makes a brave and original decision — one that carries no guarantee of her son's safety, but that does hold out the chance of a different ending. Despite the unimaginable price of tearing her infant son away from her, she chooses to build a basket (a small ark) coated with clay and pitch so that it will be watertight. In it she places the son just born to her, and she sets the basket at the edge of the Nile. The odds are slim, but Yocheved holds on to hope — that her son will be found by an Egyptian woman who will take pity on him and save him.

Yocheved's plan worked. Not only was her son found by an Egyptian woman, he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, who chose to raise him in the king's palace. Had it not been for Yocheved's brave, cool-headed and resourceful act, Moses would not have been saved. She did not only save her son — Yocheved saved the one who became the redeemer of Israel in those days, the man who led the people out of Egyptian slavery toward a new life.

YOCHEVED'S VERSE



"And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with clay and with pitch, and put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the bank of the river."

EXODUS 2:3

Shifra and Puah: the Hebrew Midwives

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was perfectly clear about the order he demanded be carried out: every male infant born to the Hebrews shall be put to death. When Pharaoh discovered that the order was not being carried out, he summoned to his palace Shifra and Puah, two Hebrew midwives. The midwives told the king that they did not manage to reach the Hebrew women at the hour of their labour, since those women give birth faster than Egyptian women — and therefore they simply did not arrive in time to reach the infants and do as the king had commanded.

The midwives' claim was not the truth — and we should not cast doubt on the efficiency of these experienced midwives' work merely because that is what they claimed before the king. Taking an enormous risk with their own lives, Shifra and Puah distorted the truth as they stood before the king; but they did so in order to save the newborn infants, using a sophisticated ruse in order to resist an inhuman and merciless act.

The midwives' deed symbolises their moral strength, their courage, and a mutual solidarity that rose above fear. Their firm belief that life must be sanctified over death — even at the price of enormous personal risk — saved many souls: innocent babies who had only just been born.

THE MIDWIVES' VERSE



"And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shifra and the name of the other Puah, and he said: When you deliver the Hebrew women, look upon the birthstool — if it is a son, then you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but kept the boys alive.

And the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them: Why have you done this thing, and kept the boys alive? And the midwives said to Pharaoh: Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; they are vigorous, and give birth before the midwife comes to them. And God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very strong."

EXODUS 1:15–20

Batya: The Daughter of Pharaoh (Bat-Yah)

Batya went down to bathe in the Nile, when suddenly she noticed a mysterious ark, and inside it an infant only a few hours old. As Pharaoh's daughter, who knew her father's decree concerning the Hebrew children, she understood at once that the infant was most likely a Hebrew baby. Despite being the king's daughter — and perhaps precisely because of it — Batya acted with mercy and humanity toward Moses, who was revealed to her in the ark in which he had been sent by his mother and his sister.

Batya stands before her father and asks to keep the baby, to act with compassion and to raise him in the king's palace. By the very act of saving Moses, Batya saved not only the infant in the ark, but all the people of Israel who were slaves in Egypt. Batya's deeds show us that even within the house of the tyrant who advanced the enslavement of the people of Israel, compassion can be found, and a willingness to stand up against injustice — redemption can be found.

BATYA'S VERSE



"And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked alongside the river; and she saw the ark among the reeds, and sent her maidservant and she took it. And she opened it and saw the child, and behold, a boy was crying; and she had compassion on him and said: This is one of the Hebrews' children."

EXODUS 2:5–6

Miriam the Prophetess: Sister of Moses and Aaron

In the days when Pharaoh decreed the killing of every male son born to the Hebrews, Miriam was a young girl, daughter of Amram and of the pregnant Yocheved, and elder sister to Aaron.

When her infant brother (later to be Moses) was born and was sent to the banks of the Nile inside an ark, Miriam followed him devotedly; and when he was found by the daughter of the king of Egypt, Miriam approached her with great resourcefulness and suggested that she find a Hebrew wet-nurse to nurse the infant. Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and Miriam found for her Yocheved — who just happened to be Moses' biological mother.

Miriam, one of the seven prophetesses of Israel, showed determination and steadfastness and brought about the rescue of her little brother. She went on to be present and to lead at key moments for the people of Israel as they went out into the wilderness. With drums and dances she lifted the spirit of the people and became for them a spiritual, optimistic and strong leader, who was an inspiration to all the women and men of Israel on a complex, long and hardship-filled journey.

MIRIAM'S VERSE



"And Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam sang to them: Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea."

EXODUS 15:20–21

A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

A Cup for Elijah the Prophet — and for Miriam Too



WAIT — WHEN DID ELIJAH THE PROPHET ARRIVE IN THE HAGGADAH?

After the destruction of the Second Temple (in the year 70 CE), hundreds of years after the Exodus from Egypt, when Passover's celebration of freedom was liable to look absurd to part of the people, passages were added to the Haggadah that emphasise the expectation of redemption and of Elijah, who according to prophecy will be the one to announce the future redemption — out of a wish to connect the Exodus from Egypt with the hope for the people of Israel's return to their land.

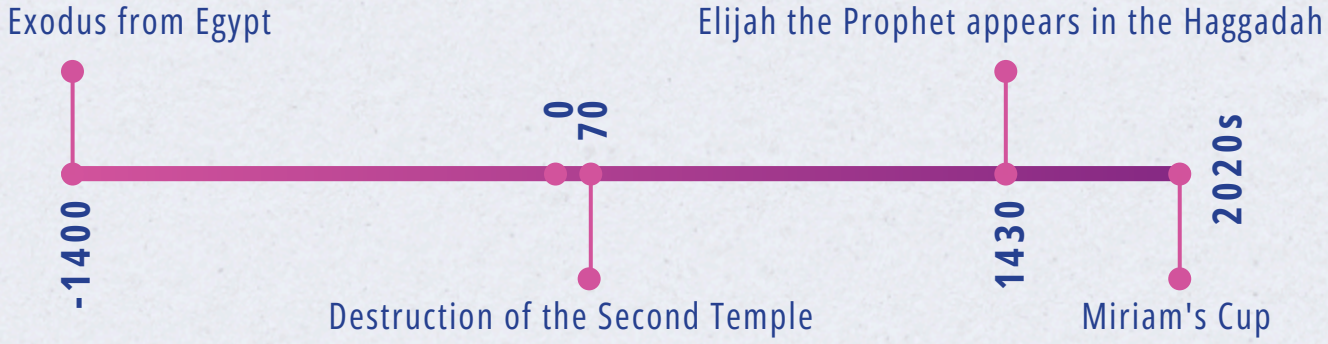
Miriam's Cup and the Timeline

In recent years more and more Jewish traditions have been placing emphasis on the place of women in the story of the Jewish people and its redemption, and adding to the Passover seder the custom of Miriam's cup. Just as a fifth cup was added for Elijah the Prophet some two thousand years ago, so today we add a sixth cup for Miriam the prophetess — prophetess, activist, leader. Miriam's cup is poured alongside Elijah's cup, marking Miriam's role in bringing water out of the well during Israel's march through the desert, and highlighting the role of women in redemption.

This year more than ever, we have seen and experienced the strength of the women of Israel — those fighting for civic change and those fighting on the battlefield; women leading the struggle to bring the hostages home, and serving as leaders in practice within Israeli society.

We invite you to add a sixth cup — Miriam's cup — and to offer a personal, social and national blessing for the redemption you seek.
Together, making room at the table for the women who are leading the change.

TIMELINE





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תנועת הנשים של ישראל

