

# THE JEWISH FOUNDATION *for the righteous*

"WHOEVER SAVES A SINGLE LIFE IS AS IF ONE SAVES THE ENTIRE WORLD."—TALMUD

## HAGGADAH SUPPLEMENT

*The following should be read after singing Dayyenu.*

**READER:** Throughout the year, we remember how despots have sought the exile and annihilation of the Jewish people. At *Pesach*, we tell of Pharaoh. At *Hanukkah*, of Antiochus. At *Purim*, of Haman. At *Yom HaShoah*, of Hitler. We speak of past oppressors, hoping that through awareness we may prevent future tyrants from attaining power.

But we also give thanks for those in every generation who came forward to lead our people out of the darkness. We recognize heroic rescuers from every generation, hoping that the memory of their strength will fortify us if confronted with similar evil.

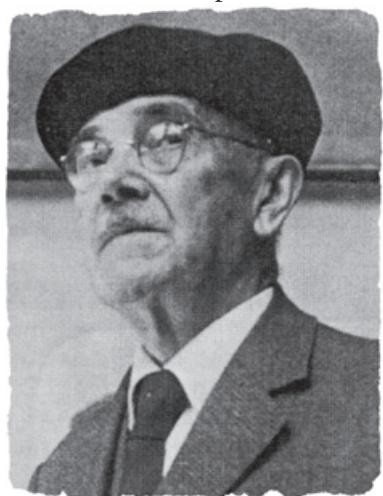
**READER:** We remember Moses, who, with both vision and courage, led his people from slavery to freedom. We remember the Maccabees, whose strength and determination saved the Temple and Jewish life in the Land of Israel. We remember Esther, who interceded to save fellow Jews from destruction.

While we commemorate the heroes of the past, we also remember modern heroes who saved Jews from the Holocaust.

**TOGETHER:** During this dark time, there were those who had the courage to care – non-Jews who risked their lives, and often the lives of their families, to save Jews from death. Just as we tell of Moses leading our people to freedom, at our *Seder* we also tell of contemporary heroes and how they led Jews to their freedom more than sixty-five years ago.

**READER:** At this Passover *Seder* we recount the story of Dervis and Servet Korkut, Albanian Muslims who lived in Sarajevo. Servet devoted her time to caring for their infant son and Dervis was the chief librarian at the Bosnian National Museum. He had a special interest in Jewish contributions to the country's culture.

**READER:** One representation of this Jewish culture was the fourteenth-century *Sarajevo Haggadah*, which was the type of artifact that Hitler hoped to preserve in a “museum of an extinct race” after he had killed all the Jews of Europe. Dervis recognized its importance and took steps to save it during the German occupation. When Johann Fortner, the Nazi commander arrived at the museum to claim the *Haggadah*, Dervis hid it underneath his coat so the German would not find it when the museum was searched. Later, Dervis quietly slipped out of the museum and entrusted the precious symbol of Jewish life to a Muslim imam who lived in the country. He hid it in his mosque’s library, where the *Sarajevo Haggadah*, one of the best known illuminated Hebrew manuscripts, remained safely hidden until after the war.



Dervis Korkut

**READER:** The Korkuts’ commitment to helping Jews continued. Mira Papos was raised in the Sephardic Jewish community in Sarajevo.

When her parents were murdered at the end of 1941, Mira escaped to the forest where she joined the partisans. In March 1942, after crippling defeats, the partisans ordered Mira and the other young people to return to Sarajevo. Mira realized that this was a death sentence, but so was remaining in the forest alone. When she entered the city she met the janitor from her father's office and begged him for help. He took her to Dervis Korkut.

**READER:** Dervis took Mira to his home. Dervis and Servet had a plan – they would dress Mira in traditional Muslim clothes, give her the Muslim name Amira, and tell anyone that inquired that she had been hired to take care of the baby. She was not to speak to anyone outside the family. A German officer lived on the second floor of the house, but he had no reason to question the young Muslim servant. Eventually Mira was able to obtain false papers. She moved to the Dalmatian coast and passed as a non-Jew for the remainder of the war. They all survived the war.

**TOGETHER:** Let the story of Dervis and Servet Korkut inspire us to do right when faced with evil.

**READER:** How can we pass this spirit on to future generations?

**READER:** First, let us honor these rescuers by learning from their deeds and dedicating ourselves anew to fulfilling the traditional Jewish commandment to be responsible for the safety and well-being of our neighbors.

**READER:** Second, let us also honor these rescuers by dedicating ourselves to assisting those among them who need our help. As Jews, we must ensure that these heroes live out their remaining years in dignity – with adequate food, medicine, and housing. We have the ability to make an enormous difference in their lives.

**READER:** Tonight, let us commit to learning the stories of these righteous men and women who saved thousands of our people from death. Let us also commit to making these stories a part of our *Seder*. As we recall those who rose up against us in every generation, let us also remember those who stood apart from the evil. On this night of Passover, we recall Shifra and Puah, the two Egyptian midwives who defied Pharaoh's edict to drown the male children of Israel in the Nile. We recall the daughter of Pharaoh who violated her father's decree to drown the infants and who reached out to save Moses. Just as we remember and praise these first rescuers of Jewish children, let us ensure that the stories of those non-Jews who rescued Jewish children and adults during the Holocaust are remembered and passed down to our children and our children's children.

**A postscript to the Korkut rescue story.** In the spring of 1999 when Kosovo started to slip into war and Albanian Muslims were driven out of Kosovo, most fled with little more than the clothes on their backs. Lamija Jahas had taken with her a copy of a most treasured document, a certificate given to her parents by Yad Vashem. After reaching a refugee camp in Macedonia, Lamija showed this certificate to members of the local Jewish community. The Israeli government flew Lamija, her husband, and their two children to Israel, where they were met at the airport by Davor Bakovic, son of Mira Papos Bakovic, who had passed away the previous year. The child of Righteous gentiles was met by the child of the Jewish survivor... and Lamija and her family from Kosovo began a new life in Israel.

*For more information about the work of the The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous or to learn more about other rescuers we support, please visit our website at [www.jfr.org](http://www.jfr.org) or contact us at:*