

HAGGADAH SUPPLEMENT

The following should be read after singing Dayvenu.

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.



Jekaterina Minkeviciene

READER: 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 sixty years ago.

READER: At this Passover *Seder* we recount the story of Jekaterina and Sergius Minkeviciene (Meen-key-vee-see-en-cy). Jekaterina and Sergius and their three children lived in a small town near Vilna in Lithuania. Sergius worked in a sugar factory. In late autumn 1943, a stranger came to their home begging them to shelter her six-year-old daughter, Golda. Jekaterina agreed to take the child.

READER: Late the next night, Golda was brought to their home. She was malnourished, sick, and desperately needed a physician. The family, too afraid to call a local doctor, went to the ghetto and bribed a policeman, saying that their own children were sick and needed a doctor. The policeman let a Jewish doctor from the ghetto go to their house to care for Golda. The Minkeviciene family took care of Golda as if she was their own child.

READER: Early in 1944, all the workers in the sugar factory were sent to Germany. The Minkevicienes and their children fled to the village where Sergius' father lived. They hid Golda in a barrel, which they took with them on their cart. At the end of that summer, the Germans occupied the house of Sergius' father and the family was forced to flee again. For some months they lived in bunkers in the forest. When the Russians approached the village, the Germans began to kill all the peasants. Jekaterina, Sergius, and the children fled again. Golda remained with them the entire time.

READER: After liberation, the Minkevicienes learned that Golda's family had been killed. Jekaterina believed that Golda should be raised in a Jewish family. They approached Dr. Goldbergas, a Jewish physician who had survived, and asked him to take care of the child. He adopted Golda and they left for Israel.

TOGETHER: Let the story of Jekaterina and Sergius Minkeviciene 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.

*For more information about the work of the The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous
or to learn more about other rescuers we support, like Jekaterina and Sergius Minkeviciene,
please visit our website at www.jfr.org or contact us at:*

305 SEVENTH AVENUE, 19TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10001-6008
212.727.9955 888.421.1221 FAX: 212.727.9956 E-MAIL: JFR@JFR.ORG WEB: WWW.JFR.ORG