

"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.

Nevertheless, 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 seventy-five years ago.

READER: At this Passover *Seder*, we recount the story of Tamara and Maria Osipova from Belarus who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

READER: After Minsk, Belarus, was occupied by the Germans on June 28, 1941, Maria and her daughter, Tamara, became active in underground activities. Their apartment became a meeting place for several partisan groups. Maria led one of the partisan groups, which consisted of lecturers and students from the city's Law Academy. Her daughter, Tamara Osipova, a student, joined a partisan group made up of mostly students. From August 1941 to September 1942, these partisans fought against the Germans and worked to rescue Jews from the Minsk ghetto.

READER: Tamara and Maria, went into the ghetto and smuggled out dozens of Jewish women and children. Putting their lives at risk, they often had to bribe local officials in order to save these Jews. Once out of the ghetto, they hid them first in their home. Maria was responsible for obtaining forged identity papers while Tamara worked to find the women and children safe places to hide. Tamara escorted a number of Jews to the forest and managed to take at least ten Jews to join the partisans.



Tamara Osipova

READER: Elena Krechetovich was one of the many women they smuggled out of the ghetto. After obtaining forged identity papers for Elena, Tamara and Maria were able to get her a job at the local hospital. Along with many others rescued by Tamara and Maria, Elena sought shelter in their home and survived the war. Elena stayed in their apartment from August 1941 until May 1942.

READER: Tamara and Maria endangered their lives with their rescue activities. Maria became known as one of the major figures in the Minsk underground during the war. Throughout German occupation, Maria played an active role in many partisan operations and she was later awarded the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union. Maria and Tamara were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations on January 2, 1995. Maria Osipova died in 1999. Tamara is in her 90s and continues to live in Minsk.

TOGETHER: Let the story of Tamara and Maria Osipova inspire us to do right when faced with evil.

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

READER: Let us honor rescuers like Tamara and Maria 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: 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 each 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 Jews 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.

About The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) was established in 1986 by Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis to fulfill the traditional Jewish commitment to *hakarat hatov*, the searching out and recognition of goodness. The JFR honors and supports Righteous Gentiles, non-Jews, who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. The Foundation provides monthly support to more than 100 aged and needy rescuers in 12 countries. Through its national education program, the Foundation also preserves the legacy of the Righteous and educates teachers and students about the history of the Holocaust.

In the past thirty years, the JFR has distributed more than \$44 million to aged and needy rescuers. We must continue to thank and support these extraordinary individuals who were the lone lights in the darkness.

In sharing the stories of the Righteous, we strive not only to honor their place in history, but also to stress the importance of their example for these times. These men and women remind us that in the midst of unspeakable evil, each human being has the capacity to act humanely and to make a difference, a lesson that is often eclipsed by the legacy of hatred, brutality, and suffering that dominates contemplation of the Holocaust.

For more information about the work of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous or to learn about other rescuers like Tamara and Maria Osipova, please visit our website at www.jfr.org or contact us at the address listed below.

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