

# Lesson 10: Sephardic Storyteller

## Aim

Folktales, stories that are passed on from generation to generation, carry messages and meanings of moral significance that transcend time. Author and librarian, Sharon Elswit states in the Jewish Book Council's *The ProsenPeople* blogpost, "The Story Will Out: Why Folktales Still Matter," folklore helps to "forge a connection between the generations, pass on the values of a community, teach lessons, and help us make sense of ourselves and understand the world around us." This lesson will provide students with the opportunity to hear Sephardi and Mizrahi folktales and learn Jewish values that are passed on by these stories.

## Objectives

- Students will read Sephardic folktales and analyze their messages and meanings.
- Students will examine Jewish values that are shared in these stories.
- Students will learn the characteristics of folktales and apply them to Jewish folktales.
- Students will understand the role stories and storytelling play in the preservation of culture.

## Materials

- Computer and projector
- PowerPoint Presentation - Lesson 10 PPT - Jewish Stories and Jewish Values
- Appendix A – Jewish Values Chart
- Appendix B – Folktale Characteristics Chart
- Appendix C – The Bird of Happiness, Iraqi Folktale

### NOTE TO TEACHER

This lesson introduces **four folktales**.

The **first three folktales** are taken from “Folktales of the Jews Volume 3: Tales from Arab Lands” edited and with commentary by Dan Ben-Amos and Dov Noy, consulting editor. Ben-Amos explains that the folktale is known as one of the most “democratic” forms of cultural preservation because these stories essentially have no “authors” and belong to everyone.

The stories in this lesson come mostly from Arab countries where Jews lived until 1948 after which some communities fled persecution. These stories were never written down until Professor Dov Noy initiated the [Israel Folktale Archive](#) that sought to preserve the individual cultures of the Jewish communities who had immigrated to Israel after its inception. Today, the archive is situated at the University of Haifa.

You can choose to **READ ONE OR ALL THE STORIES** before **READING** the main story in **Appendix C**.

The main story is a great example of a folktale, containing many of the identifying folktale characteristics listed in **Appendix B**.

The audio recording of the storyteller narrating the tale will surely delight children and adults alike! We encourage you to play the recording while the students read along in **Appendix C**. Enjoy!

## Procedures

### Introduction

1. **Communi-story:** Today we are going to start with a game called “Communi-story”. Students will sit in a circle and the teacher can explain the rules: We are going to create an improvised “story” in our group. Each person will contribute one sentence to the story. The only rules are that you must connect your sentence with the sentences that comes before yours (including characters, events etc) and the story must “come to a conclusion” by the end of the circle.

This is a fun, funny way to begin the session which is aimed at understanding the power of storytelling and the deep meanings behind the stories we are told, and we tell. After the short game, the teacher can lead a discussion based on the questions below.

Discussion Questions:

- How was creating a story together as a community? What worked and what didn't? Was this story similar to a folktale or "bedtime" story? Why or why not?
- Do you remember family stories that your parents or grandparents told you? What were they like?
- What did these stories teach you? Why were they passed down?
- What values do these stories teach us? (Possible answers might be- to be a good person, to preserve our Jewish tradition, to help others)
- What are Jewish values?

**AS AN ALTERNATIVE INTRODUCTION YOU CAN DO THE FOLLOWING**

1. **WRITE** the Main Questions on the board:
  - A. What do Sephardic and *Mizrachi* folktales teach us about the Jews who come from Sephardic, Middle Eastern and North African Jewish backgrounds?
  - B. What Jewish values are being carried on and transmitted to generations to come?
2. **PPT SLIDES #2 – REVIEW** Jewish Values on SLIDE
  - A. **ASK:**
    - Have you heard of any of these terms before?
    - Which values do you recognize?
    - Where did you learn about them?
    - Who taught you about them?
  - B. **GENERATE A LIST** with class made up of student responses.
    - From what sources and places do students learn Jewish Values?
  - C. **SAY:**
    - Today we will look at ways Jewish values have been passed down from generation to generation.
    - The Torah and Jewish texts are ways we pass on these values. Another method is **storytelling**, using **folktales**.

## Body of Lesson

### 4. HAND OUT:

- Appendix A – Jewish Values Chart
- Appendix B – Folktale Characteristics Chart
- Appendix C – The Bird of Happiness, Iraqi Folktale

### 5. PPT SLIDE# 3 – READ SLIDE OUT LOUD

#### EXPLAIN:

What are Folktales?

- Stories that are passed down **orally** over generations.
- They are typically about “**common folk**” the communities that lived at the time the tale was created.
- They try to teach a lesson about right and wrong, which is called a **moral**.
- In Hebrew a Jewish value is called a *Middah*.
- Learning Jewish Values is called *Mussar*.

### 6. PPT SLIDE #4 – INSTRUCT STUDENTS TO LOOK AT Appendix B – Folktale Characteristics Chart

#### A. SAY:

“The slide on the screen is the same as the worksheet you have in front of you with the title “Folktale Characteristics”

### 7. PPT SLIDE #5 – SUMMARIZE the 6 characteristics of folktales on the slide

A. **REVIEW** the worksheet/slide together

B. **TELL** the class that they will shortly be using this worksheet to help them analyze folktales.

### 8. PPT SLIDES #6-8 – These slides contain a summary of folktales from Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. The 4th story (PPT SLIDE #9) is a 10 min story that includes a narration and text. You may choose to review one or all short stories on the PPT slide before moving to the story in Appendix C. (Or you can jump to the main story, #4, see Note to Teacher above)

- A. When reading each story, have students check off the folktale characteristics that were depicted in each story.
  - B. **READ ALOUD** 1-3 stories (depending on class time and student comprehension) and **ASK**:
    1. What can we learn about the Jewish community from this story?
    2. What Jewish values are emphasized in this story?
    3. What folktale characteristics can be found in this story?
9. **PPT SLIDE #9** - The Bird of Happiness, Iraqi folktale
- A. **STUDENTS TURN** to Appendix C.
  - B. CLICK [HERE](#) for website to hear Miriam Kanani tell the story!
    - **Jewish Folktales Retold** (audio recordings of Jewish Folktales)  
From <https://folktales.thecjm.org/folktales/>
  - C. **STUDENTS LISTEN** to the audio recording while **CLASS READS** along silently.
  - D. The story is approximately 10 minutes long.

## Conclusion

10. After listening to the Bird of Happiness folktale, students work Individually or in pairs, and respond to the questions listed in Appendix B in more detail. Students may include a drawing that depicts the images that stood out for them in the story.
11. Students share their responses with their peers.

## Extension Activities

12. Folktales for Kids - In pairs or groups, students write a folktale for a younger child. The folktale should convey a Jewish value they want to pass on to the next generation. Provide students with books to use as examples.

### **Using Folk Tales to Teach Life Lessons and Jewish Values**

From <https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/july-2014/using-folk-tales-to-teach-life-lessons-and-jewish>

13. Universal and Particular- Research secular and Jewish folktales to find the similarities and differences between the two. Make connections between texts (for example, are there cultures that share similar lessons? Can we better understand a particular culture by looking at multiple folktales?)

## Resources and External Links

For background on this topic, you can visit the websites below:

### Telling Tales

From <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/70398/telling-tales-2>

### Play's The Thing: Storytelling Games

From <http://www.eldrbarry.net/roos/books/stgam.htm>

### Israeli Folktale Archive Preserves Folklore of Jews from Many Countries

From <https://www.jta.org/2005/09/27/archive/israeli-folktale-archive-preserves-folklore-of-jews-from-many-countries>

### Using Folk Tales to Teach Life Lessons and Jewish Values

From <https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/july-2014/using-folk-tales-to-teach-life-lessons-and-jewish>

### Jewish Folktales (lesson plan)

From <https://www.jewishlearningmatters.com/Lesson2-Jewish-Folktales-1558.aspx>

### Folktales of the Jews

From <http://www.worldcat.org/title/folktales-of-the-jews/oclc/68786698>

**Tales for the Seventh Day: A Collection of Sabbath Stories Hardcover – September 1, 2000**  
by [Nina Jaffe \(Author\)](#), [Kelly Striblin](#)

### Lists of Jewish Values

From [www.jewishlens.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Look-here-for-sample-lists-of-Jewish-values.pdf](http://www.jewishlens.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Look-here-for-sample-lists-of-Jewish-values.pdf)

### Jewish Folktales Retold (audio recordings of Jewish Folktales)

From <https://folktales.thecjm.org/folktales/>

### Folktales Folktale Writer's Workshop with Alma Flor Ada and Rafe Martin (grades 1–8):

Two acclaimed folktale writers offer their expert tips, challenges, and guidelines to help students write their own folktales. The authors also give students guidelines on revising their writing, and provide general comments, suggestions, and ideas about writing folktales.

From [http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktalewshop\\_index.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktalewshop_index.htm)

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## Appendix A – Jewish Values – Iraqi Oral Tradition

### Jewish Values

<b>Hakarat Hatov</b> הכרת הטוב ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being Grateful</li><li>• Find the good things in your life and let those things make you feel happy</li></ul>	<b>G'milut Chasadim</b> גמלות חסדים ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acts of Loving Kindness</li><li>• Show your love through kind actions</li></ul>	<b>Emunah</b> אמונה ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faith in God</li></ul>	<b>Same'ach B'chelko</b> שמח בחלקו ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be Content</li><li>• Be Happy with what you have</li></ul>
<b>Nedivut</b> נדיבות ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be Generous</li><li>• Think about other people's wants and needs and if you help them, do!</li></ul>	<b>Talmud Torah</b> תלמוד תורה ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The study of Torah is central</li><li>• Judaism's teachings guide us to be good people</li></ul>	<b>Lifnei Iver</b> לפני עור ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be Inclusive</li><li>• Help accommodate people with special needs and challenges.</li></ul>	<b>T'Shuvah</b> תשובה ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be Sorry and Repent</li><li>• When mistakes are made, tell the truth about it and try to help make it better.</li></ul>
<b>Lashon Hara</b> לשון הרע ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use Kinds Words/ Avoid Hurtful Speech</li><li>• Use your words be kind - Don't talk about other people</li></ul>	<b>Kehillah</b> קהילה ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community</li><li>• Help your community grow by showing kindness and helping all.</li></ul>	<b>Ba'al Tashchit</b> בל תשחית ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do Not Destroy</li><li>• Keep our world and the people, places, and things in it safe; reuse and recycle when you can.</li></ul>	<b>Tzedakah</b> צדקה ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charitable Giving = Justice</li><li>• Help those in need. Righteousness and charity</li></ul>
<b>V'ahavta I'reacha Kamocha</b> ואהבת לרעך כמוך ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Love Your Neighbor as Yourself</li><li>• We should treat people the way that we would want to be treated</li></ul>	<b>Oseh Shalom</b> עושה שלום ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating Peace</li><li>• Help the people in your world get along without fighting</li></ul>	<b>Kibud Av v'Em</b> כבוד אב ואם ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Honor Parents</li><li>• Honoring our parents is a sacred expression of our commitment and respect to God.</li></ul>	<b>Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim</b> צער בעלי חיים ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect Animals</li><li>• Keeping the environment safe and remembering that all animals need food and shelter.</li></ul>
<b>Sh'mirat Ha-teva</b> שמירת הטבע ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect Nature</li><li>• Take care of all the world's creatures and the environment.</li></ul>	<b>Tikkun Olam</b> תקון עולם ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair the World</li><li>• Show how much you love it by fixing any problems you might find.</li></ul>	<b>Sh'mirat Ha-guf</b> שמירת הגוף ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect Your Body</li><li>• Keep your body safe and healthy through good choices.</li></ul>	<b>Tzedek Tirdof</b> צדק תרדוף ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pursue Justice</li><li>• Try to make your world fair and help everyone get what they need to live a safe and healthy life.</li></ul>
<b>Bikkur Cholim</b> בקר חולים ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visit the Sick</li><li>• Help sick people feel better by visiting them or by sending them something special.</li></ul>	<b>Kol Yisrael areyvim zeh la(ba)zeh</b> כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All Jews are responsible for one another</li></ul>	<b>Shalom Bayit</b> שלום בית ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peace in the home</li></ul>	<b>Ozer Dalim</b> עוזר דלים ● <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helping the downtrodden</li><li>• Peace in the home</li></ul>



## Lesson 10:

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## Appendix B – Folktale Characteristics

### **Note to teacher:**

Make enough copies for each student.

Folktale Characteristics	Folktale #1	Folktale #2	Folktale #3
<p><b>Strong Characters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the main character look like?</li> <li>• Is this important to the story?</li> <li>• What inner traits do you associate with the character? Why?</li> <li>• What is the character's goal?</li> <li>• What problems does the character face in reaching the goal?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Simple Setting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where and when does the tale take place?</li> <li>• Is this important to the tale?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Magic or Fantasy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What events are most important to the tale?</li> <li>• Is magic or fantasy important to the story? How?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>A Problem that Gets Solved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the problem in the story get solved?</li> <li>• How is this important to the story and its lesson?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Cultural Clues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have you learned about the culture of the people who created this tale?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>A Message, Lesson or Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What lesson can the reader learn from this tale?</li> <li>• Why do you think this tale was shared from generation to generation?</li> </ul>			

## Folktale Characteristics

## Lesson 10:

# Sephardi Storyteller

### Appendix C – Jewish Folktale – Iraqi Oral Tradition

#### Note to teacher:

Make enough copies for each student.

## Jewish Folktale - Iraqi Oral Tradition

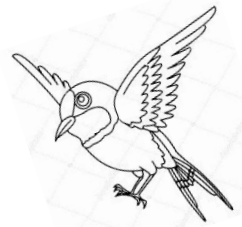
### The Bird of Happiness

There once was a young boy named Aaron, who had spent his entire life wandering in the desert. His parents had been slaves, but they had run away to find a place where they could be free. Every day they searched for food and water, while the sun beat down on their backs, and sand blew in their faces. Still, Aaron never lost hope, for his mother would say, “One day the Bird of Happiness will guide us to Jerusalem.” For that was their dream—to reach the city of Jerusalem. But how could they find their way there?

Every night, when they stopped to rest, Aaron’s father would teach him what it meant to be a Jew. They had no books, but his father remembered the Bible stories he had learned as a boy, and he remembered the Ten Commandments, and these he taught to his son. Aaron took them to heart and let them be his guide.

So, it was that they wandered for many years, and still the desert stretched endlessly before them. Then one night, Aaron had a strange and vivid dream. In the dream he was traveling with his parents when the world suddenly grew dark. Aaron’s parents said, “Quickly, Aaron, crouch down and cover yourself with a blanket. A sandstorm is coming!” And as soon as he did, sand started swirling around him and beating down on the blanket, and the sandstorm lasted a long time. At last it subsided, and Aaron and his parents threw off the blankets. But when they did, they found that their food had been scattered and their water spilt, and, even worse, their foot-prints had been covered by sand, and they could no longer tell where they had come from or where they should go.

Just when everything looked hopeless, Aaron saw something on the horizon. At first it was only a speck, but soon he saw that it was a beautiful white bird. That bird came closer and closer, and just as it flew over Aaron, it dropped something from its beak, and in the dream, Aaron caught it! At that moment Aaron woke up and discovered that he was clutching something in his right hand—a glowing stone. Aaron jumped up and showed it to his parents, and when they saw it and heard his dream, they were amazed, and his mother said, “This means that the Bird of Happiness is coming that much closer.”



After that Aaron hung the glowing stone from a leather thong around his neck, and it proved to be a wonderful guide. For when they were traveling in the right direction, the stone would glow, but when they were going in the wrong direction, it remained dark. In this way the glowing stone guided them to every oasis, where pools of fresh water were surrounded by trees bearing sweet fruit. And each time they came to such an oasis, they said a prayer of thanks.

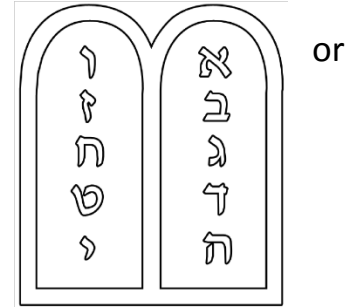
So, it was that after years of wandering through shifting sands and blazing sun, Aaron and his parents finally came to the walls of a great city—the first city that Aaron had ever seen. As they passed through the gates, they were surprised to see a huge crowd had gathered in the streets. Aaron wondered about this, because his father had told him that in cities people live in houses. Aaron’s father went up to a man and said, “Excuse me, sir, but could you tell us what city this is?” The man said: “Why, don’t you know where you are? This is Jerusalem.” “It is?” said Aaron’s father, and they were astonished, for that meant they had finally reached the city of their dreams.

Then Aaron’s father asked why everyone was standing the streets. The man said, “Three days ago our king died. And it is the custom in our city to let the will of heaven decide who will be our next king. So, on the third day after the king’s death, the rare Bird of Happiness is released and circles above the city, and whoever the bird lands on is chosen to be the next king of Jerusalem. The bird is about to be released. That is why everyone is standing in the street.”

Just then there was a great shout from the crowd, and Aaron looked up and saw a white bird soaring on high and circling above the city, and there was something strangely familiar about that bird. It spiraled lower and lower, while Aaron’s glowing jewel glowed more brightly than ever before. And suddenly the bird swooped down and landed on Aaron’s head! There was a great shout from the crowd, and all at once Aaron was picked up and carried off, while his parents ran after them, crying, “That’s our son. Where are you taking him?”

The crowd brought Aaron to the king’s palace, where he was placed on the king’s throne, with the Bird of Happiness still perched on his head. Everyone bowed low before him, and they declared that he, Aaron, the poor boy wandering in the desert, the son of slaves, was their king. At first Aaron thought it must all be a dream, but then he felt the tugging of the bird’s talons in his hair, and he knew that it must be real.

Three days later there was a great coronation, and Aaron was officially crowned king of Jerusalem. After that Aaron and his parents lived in the palace. No longer did they wonder what they would eat or drink where they would sleep at night. As king of Jerusalem, every important question was brought before Aaron to decide. Now while Aaron had never gone to school or even seen a book, he let the Ten Commandments be his guide in deciding what was right and what was wrong, and he found that they served him very well. Plus, he had the secret assistance of the glowing stone. For whenever the answer to a question was yes, the stone would glow brightly. But if the answer was no, it would remain dark.



At first the nobles of Jerusalem were worried that the fate of the city was being entrusted to such a young boy. But as they listened to his decisions, they came to realize that he was very wise. There was only one thing they wondered about. The young king had asked that a simple shack be built out of branches next to the palace. There he spent an hour each day—but no one knew what he did.

Finally, the king’s minister could not contain his curiosity, and he asked the young king about his strange actions. Aaron said, “When I go into that shack, I put on the rags I was wearing when I came here, and I stand before the mirror so that I can remember where I came from. For only then can I know where I must go.”

When the minister heard this, he knew that heaven had truly blessed them with a wise young king. After that he served Aaron faithfully for many years, and in this way, Aaron became one of the great kings of Jerusalem, as great as King David, as great as King Solomon. And every day Aaron and his parents thanked God for all their blessings—and especially for the Bird of Happiness.

—Iraq: oral tradition

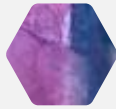
From: **The Bird of Happiness** as told by Miriam Kanani

<https://folktales.thecjm.org/folktales/>



# Lesson 10

## Sephardic Storyteller



# Jewish Values

## **Hakarat Hatov**

הכרת הטוב •

- Being Grateful
- Find the good things in your life and let those things make you feel happy

## **G'milut Chasadim**

גמילות חסדים •

- Acts of Loving Kindness
- Show your love through kind actions

## **Emunah**

אמונה •

- Faith in God

## **Same'ach B'chelko**

שמח בחלקו •

- Be Content
- Be Happy with what you have

## **Nedivut**

נדיבות •

- Be Generous
- Think about other people's wants and needs and if you help them, do!

## **Talmud Torah**

תלמוד תורה •

- The study of Torah is central
- Judaism's teachings guide us to be good people

## **Lifnei Iver**

לפני עור •

- Be Inclusive
- Help accommodate people with special needs and challenges.

## **T'Shuvah**

תשובה •

- Be Sorry and Repent
- When mistakes are made, tell the truth about it and try to help make it better.

## **Lashon Hara**

לשון הרע •

- Use Kinds Words/ Avoid Hurtful Speech
- Use your words be kind - Don't talk about other people

## **Kehillah**

קהילה •

- Community
- Help your community grow by showing kindness and helping all.

## **Ba'al Tashchit**

בל תשחית •

- Do Not Destroy
- Keep our world and the people, places, and things in it safe; reuse and recycle when you can.

## **Tzedakah**

צדקה •

- Charitable Giving = Justice
- Help those in need. Righteousness and charity

## **V'ahavta l'reacha Kamocha**

ואהבת לרעך כמוך •

- Love Your Neighbor as Yourself
- We should treat people the way that we would want to be treated

## **Oseh Shalom**

עושה שלום •

- Creating Peace
- Help the people in your world get along without fighting

## **Kibud Av v'Em**

כבוד אב ואם •

- Honor Parents
- Honoring our parents is a sacred expression of our commitment and respect to God.

## **Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim**

צער בעלי חיים •

- Protect Animals
- Keeping the environment safe and remembering that all animals need food and shelter.

## **Sh'mirat Ha-teva**

שמירת הטבע •

- Protect Nature
- Take care of all the world's creatures and the environment.

## **Tikkun Olam**

תקון עולם •

- Repair the World
- Show how much you love it by fixing any problems you might find.

## **Sh'mirat Ha-guf**

שמירת הגוף •

- Protect Your Body
- Keep your body safe and healthy through good choices.

## **Tzedek Tirdof**

צדק תרדוף •

- Pursue Justice
- Try to make your world fair and help everyone get what they need to live a safe and healthy life.

## **Bikkur Cholim**

בקור חולים •

- Visit the Sick
- Help sick people feel better by visiting them or by sending them something special.

## **Kol Yisrael areyvim zeh**

la(ba)zeh •

כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה •

- All Jews are responsible for one another

## **Shalom Bayit**

שלום בית •

- Peace in the home

## **Ozer Dalim**

עוזר דלים •

- Helping the downtrodden
- Peace in the home



# What are Folktales?

- Stories that are passed down **orally** among generations
- They are typically about the common person(**common folk**) at the time of the tale was created
- They try to teach a lesson about right and wrong, which is called a **moral**.
- In Hebrew a Jewish value is called a *Middah*.
- Learning Jewish Values is called *Mussar*.

# Folktale Characteristics

Folktale Characteristics	Folktale #1	Folktale #2	Folktale #3	Folktale #4
<b>Strong Characters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the main character look like?</li> <li>• Is this important to the story?</li> <li>• What inner traits do you associate with the character? Why?</li> <li>• What is the character's goal?</li> <li>• What problems does the character face in reaching the goal?</li> </ul>				
<b>Simple Setting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where and when does the tale take place?</li> <li>• Is this important to the tale?</li> </ul>				
<b>Magic or Fantasy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What events are most important to the tale?</li> <li>• Is magic or fantasy important to the story? How?</li> </ul>				
<b>A Problem that Gets Solved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the problem in the story get solved?</li> <li>• How is this important to the story and its lesson?</li> </ul>				
<b>Cultural Clues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have you learned about the culture of the people who created this tale?</li> </ul>				
<b>A Message, Lesson or Explanation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What lesson can the reader learn from this tale?</li> <li>• Why do you think this tale was shared from generation to generation?</li> </ul>				

- Strong Characters
- Where and when does the tale take place?
- Magic or Fantasy
- A Problem that Gets Solved
- Cultural Clues
- A Message, Lesson or Explanation

## Folktale #1: “Reciting Psalms” (Tunisia)



This story is about a man who owns a shop that is not profitable and instead of “providing for his family” as his wife insists, he sits in his shop, reciting Psalms on the eve of Passover.

On the eve of Passover, while the shop owner was reciting psalms, an old man entered the store, asking to purchase some wood. After buying the wood, the old man touched one of the rafters in the shop and went on his way. When the shop owner looked up, he saw that the rafter had turned to gold, so he ran after the old man shouting “Elijah the Prophet!” The townspeople thought he was crazy. But because of the gold from the rafters, the man was able to have all he needed for the Passover holiday.

Reciting the psalms had merited a visit from Elijah the Prophet, performer of miracles.



## Folktale #2: “Rabbi Shelomoh the Lion” (Morocco)

Rabbi Shelomoh of Morocco was a righteous man, a *tzadik*. Every summer it was his custom to fast for six days and on these fast days he would study Torah all day and all night.

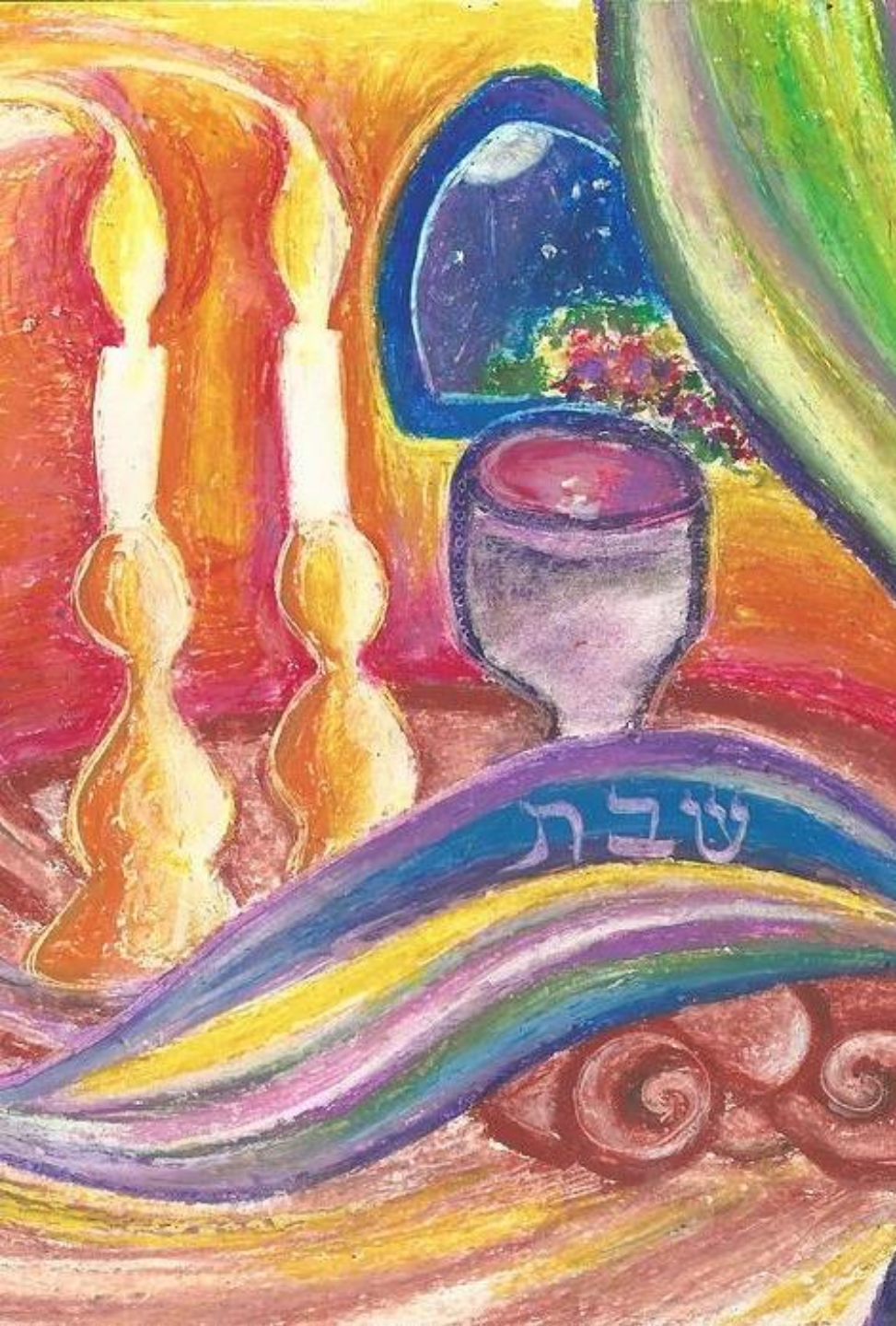
At the same time, a conflict erupted between the Jews and Arabs and the Rabbi took part in this conflict.

Three Arabs chased after him and he escaped into a cave. Upon entering, he saw a lion raising one of his legs. The Rabbi was not afraid and approached the lion. A thorn was stuck in the lion’s foot. The Rabbi, unafraid, helped the lion to pull it out and the lion in turn protected the Rabbi from the dangerous creatures inside the cave.

Meanwhile, the Jewish community thought the Rabbi had died and sent out a search party to look for his body. When they arrived at the cave, they saw something glowing from inside. It was the Rabbi, riding the lion.

From then on, they called him Rabbi Shelomoh the Lion.





## Folktale #3 : Observing the Sabbath (Egypt)

One Shabbat, a man saw a mouse in his house taking golden liras (coins) out of a hole. Because it was Shabbat, he did not touch the mice even though they continued to take money out of the house. At seven o'clock when Shabbat had gone out, the man put his hand in the mouse hole and removed one golden lira.

He was happy. He left his home and ran into a neighbor who was a merchant who was leaving for a business trip. He told his friend to buy him something with a lira. "What can I buy with a lira?", The merchant asked, but the man told him to do it.

When the merchant was on his way back he remembered he hadn't bought his friend anything and he saw a man with a crate and asked him if he could buy the crate for one lira. There are only cats inside, said the man. The merchant said, "no matter" and bought the crate.

On the way back, the boat the merchant was on was in a storm and the boat landed on an unknown coast. The people there invited the merchant to a feast but the table was infested with mice. The merchant told the people about the cats. They bought the cats for a large sum and the merchant returned home with a great fortune which he gave to his friend who had given him the golden lira.

He was a successful businessman ever since.

# The Bird of Happiness

as told by Miriam Kanani



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