

Celebrating Women's History Month Through the Story of Poorim and the Power of Jewish Learning

March is a time to reflect on the contributions of remarkable women throughout history. It is also the month when we celebrate Poorim, a holiday that centers around the courage and leadership of Queen Esther. At ShalomLearning, we recognize that education is a powerful tool in shaping future generations, and the story of Poorim provides an inspiring lens through which we can explore the values of bravery, advocacy, and Jewish identity—particularly as they relate to the empowerment of women in Jewish history and beyond.

The story of Poorim, found in Megillat Esther, highlights Queen Esther's incredible bravery. She risked her life by revealing her Jewish identity to King Ahasuerus in order to save her people from Haman's evil decree. But what makes Esther's story so compelling is not just her courage—it's her strategy. She didn't act impulsively; she built alliances, timed her words carefully, and used her intelligence to navigate a world that wasn't designed for her to lead. Her actions remind us that change is rarely about one grand moment of heroism, but rather a series of calculated, deliberate choices that shape the course of history.

At ShalomLearning, we believe that education empowers individuals to embrace their heritage, develop strong values, and become leaders in their communities. Our Jewish Values curriculum encourages students to explore values such as *Ometz Lev* (courage), *Tzedek* (justice), and *Achrayut* (responsibility)—all of which are exemplified by Queen Esther. By studying stories like Esther's, students not only learn about Jewish history and traditions but also gain the confidence to apply these lessons in their own lives. Whether advocating for themselves or others, young learners are encouraged to embrace their voices and take action in meaningful ways.

As we reflect on Women's History Month, we recognize that Jewish women have been at the forefront of leadership, activism, and change-making in every era. While figures like Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Golda Meir are well known, there are many lesser-known Jewish women whose impact continues to shape our world. Judith Resnik, one of the first female astronauts, paved the way for women in STEM. Sarah Schenirer revolutionized Jewish education by founding the Bais Yaakov movement, providing formal education for Jewish girls. Alice Shalvi, an Israeli scholar and activist, has spent decades advocating for women's rights and social justice. These women, like Esther, saw gaps in society and worked tirelessly to fill them, often in the face of resistance.

This Poorim, as we celebrate Esther's bravery, let's also take time to recognize the many women who have led with courage, intelligence, and compassion throughout Jewish history. The lessons of Poorim are not just about survival but about transformation—about using wisdom, patience, and strength to create a better world. And let's continue to educate and empower future generations—both boys and girls—to stand up for what is right, embrace their Jewish values, and make a difference.

Chag Poorim Sameach!