

## Mother Noah and the Mustard Seed

Mother Noah is not a biblical figure. We don't find her story in the Old Testament of our Bibles. But she is deeply rooted in the Haggadah, a Jewish story-telling tradition outside the Old Testament.

Mother Noah is one of the many people who bring hope and growth into a world that seems already or almost lost. She does the little thing. She has those tiny and seemingly insignificant seeds in her pocket. By sowing them, she enables new plants to grow. And plants mean food, shelter, and beauty. Mother Noah is by what she is planning and doing a creator, a co-creator or a partner of God. A carer in God's world. A gardener in God's garden.

She is a sister of all those who sow and plant and care... a sister of the nameless women and men who over the centuries grew gardens, watered plants, cared for them, and harvested the fruits. Mother Noah is, as so many people in the history of humankind, a nourisher. She feeds families, friends, and communities.

It is such a person Jesus talks about in the parable of the mustard seed. It is us Jesus talks about... our life, our faith, our visions, our dreams...

The mustard seed is in all of us. And there it will grow!

The mustard seed is in all of us.

It is our faith, our love, our hope.

It is there – in us – not matter who we are:

The mustard seed of courage, the mustard seed of resistance, the mustard seed of peace, the mustard seed justice.

Such seeds we bear in us, and they want to grow.

The seeds of grace, of compassion and sympathy want to grow.

They just need a little care.

As mother Noah held them in the pocket of her apron, we need to hold our seeds and protect them.

We must not let them fall on unfertile ground, not on stones, not among the thorns.

We must not tread on them, or trample over them.

We must see them and cherish them...

...as Shiphrah did, and Puah. They resisted the Pharaoh's unhuman and cruel demand to kill the new born Jewish baby boys. Shiphrah and Puah let them live!

Their resistance was just a little seed, but it grew into a tree, became a forest – a safe space for Moses and many after him...

The mustard seeds...

...we must use them and put our trust in them, as Ruth did, and Naomi. Their seeds were small, and the names of the seeds were faithfulness and friendship – nothing more and nothing less. Eventually those two loving woman friends found a community and lived with many others in a world of beautiful trees. There they could live and eat and envision a future that finally leads to Jesus.

Human beings can be mustard seeds...

Martin Luther King comes to my mind, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Sophie & Hans Scholl, Rosa Luxemburg, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. Malala Yousafzai comes to my mind, Mahatma Gandhi and Greta Thunberg... and, and, and...

...many more.

The list is endless.

The stories are.

And so are the hope and transformation that come through them.

Human beings can be mustard seeds.

All those and millions more.

You and me.

It grows in us.

It grows among us.

Through us trees come forth, tall and big, full of leaves and blossoms.

Through us forests will fill the earth.

Through us places of plenty and shelter can grow.

Through us people will find homes and plant gardens.

We all will shape the presence and influence the future.

Trees of bread and faith,

trees of love and hope,

trees of courage and resistance,

trees of grace and compassion,

trees of justice and peace will line our roads, fill our forests, and save the planet.

And the birds of the air will come and build their nests...

Mustard seeds.

See them.

Treasure them.

Be them.