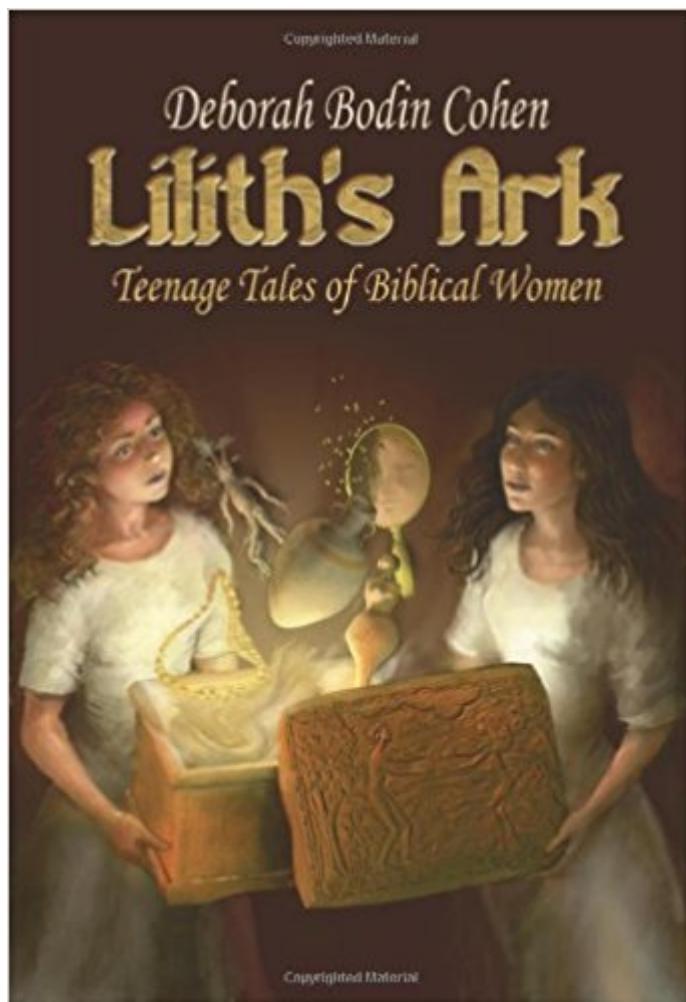


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# Lilith's Ark: Teenage Tales Of Biblical Women



## Synopsis

Not long after the world was created, Lilith, the first woman, was expelled from the Garden of Eden. She built an ark, a magic box, in which future biblical women could hide their most prized possessions. And so, Lilith's Ark became a place for women to share their own experiences of adolescence with future generations of girls... The women of Torah grew up at a time when gender roles were rigidly defined and girls were considered women at an early age. Still, the Torah hints that young biblical women faced challenges similar to those that teenagers encounter today: first loves, burgeoning identities, developing sexualities, and blossoming spirituality. Building on textual sources, Deborah Bodin Cohen has created a collection of midrashim about the teen years of 10 women in Genesis that will resonate with 21st-century readers. Lilith's Ark melds text, biblical commentaries, and historic details about the ancient world with the experiences of modern girls and women and the author's own imagination. A discussion guide for each story enriches the reading experience. This is a book that will speak across time to the anxieties and aspirations of today's growing girls.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This beautifully written collection is useful for young women of varied religious affiliations and the adults who mentor them. It speaks of heroism and creative spirit in a way that is attractive and encouraging." -Kliatt (Kliatt) "Cohen's book is thus ideally suited for book clubs, religious classes, mother-daughter Rosh Hodesh groups, or any other discussion forum." -Lilith (Lilith) "A compilation of imaginative stories that provide new perspectives on the lives of the nine

women in Genesis and on Eve's midrashic precursor, Lilith . . . After all this time, Lilith's Ark is giving voice to those ancient women who paid the price and reaped the benefits." •Ottawa Jewish Bulletin (Ottawa Jewish Bulletin)"The midrashim are faithful in style and beautifully written, with enough poetry to lift them and enough common sense to keep them grounded." •Deborah Stone (Deborah Stone)"Lilith's Ark: Teenage Tales of Biblical Women is an engaging and refreshing book filled with midrashic stories about the teenage years of ten biblical heroines. Recommended for all adolescents, Rabbi Deborah Bodin Cohen skillfully brings the reader into the inner world of these young women. The book is filled with teenage power and heroism." •Mindy Shapiro, Director, Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing! a program of Moving Traditions (Mindy Shapiro)"Teen girls today especially need role models who have lasted for more than a single season. I am impressed by Deborah Bodin Cohen's novel and original approach to biblical women. She portrays our female ancestors in their teen years: anguishing over relationships, rebelling against parental authority, searching for identity. This is a wonderful context in which women and girls can engage in meaningful dialogue around these crucial issues." •Penina Adelman, author of Miriam's Well, editor of the JPS book Praise Her Works, and co-author of The JGirl's Guide: The Young Jewish Woman's Handbook for Coming of Age (Penina Adelman)

"The midrashim are faithful in style and beautifully written, with enough poetry to lift them and enough common sense to keep them grounded."

Great cover!! I enjoyed the stories and how they were tied together. Needs more on Lilith herself and more good artwork. Enjoyed adding this book to my collection!

I was looking for something that could engage my students and trigger deeper discussion. This does the job.

I love retellings of biblical accounts because different authors bring to light aspects that might not have been considered. "Lilith's Ark" is a book of interconnected short stories that examine the common thread between women in the Book of Genesis. I am a Christian, and I was extremely impressed with this book. Deborah Bodin Cohen is a gifted writer who explores how women relate stories to one another and share similar joy, pain, and love. Women from every generation experience the same insecurities and happiness. I do not necessarily agree with the Lilith story or

the Adam and Eve interpretation. Lilith is not in Scripture. Eve was created to be an equal "helper" for Adam, (symbolized by God fashioning her out of Adam's rib). In Cohen's story Adam hides information from Eve and is domineering. However, all of the other stories were outstanding. My favorite stories were those about Rachel and Leah: each sister gets to tell her own story, and the reader learns of the love and the tension between them. Leah is one of my favorite biblical women, because she is visually impaired like me. God loves all His children, and His compassion and love for Leah always moves me to tears. It is through her lineage that Christ came into the world! Dinah's story was heartwrenching but also hopeful. I loved Tamar's tale a lot because she is gutsy and insists upon her rights. The Bible, contrary to popular opinion, is not a "women-bashing" book. God's Word introduces strong female role models whom God uses to fulfill His purposes. Ms. Cohen also does an exceptional job with the story of Asenath, Joseph's wife. Although the Bible does not say that Asenath was Dinah's daughter, I thought the story was probable and very creative. Ms. Cohen also has an outstanding discussion guide in the back of the book. The author asks relevant questions for today's adolescent girls. "Lilith's Ark" is a wonderful teaching tool that could be used in classrooms and worship services. People of all faiths can enjoy such an eye-opening book. Happy reading and God bless.

According to the author, "Lilith's Ark is a midrash, a story that grows from the Torah text and the imagination." Each chapter features a different biblical character-- starting with Lilith and Eve and continuing with Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Dinah, Tamar and Asenath. After each woman tells her story she places an item in the ark that represents an important aspect of her life. The ark is then passed on to the next generation. The stories are engaging, sensitive and thought provoking, similar to The Red Tent and The Harlot at the Side of the Road, but more appropriately written for teens. For each chapter there are "Discussion Themes

This wonderful story collection tells the story of ten of our biblical foremothers from Lilith to Asenath (Joseph's wife.) Each story begins with a "Hint from the Torah," a phrase about each woman as it is related in the Torah. Then there is a midrashic tale of the woman's experience and finally the woman puts a symbol of her story into the ark so that future generations will come to know her. The midrashic stories are beautifully written and fully expound on the stories we and our children have come to know from reading and studying Torah. There is much here for exploration and discussion. There are never enough story books for young girls about biblical characters. This is a wonderful addition to the shelf as it not only tells the story of a woman from the Hebrew Bible, it also

provides a discussion guide for each story and ideas for how mother-daughter book groups could use this book. It includes ideas for creating their own ark and discussions about what to place in it. I highly recommend this book to Jewish libraries. With the rise of such titles as Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing and The JGirl's Guide, young women of today will have a healthy understanding of life during biblical times and how it was not so very different from our own. REVIEWED BY KATHY BLOOMFIELD (NEWTON, MA)

This lovely gem of a book is a welcome addition to the wealth of Jewish literature, providing young Jewish women with powerful Biblical role models by telling their stories in a relevant and engaging way. I remember feeling alienated from Biblical literature as a teen, since most of the stories centered on men. The female Biblical heroines got short shrift in those days, which distanced me from an appreciation of my heritage. Rabbi Cohen's contribution of Lilith's Ark is a wonderful resource for youth group leaders and religious school teachers who work with adolescent girls. The discussion questions and extensions which accompany each story are of tremendous value to these busy professionals in facilitating discussion groups. It would also make an excellent bat mitzvah gift to increase the recipient's understanding of the heritage she has inherited. This book belongs in any collection accessible to teens and those who love and work with them. (Abbe Krissman, parent, grandparent, and former teacher)

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