



Dedication for First Cup of Wine
Rabbi Martin S. Cohen

Avinu She-ba-shamayim, dear God in Heaven, as we watch on as a huge nation headed by a despot attempts to swallow up a neighboring state merely because it can, we are brought back to a different era not that long ago when a different nation headed by a different despot sought to swallow up neighboring nations large and small merely because it could.

And that memory, for all it terrifies, also energizes.

Ukraine has a long, complicated, and not at all happy, history with its Jewish citizens. We refuse to forget the past, as the Torah commands, and always to remember. But we also understand that the right to self-determination is the basic right of all peoples and that freedom cannot be a prize offered to some but not to all.

Therefore, *Ribono shel Olam*, we pray that You hear the groaning of Ukraine as it endures ruthless and merciless attacks against its citizenry, just as You once heard the Israelites in Egypt when they cried out to You in their misery. And that You prompt the aggressor to open his heart to peace and to understand that, in geopolitics as in life itself, restraint is power and peace is the great end towards which humankind must strive if it is to endure.





All Who Are Hungry
A Prayer for Action, A Prayer for Ukraine
Rabbi Mark Greenspan

On Passover we open our door and invite,
"All who are hungry, all who are in need"
To join us in the celebration of Pesah
We know that we cannot joyfully remember
Our liberation from slavery if others are not free.

An open door is an invitation for the oppressed to join us
But it is also a challenge to go out
And see the suffering of others as Moses did
It is a call to answer modern day Pharaohs
Who oppress and afflict others.

This Passover as we retell the story
Of our slavery and freedom,
As we taste the bitterness of oppression,
And savor the sweetness of liberation
Let us commit ourselves to the people of Ukraine.

Though we lived in their land as strangers
For hundreds of years, they were our neighbors.
In their land, our culture flourished and grew
Their towns and cities became homes
To hasidic dynasties and Yeshivot.

We cannot turn away in anger
We cannot remain silent to injustice
We cannot be indifferent to suffering.

That is not our way! Let us proclaim
That we stand with the oppressed
That our doors and hearts are open
To all who are in need!





Mah Nishtanah - How Is This Night Different?

Rabbi Rachel Ain

As we straddle the time between Purim and Passover we are in a moment where we wonder, from where will salvation come? Will it come from the human hands of Esther, who, when compelled by Mordecai, bravely spoke up on behalf of the Jewish people? Or will redemption come from the presence of God, an entity that acts in history on behalf of people who are crying out for freedom and whose tears we see and feel, and even taste as we dip a vegetable in saltwater? In 2022 it is hard to imagine that it is just one person or that we will be able to see the outstretched arm of God, but what we can do is look for those who are stepping up for people, with their voices, acting in God's ways, to bring redemption to all.

I recently had the honor of traveling to Poland and the Ukrainian border with 17 other rabbis from the NY Area on a UJA Federation Rabbinic Mission. While I was there I realized that the work of our people, the Jewish people, who are coming together to redeem lives through the work of organizations like JFNA, JDC, and JAFI, are helping to elevate the "everyday Esther's" who are realizing that it is their time to make a difference. It is their time to speak up for those who need help. As we drove through the Polish countryside, we couldn't help but picture our more recent Jewish ancestors, those who fled, hid from, and died at the hands of Nazis during the Holocaust.

And with that as the backdrop I have been thinking about Pesah, and the question we are about to ask, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" I suggest we expand that to ask, "How is this **moment** different from all other moments?"

At all (or most) other moments, when Jews were in trouble, we didn't have anywhere to go. At this moment, Jews are able to go to Israel. Israel, as a sovereign country, is able to live out the vision and the values of being a Jewish home. Israel welcomes Ukrainian refugees, especially the direct descendants of Righteous Gentiles. Israel is using its collective voice to bring redemption to many.

As you sit at your seder this year, please ask yourself, "How am I using my voice?" How can I ensure that "this night is a different night" and "this moment is a different moment" for all who seek change?





The Sunflower on Our Seder Table

Rabbi Ilana C. Garber

Pesah, Matzah, and Marror
We know what those symbols are for:
Remember the sacrifice,
Hold sacred the flight,
Taste the bitterness without any delight.

Each year at our seder on the table we see
Items that don't belong traditionally.
We do this to encourage our children to ask,
"What makes this night different?" and
"What is our task?"

We hope the sunflower will spark such a query
So we can explain to the young and the weary
That our sisters and brothers, both Jewish and other
Want to live freely in peace with each other.

So why the sunflower this year on our table?
To pray for those who might not be able
To celebrate Pesah this year as free Jews,
To live in Ukraine however they choose.

We hope in this symbol that our children will learn
That's it's peace we all want, it's for freedom we yearn.
On this seder night we hope and we pray
That God will bring peace to Ukraine today.

So tonight as this sunflower graces our table
Let us pledge to raise funds, to send food if we're able
So the freedom we celebrate and the story we hear
Will inspire us to help others make this a better year.

