

The background of the page is a decorative border featuring various symbols of Passover. It includes several pieces of Matzah (unleavened bread) with different patterns, some featuring the Star of David. There are also pomegranates and green leaves with small red berries scattered throughout. The border is primarily in shades of orange, yellow, and red, with some green foliage. The text is set against a dark blue vertical band on the left side of the page.

Passover 2024

READINGS
THOUGHTS
AND
SUGGESTIONS
TO INCLUDE
UKRAINE IN
YOUR SEDER

**ACTION
FOR POST-SOVIET
JEWRY**

Ukraine still needs you!
Stand with Us This Passover: Support Ukraine Relief Efforts
Mitzrayim—helping those in narrow places:

Mitzrayim, the Hebrew word for Egypt, is also interpreted to mean “narrow places.” At Passover, we celebrate being released from the restrictions that limit us and make our lives smaller.

As we gather around our Seder tables to celebrate Passover, a time of liberation and freedom, it's crucial to remember those who still find themselves trapped in "narrow places". Even as we celebrate freedom, countless individuals in Ukraine continue to endure the oppressive grip of conflict and war.

Since its inception during the Refusenik era of the 1970s, Action for Post-Soviet Jewry (Action-PSJ) has been at the forefront of providing vital assistance and forging essential connections between Jewish communities across Eastern Europe. Our mission remains steadfast: to help those most vulnerable and in need find their path to freedom and safety.

One Heart Two Wars:

While the Jewish community is focused on the escalating crisis in the Middle East, the crisis in Ukraine continues to escalate, with Russia's aggression plunging the region into chaos. Today, the Jewish communities of Ukraine face relentless attacks and unspeakable atrocities, making our support more critical than ever.

Communities served by Action-PSJ, once relatively quiet, are now besieged by the relentless onslaught of war. The elderly, in particular, find themselves increasingly isolated and vulnerable, trapped within their homes by the constant threat of violence. Their plight mirrors the biblical narrative of Mitzrayim as they struggle against the constraints imposed by conflict.

Despite the physical distance between us, we can stand together in solidarity. As we bear witness to the dual tragedies unfolding in Israel and Ukraine, our hearts are heavy with the weight of two wars.

*Cover illustration
by Ukrainian artist
and designer Nadiya
Sadriya. To see more
of her work, view
Indestructible Beauty,
an extraordinary
portfolio by Nadia
commissioned By
Action-PSJ at
www.actionpsj.org*

*While preparing for
Passover, [click here](#)
to enjoy this playlist
of freedom songs
compiled by Joey
Baron, cofounder of
the Boston Jewish
Music Festival and
Jewish Arts
Collaborative.*

Our emergency response efforts include:

Basic healthcare, mental health support, and essential necessities: Providing for the immediate needs of those affected by the conflict, including food, shelter, and medical care.

Telehealth services: Initiating a groundbreaking telehealth program to deliver life-saving healthcare to vulnerable Ukrainians, particularly the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

Art therapy programs: Introducing innovative mental health initiatives to reduce anxiety and provide support to isolated individuals across Ukraine, Israel, and the US.

Warm House program: Reviving our signature community-based approach to celebrating Shabbat and Jewish holidays in even the most isolated communities, demonstrating the resilience of Jewish life.

Ukraine needs you!

But we cannot do this alone. Your support is crucial in ensuring that we can continue to provide aid and comfort to the most vulnerable individuals in Ukraine.

As you gather with your loved ones this Passover, I invite you to include passages from this supplement in your Seder, as a symbol of solidarity with our Ukrainian brothers, sisters, grandparents, and elders who endure the dire and dangerous conditions wrought by Russia's invasion.

Together, let us reaffirm our commitment to freedom and justice and stand united in the face of adversity.

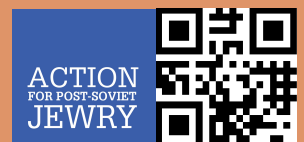
Chag Pesach Sameach



Debbie

Debbie Kardon

Executive Director, Action for Post-Soviet Jewry





SUGGESTED READING – OPENING

WELCOME TO OUR SEDER

This Passover, as we celebrate this festival of freedom, our brothers and sisters in Ukraine bravely resist the Russian invasion in a war to maintain their independence. This is the second year that the Jewish community in Ukraine will observe Passover while war rages around them. Many will gather without heat, electricity, safe shelter, and only limited food available. They will gather to pray for peace and sing freedom songs.

While we gather around this seder table, many of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters are under attack. Surrounded by violence and destruction, the message of Passover will strengthen them and assure them as they fight for freedom. Physically apart yet spiritually together.

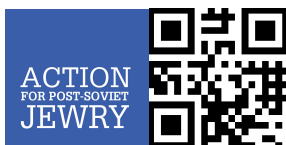
SUGGESTED ADDITION TO THE SEDER PLATE – SUNFLOWERS

Consider adding sunflowers, the national flower of Ukraine, or sunflower seeds to your Seder plate as a symbol of solidarity and remembrance.

The sunflower, Ukraine's national flower, is becoming a symbol of resistance against the country's invasion by Russian forces. Its exuberant and lively form represents the antithesis of the destruction now being suffered by the Ukrainian people.

The situation in Ukraine is desperate-yet; hopefully, the sunflowers will continue to blossom across the country and become a symbol of peace and reconstruction.

from Haggadot.com



SUGGESTED READING BEFORE LIGHTING THE CANDLES

These are the lights of the Passover Seder.
May they illuminate the darkness in which we have walked.

On the First Day, when God began to create the world, darkness covered the face of the deep. These two tapers, while standing apart, mingle their rays to enlighten our path.

To dispel the darkness, God said, "Let there be light."
And there was omnipresent light that emanated from within the Creator of the Universe.

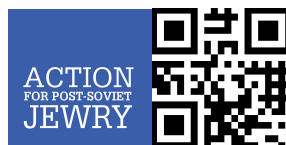
Like these candles, we, too, stand physically apart from our sisters and brothers in Ukraine (the Soviet Union)

Yet the light from their desire for freedom unites with the light from our devotion to their redemption.

Together, we will ensure they make their Exodus from the darkness of fear and oppression to the light of freedom.

As we kindle these lights, may we shed new light on a world seeking peace and enlightenment.

*(Modified from The Freedom Seder
@1991 Action for Soviet Jewry)*





SUGGESTED READING BEFORE THE FIRST CUP OF WINE

A UKRAINIAN PRAYER FOR PEACE

Ukrainian Rabbi Nathan Sternharz (1780-1845) was the chief disciple of the renowned mystic Rabbi Nachman of Breslove. Sternharz wrote this poem 200 years ago, and its words still ring true today.

Let Peace Fill The Earth as Waters Fill The Sea
May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease,
When a great peace will embrace the whole world.
Then nation will not threaten nation,
And humanity will not again know war.
For all who live on earth shall realize
We have not come into being to hate or to destroy.
We have come into being
To praise, to labor, and to love.
Compassionate God, bless the leaders of all nations
With the power of compassion.
Fulfill the promise conveyed in Scripture:
I will bring peace to the Land,
And you shall lie down, and no one shall terrify you.
I will rid the Land of vicious beasts
And it shall not be ravaged by war.
Let love and justice flow like a mighty stream.
Let peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.
And let us say: Amen.

ACTION
FOR POST-SOVIET
JEWRY



A SUPPLEMENTAL READING

HA LACHMA THE BREAD OF NEED

This is not only the bread of our affliction but also the *lechem oni*, the bread of those in dire need.

It's called that because of its purposeful lack of ingredients – only unleavened flour and water, nothing to make it rise, and it must be baked in haste – the food of those with nothing, those who've left everything, in desperate need of a miracle.

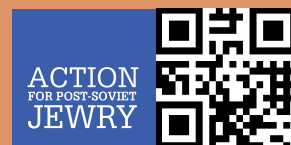
It is the bread we took with us when we rushed out of Egypt to pursue our destiny and our peoplehood — to pursue life.

Eric Lieberman

A SUPPLEMENTAL READING FOR THE TEN PLAGUES

THE ELEVENTH PLAGUE: WAR

As we recall the ten plagues God imposed on the Egyptians, let us consider an 11th plague that we face today: the plague of war. Let's not forget the destruction Russia is imposing on Ukraine tonight. As we celebrate this Seder meal, let us remember that over 8 thousand innocent Ukrainian civilians have died in this heinous war, more than 8 million Ukrainian refugees have left the country, and 5.3 million people, primarily women, and children, have been forced to leave their homes because of the Russian invasion. Those who remain in their homes endure frequent food shortages and long periods without heat, hot water, electricity, and communication. Just as we are asked to imagine that we were the ones who were enslaved people in Egypt, let us try to imagine what it is like to endure the suffering of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters, bubbies and zaydes.



A SUPPLEMENTAL READING

ELIJAH'S CUP

According to Jewish tradition, the Prophet Elijah was a brave person who denounced the slavery and injustice of the day. According to legend, Elijah can appear as anyone and, one day, will return to lead everyone to peace and freedom. We open the door during the Passover Seder in the hope that Elijah will appear and usher in the hope an age of universal peace may soon be at hand.

As you open the door:

Just as it is our responsibility to open the door at the Seder, so does it remain our responsibility to keep the doors of freedom open.

Just as it is our responsibility to keep the doors of freedom open, we must assist Ukrainian Jews to be safe in their homes.

Never again will we allow Jews to be turned away from the doors of freedom and life.

*(Modified from The Freedom Seder
@1991 Action for Soviet Jewry)*

A SUPPLEMENTAL READING FOR THE END OF THE EVENING

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM

Our Jewish family in Ukraine and those defending their country share a single concern — life—a life of safety, freedom, and opportunity for better days.

As we hold them close to our hearts tonight, and remember them here at our seder tables, let us not forget our call to action and recommit ourselves to doing all we can to support and comfort them.

Let's stand with our Ukrainian family as we dedicate ourselves to a world where everyone can live in freedom and peace.

Our Seder ends with a wish, "Next year in Jerusalem!" and let us add next year in peace!

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