

HAGGADAH SUPPLEMENT

The following should be read after singing Dayyenu.

READER: Throughout the year, we remember how despots have sought the exile and annihilation of the Jewish people. At *Pesach*, we tell of Pharaoh. At *Hanukkah*, of Antiochus. At *Purim*, of Haman. At *Yom HaShoah*, of Hitler. We speak of past oppressors, hoping that through awareness we may prevent future tyrants from attaining power.

But we also give thanks for those in every generation who came forward to lead our people out of the darkness. We recognize heroic rescuers from every generation, hoping that the memory of their strength will fortify us if confronted with similar evil.

READER: We remember Moses, who, with both vision and courage, led his people from slavery to freedom. We remember the Maccabees, whose strength and determination saved the Temple and Jewish life in the Land of Israel. We remember Esther, who interceded to save fellow Jews from destruction.

While we commemorate the heroes of the past, we also remember modern heroes who saved Jews from the Holocaust.

TOGETHER: During this dark time, there were those who had the courage to care – non-Jews who risked their lives, and often the lives of their families, to save Jews from death. Just as we tell of Moses leading our people to freedom, at our *Seder* we also tell of contemporary heroes and how they led Jews to their freedom more than sixty-five years ago.

READER: At this Passover *Seder* we recount the story of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Jews in Budapest during the winter of 1944-45. After arriving in Budapest, Hungary, on July 9, 1944, Wallenberg issued *Schutzpässe* (protective passports), which protected the holder from deportation by declaring that he or she was under protection of the Swedish government.

READER: In October 1944, the Germans orchestrated the overthrow of the Hungarian government and the Arrow Cross party, the Hungarian Nazis, took power. The Arrow Cross instigated a reign of terror on the streets of Budapest and supported the Germans' deportation efforts. During this time Wallenberg continued to issue thousands of protective passports and set up safe houses for Jews. Wallenberg worked with diplomats from other embassies to establish an "international ghetto" that came to house some 30,000 Jews.



Raoul Wallenberg

READER: In November-December 1944, between 50,000 to 60,000 Jews were forced to march on foot to the Austrian border. Many were shot along the way. Wallenberg followed the columns of Jews in his car and managed to secure the release of hundreds, and provided trucks to bring them back to Budapest. He also organized checkpoints along the roads out of Budapest and at the border crossing. He instructed members of his staff to demand the release of those carrying protective passports.

READER: Wallenberg was warned by Hungarian and German officials to stop his activities. He continued relentlessly until January 1945 when the Soviet army liberated Budapest.

READER: Because of the bravery and ingenuity of Raoul Wallenberg, he prevented tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from being deported and killed.

TOGETHER: Let the story of Raoul Wallenberg inspire us to do right when faced with evil.

READER: How can we pass this spirit on to future generations?

READER: First, let us honor rescuers like Raoul Wallenberg by learning from their deeds and dedicating ourselves anew to fulfilling the traditional Jewish commandment to be responsible for the safety and well-being of our neighbors.

READER: Second, let us also honor these rescuers by dedicating ourselves to assisting those among them who need our help. As Jews, we must ensure that these heroes live out their remaining years in dignity – with adequate food, medicine and housing. We have the ability to make an enormous difference in their lives.

READER: Tonight, let us commit to learning the stories of these righteous men and women who saved thousands of our people from death. Let us also commit to making these stories a part of our *Seder*. As we recall those who rose up against us in every generation, let us also remember those who stood apart from the evil. On this night of Passover, we recall Shifra and Puah, the two Egyptian midwives who defied Pharaoh's edict to drown the male children of Israel in the Nile. We recall the daughter of Pharaoh who violated her father's decree to drown the infants and who reached out to save Moses. Just as we remember and praise these first rescuers of Jewish children, let us ensure that the stories of those non-Jews who rescued Jewish children and adults during the Holocaust are remembered and passed down to our children and our children's children.

A postscript to the Raoul Wallenberg rescue story – On January 17, 1945, Raoul Wallenberg set out to meet with Soviet officials. He hoped to return with food and medicine for the more than 100,000 surviving Jews. He was arrested and imprisoned by Soviet authorities and was never seen again. It is believed Raoul Wallenberg died in a Soviet prison.

The deportation of Hungarian Jews began in April 1944, seventy years ago. We thought it appropriate to feature the story of Raoul Wallenberg this Passover.

About the JFR – The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) was established in 1986 by Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis to fulfill the traditional Jewish commitment to *hakarat hatov*, the searching out and recognition of goodness. The JFR honors and supports Righteous Gentiles, non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. The Foundation provides monthly support to some 600 aged and needy Christian rescuers in 21 countries. Through its national education program, the Foundation also preserves the legacy of the Righteous and educates teachers and students about the history of the Holocaust.

In the past eighteen years, the JFR has distributed more than \$34 million to aged and needy rescuers. We must continue to thank and support these extraordinary individuals who were the lone lights in the darkness.

In sharing the stories of the Righteous, we strive not only to honor their place in history, but also to stress the importance of their example for these times. These men and women remind us that in the midst of unspeakable evil, each human being has the capacity to act humanely and to make a difference, a lesson that is often eclipsed by the legacy of hatred, brutality, and suffering that dominates contemplation of the Holocaust.

For more information about the work of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous or to learn more about other rescuers, like Raoul Wallenberg, please visit our website at www.jfr.org or contact us at the address listed below.

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