

# THE JEWISH FOUNDATION *for the righteous*

"WHOEVER SAVES A SINGLE LIFE IS AS IF ONE SAVES THE ENTIRE WORLD."—TALMUD

## 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.

Nevertheless, 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 seventy-five years ago.

**READER:** At this Passover Seder, we recount the story of the Weglowski family from Poland who saved members of the Wexler and Weinstein families.

**READER:** Jacob Wexler owned a mill that was located on the farm of Florian and Maria Weglowski in the village of Stara Huta, Poland (now Ukraine). Because it was too far for Jacob to travel each day from where his family lived in Ludwipol to the Weglowski farm, Jacob moved into the Weglowski home with his wife, Chana, and daughter, Mira. Florian and Maria had three children, Helena, Leonia, and Stanislaw. When the war broke out in 1939, the area was first occupied by the Soviets. In June 1941, Germany invaded and life changed for the Wexler family. In late summer 1941, Jews from Ludwipol and the surrounding villages, including the Wexler family, were forced into the newly created Ludwipol ghetto.

**READER:** In August 1942, the Germans began the liquidation of the Ludwipol ghetto. Jacob Wexler was killed by the Germans in an *Aktion* on August 24, 1942. Chana Wexler decided their only chance of survival was to flee the ghetto. Chana, Mira, and Jacob's brother, Joseph, escaped from the ghetto. They ran across the bridge to the woods on the outside of town and made their way to the Weglowski farm. The Weglowski family took in Mira and Chana. Joseph had already smuggled his wife out of the ghetto; he joined her where she was hiding with Florian Weglowski's brother, Franciszek.



*Leonia, Stanislaw, and Helena  
Weglowski*

**READER:** Because everyone in the village knew how close Jacob Wexler and his family were with the Weglowski family, it was too dangerous for Mira and Chana to stay with the Weglowski family permanently. Mira and Chana would go back and forth between hiding in the nearby woods and the Weglowski farm; they would often sleep in pits on the farm. When Mira and Chana were hiding in the woods or in the pits, Helena and Stanislaw would bring food to Mira and Chana. This is how Mira and Chana lived for two years – going back and forth between the woods and the Weglowski home.

**READER:** Florian, Maria and their children, Helena, Leonia, and Stanislaw, put their lives in jeopardy every day. Everyone knew if the Germans discovered they were helping Jews, the Weglowski family would be killed along with Mira and Chana. The Weglowski family also helped Mira's young cousins, Sam and Sylvia Weinstein, whose parents were killed in the

liquidation of the Ludwipol ghetto. Sam and Sylvia escaped from the Ludwipol ghetto and sought out the Weglowski family. Although Sam and Sylvia stayed in a number of places, they spent most of their time in hiding with Florian's brother.

**READER:** After the war, Chana and Mira went to Brazil. Joseph and his wife, along with Sam and Sylvia, went to Canada. The Russians forced the Weglowski family to leave their home in Stara Huta. Maria, Florian, and Leonia Weglowski died years ago. Stanislaw Weglowski passed away on November 23, 2020. Helena is in her 90s and lives in Ilawa, Poland.

**TOGETHER:** Let the story of the Weglowski family inspire us to do right when faced with evil.

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

**READER:** Let us honor rescuers like the Weglowski family 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:** 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 each 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 Jews 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 WEGLOWSKI FAMILY'S RESCUE STORY

The JFR reunited Helena with Mira at its annual dinner in December 2014, they had not seen each other since the end of the war. The documentary retelling their story can be viewed on the JFR website – [www.jfr.org/reunion/2014](http://www.jfr.org/reunion/2014).

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**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, Christians and Muslims, who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. The Foundation provides monthly support to more than 140 aged and needy rescuers in 14 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 thirty years, the JFR has distributed more than \$43 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 about other rescuers like the Weglowski family, please visit our website at [www.jfr.org](http://www.jfr.org) or contact us at the address listed below.*