



Jewish Community Center of Paramus
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A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Arthur Weiner

Friday, March 11, 2022 ~ Parsha: Vayikra
Shabbat Zachor

This Video about Ukraine is Worth 55 Minutes of Your Time

Dear JCCP/CBT family,

Over the past 26 years I have asked the congregation to donate for immediate humanitarian concerns on dozens of occasions. Whether the need was overseas or right here in the United States, you have always responded when I asked you to support relief efforts for those who were suffering from famine, droughts, hurricanes, or earthquakes. Two weeks ago, I asked for your help for the Jews of Ukraine. Once again, you have responded generously. Sadly, as I write to you today, the need remains great.

Each day the news from Ukraine grows worse. Russia's senseless, illegal, and unjust war in Ukraine has caused unbelievable suffering, with many observers comparing the destruction and upheaval to World War II. Thousands have been killed. Indiscriminate missile attacks have destroyed homes, businesses, critical infrastructure and hospitals. Millions are internally displaced, and almost 2 million people have fled Ukraine, at the rate of over 90,000 per day. The scope of the suffering is unimaginable. Does the money we send really help?

On Tuesday afternoon, I attended a special briefing on Zoom for Jewish leaders and communal professionals sponsored by the UJA Federation of New York. Five leaders of different Jewish organizations that are coordinating relief efforts on the ground in the Ukraine gave first-hand accounts of the work that their organizations are accomplishing. It's sad, even hard to watch. Yet at the same time, we should be proud of the amazing Jewish organizations that have for years been doing this type of work in Europe and throughout the world, the very organizations that I have asked you to contribute to in the past when real disasters demanded our help.

I want you to watch this video, and read the description of the work these organizations are doing. I'll warn you in advance that it is 55 minutes. But take the time to watch it anyway, or even part of it. You will see something that you don't always have a chance to see when I or any other worthy organization asks for your financial help. You will see how your donations are making a critical difference right now in the lives of Ukrainian Jews, and their fellow Ukrainians whose valiant efforts in the face of Russian aggression have truly captivated the world.

Here is the link to the video: <https://www.ujafedny.org/ukraine-crisis>

In our siddur, there is a prayer for peace that we recite occasionally on Shabbat.

*May we see the day when war and blood shed cease,
When a great peace will embrace the whole world.*

It's a prayer that all of us can embrace, yet at the same time we recognize that the great vision imagined in this prayer is beyond our grasp at this difficult moment. So, until that blessed day, we must consider what we must do to keep our own nation free, strong and democratic. We must call upon our elected officials to stand with Ukraine and her people and provide them with the means, resources, diplomatic support, and weapons to defend themselves against Russian domination. We must continue to support the many outstanding organizations who are providing food, shelter, clothing, medicine, transportation and so many other vital services at this time.

Please watch the video and learn what your donations are helping to accomplish. And then, if possible, give a little more.

Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Arthur Weiner