A Special Reading for Ukraine’s Jews

To be read after we raise the matzah the first time:

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.

Our Jewish family in Ukraine and those who are fleeing the country share in a single concern — life. A life of safety, of freedom, and of opportunity for better days.

As we hold them close to our hearts tonight, and remember them here at our seder tables, let us do all we can to support and comfort them — in cities under bombardment and at the borders swelling with their numbers — and to build a future whose course we shape with every act of kindness.

We do this because all Jews are responsible for one another, embodying the mighty hand and outstretched arm that has delivered our people throughout time.