

I. Ukraine's History with the Jews



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Between 1941 and 1944, more than a million Jews living in the Soviet Union were murdered by Nazi Germany's "Final Solution" extermination policies. Most of them were killed in Ukraine because most pre-WWII Soviet Jews lived in the Pale of Settlement, of which Ukraine was the biggest part.

Prayer focus: Forgiveness and healing over Ukraine and the land of Europe.

A 2020 demographic study of European Jewry puts the number of Ukrainians who identify as Jews at 43,000. But some estimates of people with Jewish ancestry quadruple that number.

Prayer focus: Salvation of the Jews in Ukraine and for their return to the land of Israel.

Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelenskyy was born to Jewish parents on 25 January 1978 in Kryvyi Rih, then in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Prayer focus: Salvation of President Zelenskyy and his family.

"To end the war we must win it, there are no other options" — this is the conclusion of Aleksandr Kofman, leader of the pro-Russian separatists in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), established in East Ukraine eight years ago.

Prayer focus: Salvation of Aleksandr Kofman and that he can see the dark spirit that has deceived the Russian leaders and much of their country.

Israel is prepared for a "significant" wave of immigration as a result of the war in Ukraine, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said on Sunday.

Prayer focus: For the Ukrainian Jews to be received and settled in the land of Israel.

II. Russia and Israel

Putin has made considerable efforts to reach out to Russian Jewish communities, both within his state's borders and in Israel. His country's chief rabbi, Berel Lazar, is a close confidante.

Prayer focus: Protection of the Jews living in Russia, and for their salvation and return to the land of Israel.

When met with legitimate accusations of historical Soviet and contemporary Russian anti-Semitism, Putin has shifted blame elsewhere, particularly on the Ukrainians.

Prayer focus: That truth and light is revealed, and the world sees the darkness that has come over the Russian leaders and much of their country.

On Monday, Lapid issued a statement saying that Israel would vote with the United States in the General Assembly in favor of the resolution, while holding off on supporting sanctions against Russia.

Prayer focus: That Israel continues to position itself as a strong ally of the United States.

Israel, he said, has "liberal democratic values," but also, he told the Jerusalem Post, other considerations. "We have a kind of border with Russia," he said, by which he meant the northern border with Syria, where Russian diplomats and advisers have been increasingly entrenched since the beginning of the civil war in that nation.

Prayer focus: Spiritual discernment and clarity of the Jewish people and the unity of their government.

"With Russia virtually controlling the Syrian border, it has allowed Israel to act against Iranian armaments in the area without retribution--a stance that could prove catastrophic if denied at

any time. This unique situation has led to a delicate balancing act for the Israeli government. The more this battle continues--and the need for actions and not just words will be expected by the United States vis-à-vis Israel--Jerusalem may be inclined to join a number of moves against Russia, including sanctions, welcoming Ukrainian refugees or even government officials into Israel, or weakening diplomatic relations in some way," he said. "This may cause Russia to challenge Israel's ability to militarily fight from the air in Syria."

Prayer focus: Continued favor with Russia, and that Israel would retain her ability to defend her borders.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett stunned Israelis by paying a surprise visit to Moscow where he spent three hours in talks with Putin. Here are four takeaways:

- Israeli diplomacy is on the map.
- Israel will be better poised to evacuate Jews from the Ukraine.
- Israel will be better poised to influence the Iran nuclear deal.
- This is Bennett's chance to shine.

Prayer focus: That Israel would shine in these dark days and for no antisemitism to rise or retaliation of the enemy to destroy the Jewish people.

III. Israel, Russia and Ukraine

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Bennett, Israel is maintaining continuous contact with Russia and President Putin, as well as with Ukraine and President Zelensky," he said. "We have one goal: to stop the war and prevent more suffering and victims." At the same time, Lapid continued, "we have vital security interests vis-a-vis Russia on our northern border, and we are committed to the safety and security of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Israelis in Russia and Ukraine."

Prayer focus: That Israel's leadership would see truth and light in this conflict, works towards peace and protection of all people, and not make alliances with the realm of darkness.

IV. Europe, Ukraine and Russia

In a televised speech on Wednesday night, French President Emmanuel Macron renewed his calls for an EU army, saying that Europe had entered a "new era" and would need to boost investment in military defense and energy independence. "I want to build a real security dialogue with Russia, which is a country I respect, a European country," Macron said. "But we must have a Europe that can defend itself on its own without relying only on the United States." "Our European defense needs to pass a new stage," Macron said. "We can no longer depend on others and notably on Russian gas to move around, heat ourselves, and make our factories work."

Prayer focus: That Europe's leaders would stay strong and united against evil and pursue peace with all nations, and for the United States to prove itself as a viable leader and partner with the European nations.

The US Department of Defense confirmed that Russia was recruiting Syrians to fight in Ukraine. "We do believe that the accounts of them — the Russians — seeking Syrian fighters to augment their forces in Ukraine, we believe there's truth to that," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told journalists on Monday.

Prayer focus: That Russia's plans for more war and violence would be stopped.

As the U.S. placed 8,500 troops on alert for a possible deployment to Ukraine Monday, fears of a new major conflict arising in Europe abound. Russia has been causing heightened security concerns as it has placed as many 100,000 troops along the border of its Western neighbor, causing concerns the country will invade — something that Russia has denied. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly brought up the topic of NATO, the European-North American military alliance, in connection with Ukraine.

Prayer focus: Protection, safety, and peace for the European nations.

V. Turkey, Israel and Ukraine

The Turkish government has designated the Russian invasion as a "war," giving it the right under the 1936 Montreux Convention to close the Bosphorus Strait—which leads to the Black Sea—to warships.

Prayer focus: For Turkey to stay aligned with its western allies and Israel and protect the Black Sea from Russian incursion.

Turkey—like other countries including Israel—has sought a strategically defensible but morally questionable middle ground. Though Turkey voted for a UN General Assembly resolution condemning Russia, it has not sanctioned Russia or closed its airspace to Russian aircraft. Both Israel and Turkey oppose the Russian invasion but are tempering their criticisms for fear of antagonizing Moscow and jeopardizing strategic interests.

Prayer focus: That Turkey and Israel would discern and seek truth, and partner to achieve peace and stability in this region.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog landed in Turkey on Wednesday for a 24-hour visit that hopes to warm up strained relations. The bulk of Herzog's time will be spent in discussions with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara. Also on the agenda is a meeting with members of Turkey's Jewish community in Istanbul. Turkey and Israel can work together to carry Israeli natural gas to Europe and the two countries will discuss energy cooperation during talks next month, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying on Friday.

Prayer focus: That Israel and Turkey would rebuild a strong partnership, one that focuses on advancing peace and stability in the region, and economic prosperity for both countries.

VI. Saudi Arabia, UAE and United States

The administration of President Joe Biden has formally delisted Yemen's Houthi movement as a "foreign terrorist organization" and "Specially Designated Global Terrorists", undoing the last-minute move under former President Donald Trump that the United Nations and aid groups said threatened to further devastate the war-torn country. A new front of the Cold War has developed – strained relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, UAE could impact American oil supply. Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates leaders are not taking the US President Joe Biden's phone calls.

Prayer focus: That the United States would recognize the evil forces at play in the Middle East, and side with light and truth to perverse peace and stability for this region.

VII. Global Implications of Ukraine Crisis

Under normal conditions, Ukraine exports tremendous amounts of food and is considered to be one of the most important "breadbaskets" on the entire planet. Ukrainian farmers have been forced to neglect their fields as millions flee, fight, or try to stay alive. Ports are shut down that send wheat and other food staples worldwide to be made into bread, noodles, and animal feed. And there are worries Russia, another agricultural powerhouse, could have its grain exports upended by Western sanctions.

Prayer focus: No food shortages, hunger, poverty, sickness, or death to plague the world from this war.

VIII. China, Russia and Ukraine

China's Foreign Minister on Monday called Russia Beijing's "most important strategic partner," amid its continued refusal to condemn the invasion of Ukraine. "No matter how perilous the international landscape, we will maintain our strategic focus and promote the development of a comprehensive China-Russia partnership in the new era," Wang said. "The friendship between the two peoples is iron clad."

Prayer focus: That Russia and China would seek peace and normalize their relationships with all nations.

IX. Israel and Iran

Russia's top representative at ongoing nuclear negotiations in Vienna said Iran already secured more concessions than Moscow and other powers expected. "There was no united front against Iran," he explained, implying that both Russia and China were inclined toward the Iranian position. The United States has participated in the talks indirectly, having withdrawn from the original agreement in 2018. "Iran is not an alien for us," he asserted. "It is a neighbor with whom we want to develop an active trade and economic relations." He described Russia and Iran as "natural allies."

Prayer focus: That Iran's evil plans will fail and be utterly stopped.

Israel's defense minister said on Monday that the time to act on Iran was now, before the ayatollahs' regime was protected by a "nuclear canopy. The world must mobilize to stop Iranian aggression," said Benny Gantz in a post on social media."

Prayer focus: That Israel would use restraint, but also wisdom in knowing exactly when and how to stop Iran from developing weapons of mass destruction.

X. Rabbinic Prophetic Warnings

Rabbi Yekutiel Fish, a prominent Jerusalem mystic, stated unequivocally that the current war in Ukraine is the precursor to the pre-Messiah War of Gog and Magog. "In the end of days, the nations that hate Israel will be poised to fight each other," Rabbi Fish explained. "This is certainly the case with Russia and Ukraine, both of which have a long history of hating Jews. "When you hear that the Russians have captured the city of Crimea, you should know that the times of the Messiah have started, that his steps are being heard," the Vilna Gaon told his followers just before his death in 1797. He continued: "And when you hear that the Russians have reached the city of Constantinople (today's Istanbul), you should put on your Shabbat clothes and don't take them off, because it means that the Messiah is about to come any minute."

Prayer focus: While we know from scripture that many wars are coming, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem and all nations.