

An Extraordinary Word for Good

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Nathan Sharansky

When I grew up in Ukraine in the city of Oonetsk, there were people of various nationalities living there.

Their 10 certificates had the word 'Russian,' 'Ukraine,' 'Georgian,' 'Kozaki,' it wasn't that important and there wasn't much of a difference. One thing was important - if it had the word 'Jewish' written on it, that would be as if you had some disease.

We knew nothing about Judaism, except antisemitism and hatred towards us.

That's why no one tried to replace the word 'Russian' or the word 'Ukraine,' in order to get accepted to the university. But if it you had the word 'Jewish' on your 10 papers and you could manage to change that, your chance of getting accepted was so much higher.

I was reminded of this while watching this week how thousands of people are standing at the borders, trying to escape the tragedy in Ukraine. They stand there day and night, and there's only one word today that can help them get out: "Jewish." If you are a Jew - there are Jews outside who care for you, there is someone on the other side of the border looking for you, your chance of getting out is so much higher.

The world I knew has been turned upside down. When I was a child 'Jewish' was an extraordinary bad word, no one was jealous of us! Today at the border of Ukraine, 'Jewish' is an extraordinary word for good, it describes people who have somewhere to go and there's an entire nation - their family, waiting for them outside.