

Alternative Prayer for Our Country

Our God and God of our ancestors, grant to our country the will and wherewithal to fulfill its calling to justice, liberty, and equality.

May each of us fulfill our responsibilities of citizenship with care, generosity, and gratitude, ever conscious of the extraordinary blessing of freedom, ever mindful of our duties to one another. Bless those who volunteer to labor on behalf of us all; may they find the strength and courage to complete their tasks and fulfill their dreams.

May our judges, elected leaders, and all who hold public office exercise their responsibilities with wisdom, fairness, and justice for all. Fill them with love and kindness, and bless them that they may walk with integrity on the paths of peace and righteousness.

Creator and protector of all, watch over our armed forces and all those entrusted with our safety, as they daily put their lives at risk to protect us and our freedoms. Be with them in times of danger; give them courage to act with honor and dignity, as well as insight to do what is right in Your eyes.

Fill us all with the gifts of love and courage, that we may create a world that reflects Your glory. May we each respond to the charge of Your prophet, "For what does Adonai demand of You—but to act justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with Your God" (Micah 6:8). May the one who brings peace on high bring peace and prosperity to our world and keep us in safety. And let us say: *Amen*.

A Prayer for the Renewal of Creation

Master of the universe, in whose hand is the breath of all life and the soul of every person, grant us the gift of Shabbat, a day of rest from all our labors. With all of our senses may we perceive the glory of Your works. Fill us with Your goodness, that we may attest to Your great deeds. Strengthen us to become Your faithful partners, preserving the world for the sake of future generations. ► ADONAI our God and God of our ancestors, may it be Your will to renew Your blessing of the world in our day, as You have done from the beginning of time.

A Prayer for Our Country

Our God and God of our ancestors, with mercy accept our prayer on behalf of our country and its government. Pour out Your blessing upon this land, upon its inhabitants, upon its leaders, its judges, officers, and officials, who faithfully devote themselves to the needs of the public. Help them understand the rules of justice You have decreed, so that peace and security, happiness and freedom, will never depart from our land.

ADONAI, God whose spirit is in all creatures, we pray that Your spirit be awakened within all the inhabitants of our land. Uproot from our hearts hatred and malice, jealousy and strife. Plant love and companionship, peace and friendship, among the many peoples and faiths who dwell in our nation. Grant us the knowledge to judge justly, the wisdom to act with compassion, and the understanding and courage to root out poverty from our land.

May it be Your will that our land be a blessing to all who dwell on earth, and may You cause all peoples to dwell in friendship and freedom. Speedily fulfill the vision of Your prophets: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." "For all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall know Me." And let us say: *Amen*.

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תפלה לשלום הארץ

רבונו של עולם, אשר בידך נפש כל־חי ורוח כל־בשר איש, הנחילנו שבת מנוחה, יום לשבות בו מכל־מלאכה. בכל־תחושה, נפיר ונדע את־הוד יצירתך. שבענו מטובך שנהיה עדים לגדל מעשיך. חזקנו להיות עמך שותפים נאמנים, לשמור על עולמך בעבור הדורות הבאים. ◀ יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו, שתברך את־עולמך בימינו בימי קדם.

תפלה לשלום המדינה

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו, קבל נא ברחמים את־תפלתנו בעד ארצנו וממשלתה. הרק את־ברכתך על הארץ הזאת, על תושביה, על ראשה, שופטיה, ופקידיה העוסקים בצרכי צבור באמונה. הבינם משפטי צדקך למען לא יסורו מארצנו שלום ושלום, אשר וחפש כל־הימים.

אנא יהוה, אלהי הרוחות לכל־בשר, שלח רוחך על כל־תושבי ארצנו. עקר מלבנו שנאה ואיבה, קנאה ותחרות, וטע בין בני האמות והאמונות השונות השוכנים בה אהבה ואחווה, שלום ורעות. כי עד צדק ישוב משפט בבתי דיננו, וחננו מאתך דעה לשפט בצדק ובבינה, לפעל בחסד וברחמים, בשכל טוב ובאמץ לב, לעקור עניות מארצנו.

ובכן יהי רצון מלפניך שתהי ארצנו ברכה לכל־יושבי תבל, ותשרה ביניהם רעות וחירות, וקים במהרה חזון נביאך: לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה. ונאמר: כי כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ועד גדולם. ונאמר אמן.

Whereas earlier prayers asked that the monarch be compassionate to the Jewish people, this prayer expresses the hope that the leaders of the country will be fair and just to all, helping to bring the world closer to a vision of peace and justice. The prayer ends with two prophetic verses: Isaiah 2:4 ("Nation shall not lift up sword...") and Jeremiah 31:33 ("For all of them ...").

PRAYER FOR THE RENEWAL OF CREATION. Concerns about our environment are as much a part of our consciousness as are the issues that were historically raised in this part of the service. This prayer, written by Daniel Nevins, expresses the hope that by ceasing to labor on Shabbat, by being able to appreciate and be grateful for life and its gifts, we will increase our awareness of the need to be responsible caretakers of the natural world.

PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY. It has been customary since medieval times to include in the liturgy a prayer for the welfare of the government. Secure governments were seen as providing safety for the Jewish community, and a biblical warrant for such prayers was found in Jeremiah's instruction to Israel to "seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to Adonai on its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper" (29:7). Early versions of this prayer referred to God as "the one who gives dominion to kings" and reflected the anxiety that Jews felt as a beleaguered minority. The text here is based on a prayer composed in the 1920s by Professor Louis Ginzberg, which transforms what had formerly been "A Prayer for the Government" into "A Prayer for Our Country" and for its people, the source of authority in a democracy.

*A Prayer for the
State of Israel*

רבונו של עולם, קבל
נא ברחמים וברצון
את תפלותינו בעד
מדינת ישראל.

Sovereign of the universe,
accept in lovingkindness
and with favor our prayers
for the State of Israel, her
government, and all who
dwell within her boundar-
ies and under her authority.
Open our eyes and our
hearts to the wonder of
Israel, and strengthen our
faith in Your power to
work redemption in every
human soul. Grant us also
the fortitude to keep ever
before us those ideals upon
which the State of Israel
was founded. Grant cour-
age, wisdom, and strength
to those entrusted with
guiding Israel's destiny
to do Your will. Be with
those on whose shoulders
Israel's safety depends and
defend them from all harm.
Spread over Israel and all
the world Your shelter of
peace, and may the vision
of Your prophet soon be
fulfilled: "Nation shall not
lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war
anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב
ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה.

A Prayer for the State of Israel

Avinu she-ba-shamayim, stronghold and redeemer of the
people Israel: Bless the State of Israel, [that it may be] the
beginning of our redemption. Shield it with Your love; spread
over it the shelter of Your peace. Guide its leaders and advi-
sors with Your light and Your truth. Help them with Your
good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our
holy land. Deliver them; crown their efforts with triumph.
Bless the land with peace and its inhabitants with lasting joy.
And let us say: *Amen*.

*Avinu she-ba-shamayim, tzur yisrael v'go-alo, bareikh et m'dinat
yisrael [she-t'hei] reishit tz'miḥat ge'ulateinu. Hagen aleha
b'evrat ḥasdekha u-f'ros aleha sukkat sh'lomekha, u-sh'lah or'kha
va-amit'kha l'rasheha sareha v'yo-atzeha, v'takneim b'eitzah tova
milfanekha. Hazeik et y'dei m'ginei eretz kodsheinu, v'hanhileim
eloheinu y'shu'ah, va-ateret nitzahon t'atreim. V'natata shalom
ba-aretz v'simḥat olam l'yosh'veha, v'nomar: amen.*

A Prayer for Peace

May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease,
when a great peace will embrace the whole world.

*Then nation will not threaten nation,
and the human family will not again know war.*

For all who live on earth shall realize
we have not come into being to hate or to destroy.
We have come into being to praise, to labor, and to love.

*Compassionate God, bless the leaders of all nations
with the power of compassion.*

Fulfill the promise conveyed in Scripture:

I will bring peace to the land,
and you shall lie down and no one shall terrify you.

*I will rid the land of vicious beasts
and it shall not be ravaged by war.*

Let justice and righteousness flow like a mighty stream.
Let God's peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.
And let us say: *Amen*.

תפלה לשלום מדינת ישראל

אבינו שבשמים, צור ישראל וגואלו, ברח את מדינת
ישראל [שתהא] ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו. הגן עליה
באברת חסדך ופרש עליה ספת שלומך, ושלח אורך
ואמתך לראשיה שריה ויועציה, ותקנם בעצה טובה
מלפניה. חזק את ידי מגיני ארץ קדשנו, והנחילם
אלהינו ישועה, ועטרת נצחון תעטרים. ונתת שלום
בארץ ושמחת עולם ליושביה, ונאמר: אמן.

תפלה לשלום

יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו,
שתבטל מלחמות ושפיכות דמים מן העולם
ותשפין שלום בעולם,
ולא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה.

יכירו וידעו כל יושבי תבל
שלא באנו לעולם בשביל ריב ומחלוקת,
ולא בשביל שנאה וקנאה וקנאתור ושפיכות דמים.
רק באנו לעולם כדי להפיר אותך, תתברך לנצח.

ובכן תרחם עלינו ויקים בנו מקרא שפתוב:
ונתתי שלום בארץ ושכבתם ואין מחריה
והשפתי חיה רעה מן הארץ וחרב לא תעבר בארצכם.
ויגל כמים משפט, וצדקה בנחל איתן.
כי מלאה הארץ דעה אתיהוה כמים לים מכסים.

**PRAYER FOR THE STATE OF
ISRAEL.** Upon Israel's inde-
pendence in 1948, many
prayers were circulated
for the well-being of the
new state. This one was
composed by Israel's chief
rabbis and was then slightly
edited by the writer
S.Y. Agnon.

שְׁתֵּהא THAT IT MAY BE
This Hebrew word was
added by the Chief Rabbi
of England, Immanuel Jako-
bovits, turning the phrase
"the beginning of the re-
demption" into an expres-
sion of hope, rather than a
statement of fact.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE.
Rabbi Nathan Sternharz,
a student of the Hasidic
master Nahman of Bratzlav
(1772–1810, Ukraine),
recorded this prayer. The
version here has been
adapted and translated by
Jules Harlow.

NATION WILL NOT THREATEN
לא ישא גוי. Isaiah 2:4.

I WILL BRING PEACE ונתתי
שלום. Leviticus 26:6.

**LET JUSTICE AND RIGH-
TEOUSNESS FLOW** ויגל כמים
משפט. Amos 5:24.

FILL THE EARTH כי מלאה
הארץ. Isaiah 11:9.

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