

A Prayer for the United States of America

By Rabbi Michael Knopf



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Our God and God of our ancestors, bless and protect the United States of America and secure, strengthen, and advance the ideals and institutions that are its pride and its glory.

Guide our leaders and officials to see Your image in all people. Embolden them to give “to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance,”¹ and empower them to uphold the cause of the “plundered poor”² and the passed over, the vulnerable and the marginalized, the homeless and the tempest-tost³, ensuring equal opportunity and justice for all, eradicating oppression in all its forms, both within and beyond our borders.

Grant our leaders strength to discharge the duties of their offices with honesty and integrity, withstanding the temptations that “blind the clear-sighted and subvert the cause of the righteous.”⁴ Help them “see the right,” grant them “firmness in the right,” and give them courage always to do what is right.⁵

Help us all remain mindful of the extraordinary gift of freedom, attained by our ancestors at great expenditures of toil and blood, that we have been blessed to inherit. Work through us so that we may dutifully fulfill our responsibilities to one another as a self-governing people. Where we see degradation or persecution,

move us to march. Where we see tyranny, rally us to resist. And when we feel despair, grant us the audacity to hope.⁶

Enable us to remember that, regardless of the shade of our skin or the place of our origin,; regardless of whether we were born in privilege or in poverty,; regardless of the anatomy with which we were born or the language we speak; regardless of our gender identity or our sexual orientation, we are all siblings, called upon by our Heavenly Parent to safeguard one another and to dwell together in peace.⁷

Ready us to join together in that spirit, so that together we may make “justice well up like water, and righteousness like an unfailing stream” (Amos 5:24), and speedily bring about the day when “nation will not take up sword against nation, and they will never again know war” (Isaiah 2:4).

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to You.

And let us say, “Amen.”

¹George Washington, Letter to Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island

²Abraham Joshua Heschel, “My Reasons for Involvement in the Peace Movement”

³Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus”

⁴Exodus 23:8

⁵Abraham Lincoln, 2nd Inaugural Address

⁶Barack Obama, The Audacity of Hope

⁷Psalms 133:1



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A Prayer for the State of Israel

By Rabbi David Seidenberg (Edited by Rabbi Michael Knopf)



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Our Nurturer, our Parent, in heaven and on Earth, Rock of Israel and its redeemer, bless the State of Israel, so that she may become the beginning of the flowering of our redemption.

Shield her with Your embrace of love and spread over her Your sukkah of peace, and send Your light and Your righteousness to her heads, ministers, advisers, and judges, and to the nation that elects them, and align them all with the spirit of justice from You, as it says, “Zion through justice will be redeemed and her captives through righteousness.” (Isaiah 1:27)

Rescue all of the land, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, from the spilling of blood, and all residing and sojourning there, under every government, from enemies without and from hatred within.

Grant peace in the land, and secure calm to her defenders, lasting joy to all her inhabitants, and real hope for all her peoples.

And let us say: Amen.



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