

Prayer for the state of Israel ☆ תפילה לשלום המדינה

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The traditional prayer for the state of Israel, which is more literally titled “A Prayer for Peace for the State” *tefilah lish'lom hamedinah*, was written in 1948 by the chief rabbis of what had up until then been Palestine, in a time of war. The state was under direct attack by the Arab armies, and there was little distinction between peace, survival, and victory.

As we approach Israel's 70th birthday, it is time to make such distinctions. Israel and the Jewish people live in a much more complex reality today, a democratic reality, where the triumph of one political party or set of goals can change the outlook for peace, and the possibility of justice. In our time, praying for peace for Israel must include praying for the rectification of its relationships with neighboring countries, and with the Palestinian people, some of whom are Israeli citizens, and most of whom are in some way under Israel's control.

This prayer assumes that the best reality for the Jewish state is also the best reality for all of her citizens and for everyone who lives “in the land,” no matter where they are in relation to the Green Line or Areas A, B and C.

Our nurturer / Our father, 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-shelter 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 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 Your land, from the Jordan River to the sea, from the spilling of blood, and all residing and sojourning there, under every government, from haters without and 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.

Om'neinu/Avinu shebashamayim uva'aretz, Tzur Yisrael v'go'alo, bareikh et m'dinat Yisrael shet'hei l'reishit tz'michat g'ulateinu. Hagein aleha b'evrat chasdekha, ufros aleha sukat sh'lomekha, ush'lach orkha v'tzidkekha l'rasheha sareha yo'atzeha v'shofteha, v'lal'om shebocher bam, v'takneim b'ru'ach mishpat milfanecha, shene'emar, Tziyon b'mishpat tipadeh v'shaveha bitz'dakah. Hatzeil na et kol ar'tzekha bein yardein layam mish'fichut damim, v'khol hayoshvim bah, tachat kol shilton, mison'im bachutz umisin'ah bifnim, v'natata shalom ba'aretz v'shalvah lim'gineha, simchat olam l'khol yoshveha v'tikvah tovah l'khol ameha, v'nomar: Amen.

Underlined phrases are changed from the standard prayer for the state in the siddur (which uses only half the original prayer).

What's left out: “Strengthen the hands of those who defend the land...and crown them with the crown of victory”

Why: This was the only phrase in the original prayer referring to the IDF. In a time of war, we need a full prayer for the protection and success of soldiers, like the *Mi Shebeirakh* prayer used by the IDF. (<http://www.jr.co.il/prayers/hebrew-idf-prayer.htm>) In a less critical time, any hope for the IDF is included in the phrase “grant secure calm (*shalvah*) to her defenders,” which also includes everyone working for peace, justice, and security in the lands of Israel/Palestine and the state of Israel.

Om'neinu is a gender-diverse alternative to *Avinu* derived from *omenet*, one who breastfeeds (see Num 11:12, Rut 4:16, Esth 2:7).

אָמְנֵנוּ | אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאָרֶץ,
צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ, בְּרַךְ אֶת מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל,
שֶׁתְּהֵא לְרֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ.

הִגֵּן עָלֶיךָ בְּאֶבְרַת חַסְדְּךָ, וּפְרַשׁ עָלֶיךָ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ,
וּשְׁלַח אוֹרְךָ וְצִדְקָךָ לְרֵאשִׁיּוֹת שְׂרָיָה יוֹעֲצִיָּה
וְשׁוֹפְטֵיָהּ, וְלִלְאָם שְׁבוּחַת בָּם
וְתַקְנֵם בְּרוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט מִלְּפָנֶיךָ
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר “צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּט תִּפְדֶּה וְשָׁבִיָּה בְּצִדְקָה.”

הַצֵּל נָא אֶת כָּל אֲרָצְךָ בֵּין יַרְדֵּן לַיָּם מִשְׁפִּיכוֹת דָּמִים
וְכָל הַיּוֹשְׁבִים וְהַגֵּרִים בָּהּ תַּחַת כָּל שְׁלֹטוֹן
מִשׁוֹנְאִים בַּחוּץ וּמִשְׁנֹאֵה בְּפָנִים.
וְנַתַּת שְׁלוֹם בְּאָרֶץ וְשְׁלוֹה לְמַגְנֵיָהּ,
שֶׁמַּחַת עוֹלָם לְכָל יוֹשְׁבֵיָהּ וְתַקְוָה טוֹבָה לְכָל עַמִּיָּה,
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