

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.

תַּפְלָה לְשָׁלוֹם הָאָרֶץ
רְבוּנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדְךָ נַפֵּשׁ כָּל־חַי וְרוּחַ כָּל־בָּשָׂר
אִישׁ, הַנְּחִילֵנוּ שָׁבֹת מְנוּחָה, יוֹם לְשָׁבוֹת בּוֹ מִכָּל־
מְלָאכָה. בְּכָל־תְּחוּשָׁה, נִפְּרִי וְנִדַּע אֶת־הוֹד וְיִצִּירְתָּךְ.
שְׂבַעְנוּ מִטּוֹבְךָ שְׁנֵהִיָּה עֲדִים לְגָדֹל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ. חֲזַקְנוּ
לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּךְ שׁוֹתֵפִים נְאֻמָּנִים, לְשִׁמּוֹר עַל עוֹלָמְךָ
בְּעִבּוֹר הַדּוֹרוֹת הַבָּאִים. ◀ יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאַמּוּתֵינוּ, שֶׁתְּבָרֵךְ אֶת־עוֹלָמְךָ
בְּיָמֵינוּ כִּימֵי קָדָם.

תַּפְלָה לְשָׁלוֹם הַמְּדִינָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאַמּוּתֵינוּ, קִבֵּל נָא בְּרַחֲמִים
אֶת־תַּפְלָתֵנוּ בְּעֵד אֲרָצֵנוּ וּמִמְשָׁלָתָהּ. הִרָק אֶת־בְּרַכְתְּךָ
עַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת, עַל תּוֹשְׁבֶיהָ, עַל רֹאשָׁהּ, שׁוֹפְטֶיהָ,
וּפְקִידֶיהָ הָעוֹסְקִים בְּצָרְכֶי צִבּוֹר בְּאַמּוּנָה. הַבִּינֵם
מִשְׁפָּטֵי צִדְקָךְ לְמַעַן לֹא יִסּוּרוּ מֵאַרְצֵנוּ שָׁלוֹם וְשִׁלְוָה,
אֲשֶׁר וְחַפֵּשׁ כָּל־הַיָּמִים.

אָנָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחוֹת לְכָל־בָּשָׂר, שְׁלַח רוּחְךָ עַל
כָּל־תּוֹשְׁבֵי אֲרָצֵנוּ. עֲקֹר מִלִּבֵּנוּ שִׁנְאָה וְאִי־בָהּ, קִנְאָה
וְתַחְרוּת, וְטַע בֵּין בְּנֵי הָאֻמוֹת וְהָאֻמוֹנוֹת הַשּׁוֹנוֹת
הַשּׁוֹכְנִים בָּהּ אֶהְבָּה וְאַחֲוָה, שָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת. כִּי עַד צִדְקָ
יִשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט בְּבִתִּי דִינִנּוּ, וְחַנּוּנוּ מֵאַתָּה דַּעַה לְשִׁפְט
בְּצִדָּק וּבִבְיָנָה, לַפֶּעַל בְּחֹסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים, בְּשֹׁכֵל טוֹב
וּבְאַמֶּץ לֵב, לַעֲקוֹר עֲנִיּוֹת מֵאַרְצֵנוּ.

וּבְכוּן יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ שְׁתֵּהִי אֲרָצֵנוּ בְּרָכָה לְכָל־יּוֹשְׁבֵי
תֵּבֵל, וְתִשָּׂרָה בִּינֵיהֶם רַעוּת וְחִירוּת, וְקַיָּם בְּמִהְרָה
חֲזוֹן נְבִיאֶיךָ: לֹא יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל גּוֹי חָרֵב וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד
מִלְחָמָה. וְנֹאמַר: כִּי כּוֹלָם יִדְעוּ אוֹתִי לְמִקְטָנָם וְעַד
גְּדוֹלָם. וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

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 . . .").

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*.

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*.