



## A Prayer for Ukraine, by Chaya Kaplan Lester (2022)

Contributor(s): Chaya Kaplan-Lester

Shared on: 24 February 2022 under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike \(CC BY-SA\) 4.0 International](#) copyleft license

Categories: Conflicts over Sovereignty and Dispossession, War

Tags: 21st century C.E., 58th century A.M., Prayers as poems, English vernacular prayer, Chess, 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine

[Bookmark 0](#)[Table options](#)[Contribute a translation](#) | [Source \(English\)](#)

Dear God of chess games  
 turned long-range  
 missiles,  
 fateful tanks  
 and heavy metals

Let our prayers  
 be likewise geared  
 for long-range impact  
 and great precision  
 to protect the innocent  
 from invasion  
 and division

For suddenly the game has changed...

Another match  
 just like we played last  
 season and the last...  
 in fierce competition, yes,  
 but a theoretical game of chess  
 none the less...

Until today  
 when these wooden figures  
 turned flesh and bone and tender  
 When suddenly the tactics are tactile  
 made of real fire,  
 no fiction in shrapnel

For these chess pieces bleed...  
 the rooks buckle under pressure  
 and bishops bend break shatter  
 pawns blasted  
 asunder by another  
 monster and another

And the bloodied board has begun to drip  
 onto the carpet  
 that keeps getting pulled out  
 from beneath our feet  
 and we can't seem to stop it...

The fabric of an entire continent  
 stained sprayed  
 afraid  
 as we pray  
 our way through this somber day.

We are wildly untethered  
 weathered  
 by winter  
 and pandemic  
 we are deep in it  
 dismay, dismal and may  
 we finish the game  
 somehow saved  
 somehow civil

May Justice be the victor  
 and may the chess master  
 master his own inward glance  
 and retreat from disaster

Unseat the monsters  
 who make chess pieces bleed  
 onto the carpet

the kings and queens are just mothers and fathers

protect the pawns

God of chess games

please stop this...

"A Prayer for Ukraine" was first published by Chaya Kaplan Lester on her [Facebook page](#).



## Chaya Kaplan-Lester

Chaya Kaplan-Lester is a Jerusalem-based spiritual teacher & guide, psychotherapist, and performance artist. She offers private therapy & spiritual counseling in person or via phone and Skype as well as leads spiritual journeys in Israel. As co-director of the [Shavet Center for Jewish Personal Growth](#), Chaya trains and facilitates ongoing women's groups and teaches regular classes in the Jerusalem area and on her annual tours world-wide.

Stable Link: <https://opensiddur.org/?p=42866>

Associated Image:

(This image is set to automatically show as the "featured image" in category lists and in shared links on social media.)

Terms of Use: Please reciprocate for any adaptation or redistribution of this work by (1) properly attributing the work to [Chaya Kaplan-Lester](#), (2) clearly indicating the date you accessed the resource and whether any changes have been made (and if so, please [be in touch with us](#) and leave a comment below so that we might note your adaptation or improvement), (3) providing the [stable link](#) to this resource, and (4) specifying the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike \(CC BY-SA\) 4.0 International](#) copyleft license under which this work was shared.

Support this work: The Open Siddur Project is a volunteer-driven, non-profit, non-denominational, non-prescriptive, gratis & libre Open Access archive of contemplative praxes, liturgical readings, and Jewish prayer literature (historic and contemporary, familiar and obscure) composed in every era, region, and language Jews have ever prayed. Our goal is to provide a platform for sharing open-source resources, tools, and content for individuals and communities crafting their own prayerbook (siddur). Through this we hope to empower personal autonomy, preserve customs, and foster creativity in religious culture. If you like what you've found here, please help keep our project alive and online with your [financial contribution](#).

And the bloodied board may be upon us; may our handiwork be established for us – our handiwork, may it be established." –Psalms 90:17

[PDF \(or Print\)](#)[Twitter](#)[Facebook](#)[Pinterest](#)[Reddit](#)[Pocket](#)[Email](#)[SMS](#)[WhatsApp](#)

## Comments, Corrections, and Queries

Enter your comment here...

Prayer for the People of Ukraine, by the chief rabbi of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth Ephraim Mirvis (2022)

Comments, Corrections, and Queries

Comments, Corrections,