

House of Sages

ISRAEL IN PRAYER

3RD MARCH, 2024

COME & LEARN

וְנָתַתִּי שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ

And I shall grant you peace in the land

Leviticus 26:6



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ISRAEL AND PRAYER

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SOURCES ON ISRAEL IN PRAYER

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

- Where do you recall seeing Israel in your experience with prayer?
- What type of prayer would you expect historically for Israel?
- How do you think the founding of the modern state of Israel could have impacted the relationship between Israel and prayer?

SOURCE 1 – THE AMIDA

And to Your city Jerusalem return in mercy, and dwell within it as You have spoken, and build her soon in our days into an eternal building. And prepare the throne of David within her speedily. Blessed are You, God, who builds Jerusalem.

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ בְּרַחֲמִים תָּשׁוּב.
וְתִשְׁכֵּן בְּתוֹכָהּ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ. וּבְנֵה
אוֹתָהּ בְּקֶרֶב בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּנֵן עוֹלָם.
וְכִסֵּא דָוִד מְהֵרָה לְתוֹכָהּ
תִּכְוֶן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', בּוֹנֵה
ירוּשָׁלַיִם:

Be pleased, Lord our God, in your people Israel and in their prayers, and return the service to the inner sanctuary of Your house. And receive in love the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayers. And may the service of your people Israel be always in your favor. And let our eyes behold your return to Zion in mercy. Blessed are You, God, who returns His Presence to Zion.

רְצֵה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ בְּעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבִתְפִלָּתָם וְהִשָּׁב אֶת הָעֲבוּדָה
לְדַבֵּיר בֵּיתְךָ. וְאֲשִׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּתְפִלָּתָם. בְּאַהֲבָה תִקְבַּל בְּרָצוֹן.
וְתֵהִי לְרָצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוּדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
עִמָּךְ. וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוּבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן
בְּרַחֲמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הַמַּחְזִיר
שְׂכִינְתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן:

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What image of Israel does this present?
- How does that compare to your current conceptions of the state of Israel?

SOURCE 2A – ANCIENT SIDDIR FOUND IN ISRAEL

This is a blessing found in an ancient siddur that was found in ancient Israel.

Blessed be You the Lord, The king, Rock of Israel and its redeemer
ברוך אתה ה' מלך צור ישראל וגואלו

SOURCE 2B – YERUSHALMI BERACKHOT 1:1

There was an incident regarding Rabbi Chiya the Great and Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta, who were walking in the Arbel Valley at dawn, and they saw the burst of the the first light. Rabbi Chiya the Great said to Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta: My rabbi! Such is the redemption of Israel, a bit, a bit, as long as it continues, it increases.

מעשה ברבי חייא הגדול ורבי שמעון בר חלפתא שהיו מהלכין בבקעת ארבל בעלות השחר וראו איילת השחר שהפציע אורה אמר רבי חייא הגדול לרבי שמעון בר חלפתא בירבי כך היא גאולתן של ישראל, בתחילה קמעא קמעא, כל מה שהיא הולכת, היא רבה והולכת

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What do you think “מלך צור ישראל וגואלו” means? Is this identity inherently connected to Israel? If so, how?
- What image of Israel does this present?
- How does that compare to your current conceptions of the state of Israel?

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SOURCE 3 – JEREMIAH 29:7

And seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you [Jerusalem] and pray to GOD in its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper.

וְדַרְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׁלוֹם הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִגַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ בְעַדָּהּ אֵלֶיהָ כִּי בְשָׁלוֹמָהּ יִהְיֶה לְכֶם שְׁלוֹם:

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Questions for discussion:
- What do you think it means to “seek the welfare” or “דַרְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׁלוֹם” means? How do you imagine this is similar or different from prayer?
- How do you imagine the relationship described as “prosperity you shall prosper.” or “בְשָׁלוֹמָהּ יִהְיֶה לְכֶם שְׁלוֹם” would function?
- How does this source frame praying for Israel?

SOURCE 4 – PIRKEI AVOT 3:2

Rabbi Hanina, the vice-high priest said: pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear it inspires, every man would swallow his neighbor alive.

רַבִּי חַנִּינָא סִגְן הַכֹּהֲנִים אָמַר, הָיִי מִתְפַּלֵּל בְּשָׁלוֹמָהּ שֶׁל מַלְכוּת, שְׂאֵלְמָלָא מוֹרָאָהּ, אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ חַיִּים בְּלֵעוּ.

SOURCE 5 – FIDDLER ON THE ROOF



“Rabbi, Rabbi is there a blessing for the Czar?”

“Yes, my son, God bless and keep the Czar... Far away from us!”

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What do sources 4 and 5 teach us about Jewish relations towards praying for governments?
- What anxieties do these sources highlight? What other angles for prayer may be missing?

SOURCE 6 – PRAYER OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Written in 1948 by the Chief Rabbi's of Israel

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Our father in the heavens | (א) אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, |
| (2) Rock and Redeemer of Israel | (ב) צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ, |
| (3) Bless the State of Israel | (ג) בָּרַךְ אֶת מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, |
| (4) The start of flowering of Redemption | (ד) רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ. |
| (5) Shield it with Your love | (ה) הִגֵּן עָלֶיהָ בְּאַבְרַת חֶסֶדְךָ, |
| (6) Spread over it the shelter of Your peace | (ו) וּפְרֹשׂ עָלֶיהָ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ, |
| (7) Guide it's leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth. | (ז) וְשַׁלַּח אוֹרְךָ וְאִמְתָּךְ לְרֵאשִׁיָּהּ, שְׁרִיָּהּ וְיוֹעֲצֵיהָ, |
| (8) Establish for them Your good counsel. | (ח) וְתִקְנֵם בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. |
| (9) Strengthen the hands of the defenders of our Holy Land | (ט) חִזַּק אֶת יְדֵי מְגַנֵּי אֶרֶץ קְדֻשָּׁנוּ, |
| (10) Cause them to inherit, our God, deliverance | (י) וְהִנְחִילֵם אֱלֹקֵינוּ יְשׁוּעָה |
| (11) Place the crown of victory upon them | (יא) וְעֵטְרַת נִצְחוֹן תַּעֲטֹרֵם, |
| (12) Give the land peace | (יב) וְנָתַתְּ שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ, |
| (13) And everlasting joy to its inhabitants | (יג) וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם לְיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ |

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- What is being prayed for here?
- How does this compare to other prayers seen above? How do the intentions compare?

SOURCE 7 – HAARETZ SEPT 21, 1948

Haaretz is an Israeli newspaper founded in 1918, it's the longest running newspaper currently in print in Israel

(The Chief Rabbis of Israel - Rav Herzog and Rav Uziel - established and fixed - with the consent of the members of the board and Chief Rabbis of Tel Aviv and Petach Tikvah, the preceding prayer to be recited in all synagogues in the Land and Diaspora by the rabbi or chazan on Shabbat and holidays after the Torah reading.

הרבנים הראשיים לארץ ישראל – הרב א.י. הרצוג והרב ב"צ עוזיאל – יסדו ותקנו בהסכמת חברי המועצה וראשי הרבנים של ת"א, חיפה, ופתח תקווה, את התפילה המובאת לעיל להיאמר בכל בתי הכנסת בארץ ובתפוצות על ידי הרב או הש"ץ (שליח הציבור - החזן) בשבתות ובמועדים לאחר קריאת התורה

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Did you know when this prayer was created and by who?
- How do you feel about the decision to make this a fixed part of prayer? Why do you think this location in tefilah and these times to say this prayer were chosen?
- What do you think it says that this is being published in the newspaper Haaretz?

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SOURCE 8A – SIDDIR LEV SHALEM, THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY, 2016, P. 178

This comes from the Siddur published by the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. This source provides an alternative version of the text, found in source 5.

stronghold and redeemer of the people
Israel: Bless the State of Israel, that it
may be the beginning of our
redemption...

אַבִּינוֹ שֶׁבְּשָׁמַיִם,
צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ,
בְּרַךְ אֶת מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל,
שֶׁתְּהֵא רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלָּתֵנוּ

SOURCE 8B – SIDDIR LEV SHALEM, COMMENTARY

That it may be (שֶׁתְּהֵא):

This Hebrew word was added by the Chief Rabbi of England, Immanuel Jakobovits, turning the phrase "the beginning of the redemption" into an expression of hope, rather than a statement of fact.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- How do you feel this change impacts the prayer overall?
- Have you ever seen this before? If not, what are your first impressions?

SOURCE 9 –SOURCE 8: LEVITICUS 26:6

I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone; I will give the land respite from vicious beasts, and no sword shall cross your land.

וְנָתַתִּי שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וּשְׁכֵבְתֶם וְאִין
מַחֲרִיד וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חַיָּה רָעָה מִן
הָאֶרֶץ וְחָרֵב לֹא יִתְעַבֵּר בְּאֶרְצְכֶם:

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Zooming back out to tanach, what is the image promised to the Jewish people? Do you feel this image is represented in the prayers we've seen related to Israel?

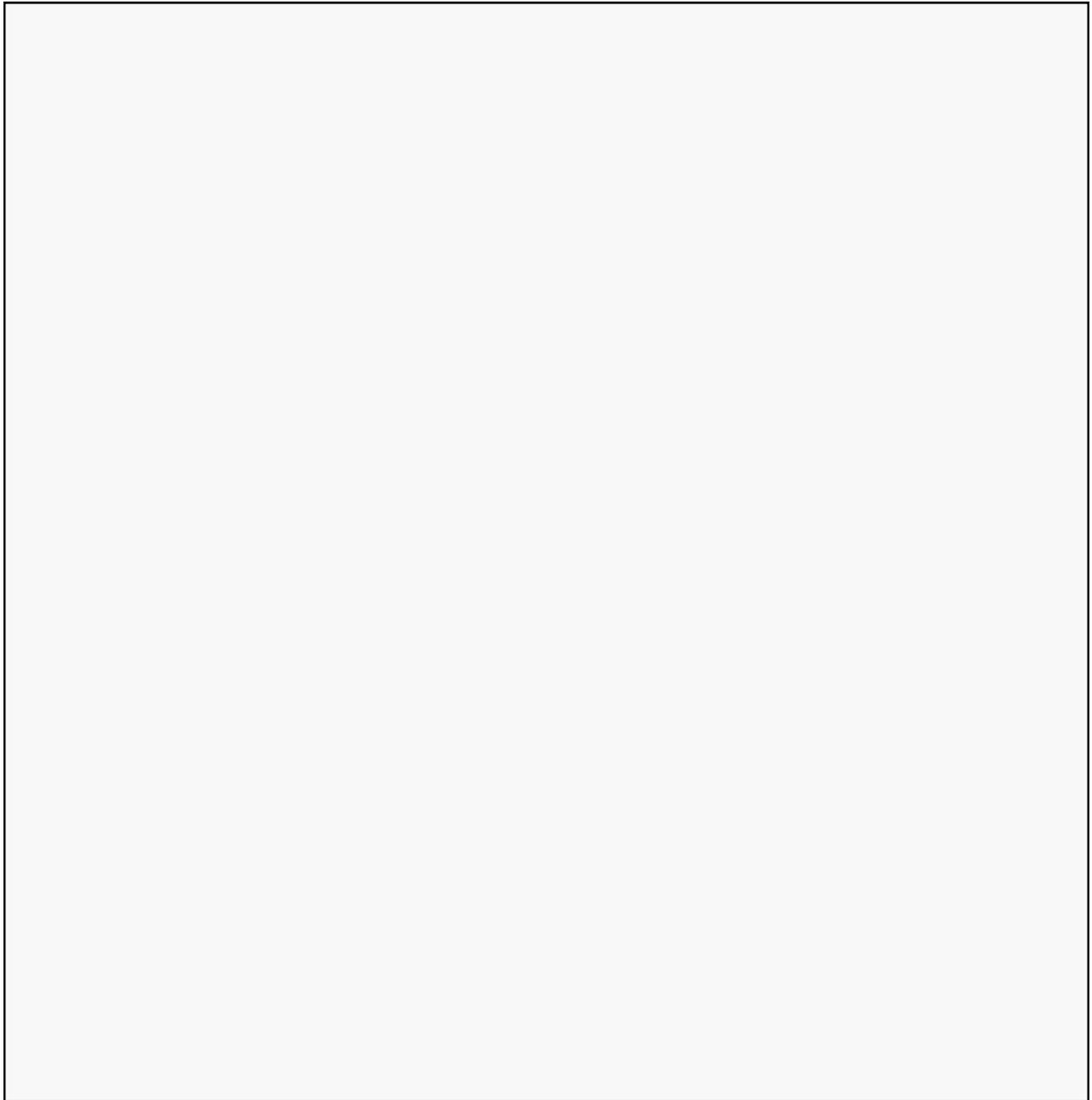
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SPACE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

If you'd like use this space to reflect on what you've gathered from these sources.
You can also write your own version of a prayer for Israel drawing upon the sources above.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for personal reflection or writing. It occupies the central portion of the page below the introductory text.

SOURCES ABOUT ISRAEL IN PRAYER
