

Signs of Life

by Charilyne Rojas

Wear the star
Near and far
For me, for you
For every Jew

Not with shame
But with pride
Never forget
To be on the right side

Around the world
Day and night
Our flag flies high
Am Yisrael Chai!



I Do Not Live in Israel

by Amy Wine

I do not live in Israel—
but her streets, I know by heart.
I've passed through them, step by step, turn by turn, town by town
I have followed her paths deep underground.
I do not live in Israel—
but I can hear all her sounds:
car horns and chatter, city pulse and sirens,
music in the desert,
hope, fear and resolve reverberating off of ancient walls.
I do not live in Israel
but I've touched on every shore.
My toes have dipped in all her seas, touched each piece of Negev sand,
my hands run daily down her rough, pale stone.
I do not live in Israel but I have tasted all her fruits—
I have eaten every date and pomegranate seed, red juice runs down my face.
I wipe it with my dirty hands, sticky with honey.
I do not live in Israel, but I know every family there.
We were just together, moments ago.
I am every mother,
every baby is my baby.
I can distinguish all their cries:
a low whine, tired.
a lingering wail, hunger.
a piercing scream, fear.
How do I stop this pain?
I do not live in Israel,
I stand in Jerusalem.
I do not live in Israel.
Her words leave my lips and are received in heaven.
I do not live in Israel—
Israel lives in me.



Prayer for Israel's Present and Future

by Rabbi Raphael Silverstein

May we remember that our faces are mirrors of each other, our fears are mirrors of each other's, our hopes are mirrors of each other's, and all of our children will inherit everything we are.

May we remember our shared past, our shared ancestors, our shared heritage, our shared grief at the destruction of our home twice before, our shared journeys through millennia of exile, our shared pride in who we are and all that we have achieved, wherever we found ourselves, and now here.

May we remember that our being here is something no human can explain or understand.

May we remember that we are responsible to those who came before us and those who come after us.

May we remember that it is very, very easy to destroy, but infinitely harder to build.

May we remember that there is no future for any of us without all of us.



Kalaniot

by Robin Minkoff

Once, red meant something else

After all, on her way to the Emerald City,
Dorothy succumbed to a deep slumber
In a field of poppies

Red was the color of love on valentines
And of life when I birthed my children
And the delicious wine of l'chaims

Then, October 7th
Now!

Bring Them Home Now!
Machzirim Otam Ha-Bayta Achshav!
The posters urgently decry in red

And I put down my glass of merlot
And I kiss my dear children
And I send love notes to my Israeli family and friends

And I wish
The fields of Israel's kalaniot — red poppies —
Were all that were needed to generate peace



It's 3 am and I Can't Sleep

by Rabbi Adrienne Rubin

It's 3:00 a.m.
I can't sleep.
I am awake.
I am heartbroken.
I am exhausted.
I am spent.
I am raw.

I cry.
I cry for the children.
I cry for the grandparents.
I cry for the parents.
I cry for the young adults.
I cry for their families.
I cry for their friends.
I cry for us all.

I mourn.
I mourn for lives lost and lives that are forever altered.
I mourn for murdered victims and their loved ones.
I mourn for kidnapped victims and their loved ones.
I mourn for injured victims and their loved ones.
I mourn for families with gaping holes that will never be filled.
I mourn for music lovers for whom concerts will never be the same.
I mourn for current and past kibbutz residents for whom kibbutz life
will never be the same.
I mourn for ordinary people in Israel.
and all over the world for whom Israel will never be the same.
I mourn for Israel, which will never be the same.



I fear.
I fear war.
I fear for the people living in Israel.
I fear for the innocent people living in Gaza.
I fear for our IDF soldiers, little more than children themselves.
I fear for what this war will bring to the Jewish people across the world.
I fear for all who are experiencing even more antisemitism.
I fear for the future of Israel.
I fear for our future in the diaspora.

I worry.
I worry about the fate of the hostages.
I worry about people anxiously awaiting news of their loved ones.
I worry about people mourning the deaths of their loved ones.
I worry about innocent civilians caught in the crossfire.
I worry about the shaping of world opinion by propaganda and hatred.
I worry about seeing pictures that will break me.
I worry about reading news that will break me.
I worry about hearing stories that will break me.
I worry about the divides this is creating between people.
I worry about the friendships that have already been damaged and broken.

I grieve.
I grieve the loss of life.
I grieve the loss of innocent life.
I grieve the inevitable further loss of innocent life.
I grieve the loss of a way of life.
I grieve the loss of humanity.

I pray.
I pray for a swift end to this unwanted war.
I pray for innocents to be spared injury, death and heartache.
I pray for Israel to maintain its commitment to life.
I pray for the world to affirm Israel's right to exist.



I pray for Israel to feel safe again.
I pray for the people living in Israel to feel safe again.
I pray for the people living in Gaza to feel safe again.
I pray for the suffering to end.

And I hope.

I hope that all people in the region will find a way to live in harmony with one another.
I hope that we all learn to love our neighbors as ourselves.
I hope that we begin to see every other person as b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God.

I hope – and I pray – for peace.



You of Blood and Venom: A Prayer of the Jewish People by Alden Solovy

This prayer is a declaration that the Jewish people will survive.

The Hebrew stanza is from Psalm 121.

You will not succeed,
You of hate,
You of violence,
You of blood and venom.
My people have seen your kind
For generations,
For millennia.

We have stood before guns and knives,
Gallows and gas chambers,
To outlive our persecutors.
Greece fell. Rome faded.
The Inquisitions, the Pogroms,
The Treblinkas and the Babi Yars,
All failed.

The people of Israel live.
The nation of Israel lives.

Hinei lo-yanum v'lo yishan shomer Yisrael!
Adonai yishmarekha mikol-ra, yishmor et-nafshecha.
See, the guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps!
God shall keep you from all evil, God will keep your soul.

No, you will not succeed,
You of hate,
You of violence,
You of blood and venom.
Am Yisrael chai!

The people of Israel live.
The nation of Israel lives.

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A Prayer for Israel in this Time of War

by Rabbi Naomi Levy

God, our Strength and Protection, we pray for the State of Israel in this devastating time of war, shock and grief. Our hearts are breaking, God. We pray for the lives of the innocent civilians who have been heartlessly kidnapped by Hamas, bring them home, watch over them, God. We pray for the lives of the soldiers who have been taken captive, we pray for their safe return, shelter them, God. We pray for the souls of the innocent victims who were brutally slaughtered. Send comfort and strength, God, to the grieving. Send healing to the injured, and strength and wisdom to their doctors and nurses. We pray for all our brothers and sisters in Israel in this time of tragedy and crisis.

Watch over Israel, God, spread Your shelter of peace over the land and over all our brothers and sisters who live there. Shine Your light upon Israel's leaders, officers and advisers, help them to overcome all divisiveness and to act with clarity and determination. Protect the men and women who defend Israel, let them be safe and may they be victorious over the Hamas terrorists who attacked our people. Watch over them, God. Hear their prayers. Bring peace, God. Let it rain down from the heavens like a mighty storm. Let it wash away all hatred and bloodshed. Peace, God, please, God. God of the brokenhearted, God of the living, God of the dead, gather the souls of the victims into Your eternal shelter. Let them find peace in Your presence, God. Their lives have ended, but their lights can never be extinguished. May they shine on us always and illuminate our way.

Amen.



A Prayer for Israel

May you be a light unto the nations, O Israel,
Shine across the universe.

We rejoice in Israel's beauty.

Red mountains watch over lush fields.

Ancient temple walls echo the prayers

Of countless generations.

We praise Israel's commitment to all who seek refuge

In the land of our ancestors.

With joy and compassion,

Israel welcomes the stranger.

We remember the brave souls who built our homeland.

Their toil made the desert blossom and cities rise.

Just as Joshua and his flock labored in that holy land,

Our people struggle to keep Israel strong.

We thank God for the land of Israel, a precious gift.

We pray for God's blessing of peace, a precious gift.



Praying, 10.9.23

by Julie Brandon

As I weep over the loss and the fear,
The families desperately searching, searching, searching for
 News of loved ones
The phones of the innocents lost to madness and violence
As I sit here in the safety of my home far from danger,
My heart breaks and my soul cries out for my family
 Because all Jews are my family
Each picture and cry for help is a hammer blow to my heart
Feeling helpless but never hopeless
Praying for restoration
Praying for peace
Praying for Israel
Am Yisrael Chai



Always Hope, 10.10.23

by Julie Brandon

The world is different today
Sadder, darker even though the sun shines through multicolored leaves
Those who wish for the destruction of my people dance in
The street
While we grieve and pray
For the lost, the missing, the dreams of safety
We hold onto hope
The hope that the lost will be found
The hope that the bereaved can be comforted
But not yet, perhaps never
Life goes on as though millions of lives haven't been
Changed, broken, shattered
The sun rises and sets
The rains come
Flowers bloom again
Amid destruction somehow life goes on
Am Yisrael Chai



Learning to Say Dayenu

by Alexandra Benjamin | Source: Michelle Shain

Maimonides urged us to care for our bodies so that we would be free to concentrate our energies on God. In the modern world, one of the greatest threats to our physical health is mental stress.

As women, we are particularly vulnerable to the stress caused by multiple and exhausting commitments to our families, friends, jobs and communities. This year, let us learn how to say “Enough!”

If we agree to serve one volunteer committee, but not two or three... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we work 45 hours in a week, but not 60... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we serve two courses for Shabbat dinner, but not three or four... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we buy a dessert, instead of making one from scratch... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we wash the floor every other Friday morning, instead of every Friday morning... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we clear away the clutter, but don't dust the shelves... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we buy a gift certificate, instead of spending hours searching for the perfect gift... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we usually schlep to the less expensive supermarket, but not always... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we take on one of the big projects coming up at work, but not all of them... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we go to one of the events organized by our friends this week, but not all them... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu

If we do what we can, and then go to bed at a reasonable hour... יָיֵנוּ - Dayenu



The Power Of Sisterhood

Sisterhood exists. And it is truly powerful

It's the strength of a united force

One that's immediate with the women you surround yourself with And one that's universal with your sisters from around the world

Sisterhood creates a space of nourishment and love A place to celebrate your everyday joys and triumphs

And one to hold one another when joy seems far away

Sisterhood is where you are supported when you are at your most vulnerable

It's a space to listen, and to be heard For both the laughter

And where you ask for help

Sisterhood is surrounding yourself with women whose energy ignites your spirit.

A space to grow and flourish.

It is listening without judgement, Without needing to give advice.

It is allowing women to be beautifully real And fearlessly be themselves

Sisterhood exists. And it is truly powerful

It's a force that when it's awakened

has the power to heal

both one another

And the world around us

<https://loveprojectlove.com/new-blog-1/a-message-to-the-next-generation-about-the-power-of-sisterhood>

