

A Jewish Women's Prayer Book

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A collection of prayers composed by and for women over hundreds of years.

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PRAYER NO. 1 For Beautifying the Synagogue

Prayer book of the Jewish community of Rome

He Who blessed Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah - may He bless every daughter of Israel who fashions a coat or covering with which to adorn the Torah, or who prepares a candle in honor of the Torah. May the Holy One, blessed be He, pay her reward and grant her the good that she deserves, and let us say Amen.

תַּחַת לְכַבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה מִי שֶׁפָּרַךְ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה מְעִיל אוֹ מְטַפֵּה
וְהַמְתַּקֵּת גַּר לְכַבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה. הַקָּב"ה יִשְׁלַם שְׂכָרָהּ וְיִתֵּן לָהּ גְמוּלָהּ הַטּוֹב וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

PRAYER NO. 2

Paula, daughter of Avraham, from the end of the 13th century. Paula had a profession – she was a copier of manuscripts; she was educated and had extensive knowledge of halakhic literature. At the end of **Sefer ha-Makhri'a**, by R. Yishaya Detrani, she added a prayer on behalf of all of Israel. Her prayer, written in 1292, appears to have been composed against the background of the decrees forcing Jews to convert, leading to martyrdom, expulsion, and outward acceptance of Christianity:

**“May He, in His mercy,
grant me the merit of seeing
His honor and our honor
And take us out of the great darkness
In which we find ourselves today
and which has come about in our times.”**

PRAYER NO. 3 Pesach, 5705, Auschwitz.

Toby Trackeltaub

We wish to celebrate but we are unable to, we desire to believe and that is the only thing that we have that they are unable to take from us; in it is memory, that alone can give us hope for a better and more beautiful future that we wish to think about and not to lower our heads.

And if God redeemed our forefathers from Egypt, He will also save us from our bitter enslavement, and restore us to the land of our forefathers.

אֲנַחְנוּ רוֹצִים לְחַגֵּג אֲבָל אֵינָנוּ יְכוּלִים, אֲנַחְנוּ תּוֹרְמִים
לְהֵאמִין וּפְבֵר הַיְחִידִי מָה שִׁישׁ לָנוּ וּמָה שֶׁאֵינֵנוּ יְכוּלִים,
יָד טוֹב וְיִפְּהָ יוֹתֵר מֵאֲתָנוּ בּוֹ הַזְכָּרוֹן רַק זֶה יְכוּל לְתַת לָנוּ תְקוּנָה לְעַתְּ לַקַּחַת

עָלִיו אָנוּ רוֹצִים לְחָשׁוֹב וְלֹא לְהוֹרִיד אֶת רֵאוּשָׁנוּ
וְאִם ה' גָּאֵל אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם יִצִּיל גַּם
אוֹתָנוּ מֵעֲבֻדוֹתֵינוּ הַמֶּרֶה. וְיִשְׁכַּנּוּ לְאַרְץ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

PRAYER NO. 4 Hanna
Samuel I 1:13

“Hanna spoke in her heart; only her lips moved,
but her voice was not audible, and Eli thought she was drunk”

(שמואל א, א 13). "לִבָּהּ רַק שִׁפְתֶיהָ נָעוֹת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ עָלֶי לְשִׁפְרָה- וְחִנָּה הִיא מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל
“Hanna spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard, and Eli
thought she was drunk’: We learn that prayer requires the intention of the heart. And
from the words, ‘only her lips moved’ we learn that one must move his lips – in other
words, he must form the words of the prayer with his lips, not only in his heart. And
from [the words], ‘but her voice could not be heard’ – [we learn] that one should not
raise his voice in prayer, but rather that prayer should be recited in a whisper. And
from the continuation of the verse, ‘Eli thought that she was drunk’ we learn that one
who is drunk may not pray, and for this reason Eli reproached her.”
(Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 31a).

PRAYER NO. 5 Completion
Based on the teachings of Rabbi Nahman of Breslov

Loving God
So numerous are
Those deprived of true love;
So many
Cannot find their match.
Have mercy upon them.
Source of love –
Allow
Every solitary, lonely soul
To experience the completion
That comes
with finding one’s match.

מְקוֹר הָאֱהָבָה, רַחֵם עָלֵיהֶם. אֵינָם מוֹצְאִים אֶת זְוִיגָם. כֹּה רַבִּים חֲסֵרֵי אֱהָבַת הָאֱמֶת; כֹּה רַבִּים הֵם אֵל אוֹהֵב,
תְּן
מִמְצִיאַת זְוִיג הַנּוֹבְעַת לְחֹוֹת אֶת הַשְּׁלֵמוֹת לְכֹל נִשְׁמָה בּוֹדְדָה וְגִלְמוּדָה,

PRAYER NO. 6 **Young Girl's Prayer**
Fanny Neuda

Our God Who is in heaven and on earth, God Who is good: You attend to all of Your creatures; faithful Father, all of Your creations take refuge under Your wings.

You have called me, too, Your daughter; to me, too, You extend Your love—an eternal love. My childhood has passed in green pastures; I thank you for my happy youth; I thank You for what I am. You have given me all kinds of goodness: a dear mother and father at my side, guiding me with gentleness and love, with advice and help, caring for me and sustaining me, enhancing my life with sweet and heartwarming joys.

With humility, my Lord, I approach You, revealing the hidden secrets of my heart, and offering thanks to You.

You see into my soul; my innermost being is before You as an open book. No emotion that moves my heart, no breath, no utterance of my voice, no thought that animates my soul—none is hidden from Your eyes. If only all my emotions, my thoughts, and my actions might find favor and grace before You. Deliver me from the evil inclination and imbue my heart with submission and humility.

Our Father Who is in heaven: guide my heart to choose the way that is good and not to deviate from the straight path. Wherever I—lacking experience—am unable to distinguish between good and evil, grace me with Your wisdom, teach me to recognize the truth, that I may maintain modesty and good traits, that I may punctiliously observe Your words and Your commandments with faith and with love, and walk before You wholeheartedly and with devotion.

Let my heart not follow vanity and emptiness, and let the pleasures of the world not cloud my vision, that I not waste my precious life—the life given to me to fulfill my obligations. May it be Your will that I not turn, in a moment of frivolity, from the words of Your mouth; that virginal honor and a pure heart be a precious adornment for me.

Bless me, my Lord, with understanding and insight, with a healthy body and soul, with a heart that is joyful and content. May I never deviate from the commandment of honoring one's father and mother, and not offend or anger my dear parents, so that I may succeed in bringing them happiness through my actions. Bestow Your blessing, my God, upon my loved ones; that illness, trouble, and anxiety never be their lot; that they may enjoy success in their endeavors and fulfillment of their hearts' wishes; and may their occupations and work bear abundant fruit. Bless them, my God, with long life, that they may rejoice in their lifetimes with strength and good health of body and soul. Amen.

From the Introduction:

“Unfortunately, however, today people attend to that which is external and sparkling, but that heart with its flowers and its seeds is increasingly neglected, and left to the whims of time... Religious instruction is given marginal attention; it is regarded as an insignificant matter of no value. Nevertheless, nobility of emotions and profound religiosity are a woman’s most precious adornments... Only with these do they become a blessing to the home and to the world, for the present and for the future. Therefore, noble Jewish women, we must ensure that our daughters do not lose this valuable adornment. We must make it their teachers’ first obligation to instruct them in God’s commandments and His wonders; they must tell them about the history of our forefathers and their fate... Let us accompany our daughters to the synagogue, where the sermon, the singing and the prayers will enhance and refine the woman’s soul, sanctify lofty emotions, and lead to a love for God. But in order for the participation in the prayer to be productive, for the tunes and melodies that are heard at the synagogue to reverberate in the woman’s soul, it is necessary to overcome a further obstacle: knowledge and understanding of the Holy Tongue, in which the prayer service is conducted. Without it, we heard only words, but no messages; the tunes penetrate our ears but not our hearts; we pray with our lips but not with our souls. The holy songs for Zion, the wonderful psalms by David, the uplifting and exalted prayers of Israel remain obscure and closed to us. Our daughters, who devote much time and conscientiousness to studying the piano, and opera, and to studying languages that are all the fashion – why should they not devote an hour each day to studying the Holy Tongue, worthy of honor as the mother of all languages, since it is the key to those treasures of the spirit and the heart which God inscribed in His book, known as the Book of books... In every part of the world, in Cincinnati and in Bombay, in Tunis and in Warsaw, in Vienna and in London, from the synagogue there still emerges the same language in which God spoke at Mount Sinai.”