

Jewish Values and Prayers About War

How and Why to Use this Resource

This resource is intended to make it quick and easy to add Jewish values and prayers into your communication during this time of war in Israel.

Why is speaking in the language of Jewish values and prayers important?

- What is happening in Israel and how we respond communicates our sense of peoplehood. It also speaks to the Jewish values and practices that lay at the foundation of what it means to be a Jew. We care about what happens to Jews in Israel and around the world.
- Part of the power of values and prayers is that they have the ability to act as symbols that can resonate with people in ways that transcend the intellectual, organizational and rational realms. Using Jewish idioms to express what we're doing today helps ground our work in the larger context of Jewish life, which is timeless.

Jewish Values

The Right to Self Defense is Essential

<p>Talmud, Sanhedrin 72a – And the Torah stated a principle: If someone comes to kill you, rise and kill him first.</p>	<p>והתורה אמרה אם בא להורגך השכם להורגו</p>
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Collective Responsibility

<p>Talmud, Shevuot 39a – All Jews are responsible for one another</p>	<p>כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה</p>
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<p>Talmud, Ta'anit 11a – When the community is in trouble, a person should not say, “I will go to my house and I will eat and drink and be at peace with myself.”</p>	<p>תניא אידיך: בזמן שהצבור שרוי בצער, אל יאמר אדם: אלה לביתי, ואוכל ואשתה, ושלום עליך גפשי.</p>
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<p>Leviticus Rabbah 4:6 – Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught a parable: Men were on a ship. One of them took a drill and started drilling underneath him. The</p>	<p>תני רבי שמעון בן יוחאי, משל לבני אדם שהיו יושבין בספינה נטל אחד מהן מקדח והתחיל קודח תחתיו, אמרו לו תבריו מה</p>
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<p>others said to him: What are you sitting and doing?! He replied: What do you care. Is this not underneath my area that I am drilling?! They said to him: But the water will rise and flood us all on this ship.</p>	<p>אתה יושב ועושה, אמר להם מה אכפת לכם לא תחתי אני קודח, אמרו לו שהמים עולין ומציפין עלינו את הספינה.</p>
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Saving the Captive

<p>Genesis 14:14 - When Abram heard that his relatives had been taken captive, he mustered his troops, born to his house, numbering 318 and went in pursuit as far as Dan.</p>	<p>(ד' וישמע אברם כי נשבה אחיו וירק את-חניכיו ילידי ביתו שמנה עשר ושלש מאות וירדף עד-דן:</p>
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We Don't Rejoice in the Downfall of Our Enemies

<p>Proverbs 24:17 - Don't rejoice when your enemies fall; don't be happy when they stumble.</p>	<p>(ז' בנפל (אויבך) [אויבך] אל-תשמח רבבשלו אל-יגל לבך:</p>
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<p>Talmud, Tractate Megillah 10b - Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asked: Does the Holy One, Blessed be He, in fact rejoice over the downfall of the wicked?... [The Talmud teaches that No,] the Holy One, Blessed be God, does not rejoice over the downfall of the wicked [rather we only rejoice in the overcoming of hardship. The proof for this is a story about the angels wanting to celebrate when the Egyptians were drowning in the Sea of Reeds]. But the Holy One, Blessed be God, [rebuked the angels] saying: Are not the Egyptians who are drowning in the sea also the work of My hands?</p>	<p>רבי יהושע בן לוי פתח בן לוי פתחא להאי פרשתא מהכא: "והיה כאשר שש ה' עליכם להיטיב אתכם בן ישיש ... להרע אתכם." ומי חדי הקדוש ברוך הוא במפלתו של רשעים? ... לפי שאין הקדוש ברוך הוא שמח במפלתו של רשעים... בקשו מלאכי השרת לומר שירה, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: מעשה ידי טובעין ביים</p>
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Defining Values of the IDF from the IDF Code of Ethics

<p>Defense of the State, its Citizens and its Residents – The IDF's goal is to defend the existence of the State of Israel, its independence and the security of the citizens and residents of the state.</p> <p>Human Dignity – The IDF and its soldiers are obligated to protect human dignity. Every human being is of value regardless of their faith or origin, religion, nationality, gender, status or position.</p>



Purity of Arms – The soldier shall make use of their weaponry and power only for the fulfillment of the mission and solely to the extent required; they will maintain their humanity even in combat. The soldier shall not employ their weaponry and power in order to harm noncombatants or prisoners of war and shall do all they can to avoid harming their lives, body, honor and property.”

The Difference Between an Optional War and a Necessary War

<p>Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah 8.10 - Our Sages say: The wars of the House of David are an example of a permitted/optional war. The wars of Joshua are an example of an obligatory war.</p> <p>Rabbi Judah called a permitted/optional war one in which we attacked them; an obligatory war one in which they attacked us.</p>	<p>רבנין אמרין מלחמת מצוה זו מלחמת דוד מלחמ' חובה זו מלחמת יהושע.</p> <p>רבי יהודה היה קורא מלחמת רשות כגון אנן דאזלין עליהון. מלחמת חובה כגון דאתיין אינון עלינון.</p>
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Prayers

Prayer for the Rescue of Captives

<p>The One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, may they bless and safeguard and preserve the captives: (name of captive(s)) among their brethren in the House of Israel in trouble and captivity. In the merit of the prayers of this holy assemblage who pray for them, may the blessed Holy One shower compassion over them, deliver them from darkness and strife, remove their bondage, deliver them from their afflictions, and return them speedily to their families. Let them give thanks to Adonai for God’s lovingkindness, and for God’s miracles to the children of Adam. And establish for them that what is written, “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; They shall</p>	<p>מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב יוסף משה ואהרן דוד ושלמה הוא יברך וישמר וינצל את השבויים: (שמות של השבויים) בתוך שאר אחינו בית ישראל הנתונים בצרה ובשביה. בעבור שהקהל מתפלל בעבורם, הקדוש ברוך הוא ימלא רחמים עליהם, ויוציאם מחשך וצלמות, ומוסרותיהם ינתק, וממצוקותיהם יושיעם, וישיבם מהרה לחיק משפחותיהם. ”יודו לה' חסדו ונפלאותיו לבני אדם” (תהלים קז: לא) ויקנם בהם מקרא שפתוב: ופדויהי ה' ישוּבוּן וְבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל רֵאשִׁים שְׂשׂוֹן</p>
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obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35:10) And let us say, Amen.	וְשִׂמְחָה יִשְׂגוּ וְנֹסוּ יְגֹן וְאַנְחָה (יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ לֵה:י) וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.
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Blessing for the Release of the Captive

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sets free the captive.	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים:
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Prayer for the State of Israel

Our Parent who is in Heaven, Rock and Redeemer of Israel, bless the State of Israel [that it may be] the beginning of our redemption. Shield it with Your love; spread over it the shelter of Your peace. Guide its leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth. Help them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of the defenders of our Holy Land. Deliver them; crown their efforts with victory. Bless the land with peace and everlasting joy to its inhabitants. And let us say: Amen.	אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׂמִים, צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ, בְּרוּךְ אַתְּ מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ. הִגֵּן עָלֶיךָ בְּאַבְרַת חֶסֶדְךָ, וּפְרַשׁ עָלֶיךָ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ, וּשְׁלַח אוֹרְךָ וְאַמְתָּךְ לְרֵאשִׁיָּהּ, שְׂרִיָּהּ וְיוֹעֲצֵיהָ, וְתַקְּנֵם בְּעֲצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. חַנּוּן אַתְּ יְדֵי מִגְנֵי אֶרֶץ קְדֻשְׁנוּ, וְהַנְחִילֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְשׁוּעָה וְעֲטָרַת נִצְחוֹן תַּעֲטֹרֵם, וְנַתַּת שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ, וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם לְיוֹשְׁבֵיהָ. וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן
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Prayer for the Israeli Army (Adapted)

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, bless the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, in their standing guard upon our land and the cities of our God from the border of Lebanon to the Wilderness of Egypt and from the Great Sea to the approach of the Arava - on land, in the air, and in the sea. May the Holy One, blessed be God, guard and rescue our soldiers from all trouble and distress and from all affliction and illness; and send blessing and success in all the work of their hands. And let us say, Amen.	מִי שְׁבַרְךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבֵרָהֵם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, הוּא יְבָרֶךְ אֶת חַיְלֵי צְבָא הַגְּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, הַעוֹמְדִים עַל מִשְׁמַר אֶרֶצְנוּ וְעָרֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִגְּבוּל הַלְּבָנוֹן וְעַד מִדְּבַר מִצְרַיִם, וּמִן הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל עַד לְבוֹא הָעֲרָבָה בִּפְשֵׁה בְּאוֹר וּבַיָּם. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִשְׁמַר וְיַצִּיל אֶת חַיְלֵינוּ מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֹגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם. וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.
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<p>Our Father in heaven, Shekhinah source of life, Rock and redeemer of Yisrael, strengthen and deliver all who stand on guard protecting their homes, safeguard and save them from any trouble and distress and bless their actions, hear their prayers and ours and deliver them.</p> <p>Save those who are trapped in their homes, grant them inner strength, faith and hope, bolster them in these terrifying times.</p> <p>Send Your mercy to the anxious mothers and hurting fathers and the children sitting in shelters.</p> <p>May it be Your will to remember us, to take notice of us, to meet us with compassion for we trust in You.</p> <p>Return all those kidnapped safe and sound to their homes, without the spilling of innocent blood, without their souls becoming tarnished by horrific acts.</p> <p>Strengthen those who protect our Holy Land, soldiers and civilians alike</p> <p>We pray “nation shall not lift sword against nation and they will study war no more”. (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3) Compassionate God, please, arouse Your mercy for us, and may the verse be fulfilled: “from the seed of peace the vine shall produce its fruit, the land shall produce its yield, and the skies shall provide their moisture. I will bestow all these things upon you.” (Cf. Zechariah 8:12) “...and you shall be a blessing, have no fear.” (Zechariah 8:13 part) And let us say Amen.</p> <p>This prayer for the welfare of the State of Israel, by Rabbi Mira Regev, was disseminated by HaTenuah HaReformit (The Israel Movement for Reform and progressive Judaism).</p>	<p>אָבִינוּ שְׁבִשְׁמִים, שְׂכִינָה מְקוֹר חַיִּינוּ צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹאֲלוֹ חֲזַק וְהוֹשַׁע אֶת כָּל הַעוֹמְדִים עַל מִשְׁמַרְתּ בֵּיתָם שְׂמֶרֶם וְהַצִּילֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וְתַן בְּרָכָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיהֶם, שְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתָם וְתַפְלְתָנוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵם.</p> <p>שְׁלַח יְשׁוּעָה לְכָל הַנְּצוּרוֹת וְהַנְּצוּרִים בְּבֵיתֵיהֶם, מְלֵא אוֹתָם בְּחֶסֶן בְּנֶפֶשׁ אַמּוּנָה וְתַקְוָה וְחֲזַקֵם בְּרַגְעֵים הַמְּפַחֲדִים הָאֵלֶּה.</p> <p>עֲשֵׂה בְרַחֲמֶיךָ לְמַעַן הָאֲמָהוּת הַדּוֹאֲגוֹת וְהָאֲבוֹת הַדּוֹאֲבִים וּלְמַעַן הַתִּינוּקוֹת וְהַיְלָדִים הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בַּמְּקַלְטִים.</p> <p>אָנָּה זְכַרְנוּ בְּרַצוֹנְךָ, פָּקְדָנוּ בִישׁוּעָתְךָ, יְקַדְמוּנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ כִּי בְטַחָנוּ.</p> <p>הֲשִׁב אֶת כָּל הַחַטּוּפוֹת וְהַחַטּוּפִים בְּשָׁלוֹם לְבֵיתֵיהֶם בְּלֹא שִׁשְׁפָּף דָּם נָקִי וּבְלִי שִׁתְטָמָא בְּנֶפֶשׁם בְּמַעֲשֵׂי זָרָעָה</p> <p>חֲזַק אֶת יְדֵי מְגִנֵי אֶרֶץ קְדִשְׁנוּ: הַחֲזִילִם וְהֶאֱזָרְהוּם.</p> <p>מִי יִתֵּן וְלֹא יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל גּוֹי חֲרֵב וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה: (ישעיה ב:ד; מיכה ד:ג)</p> <p>אָנָּה, אֵל רַחֲמָן, יִקְמוּ נָא רַחֲמֶיךָ עָלֵינוּ, וְיִקְיֵם בָּנוּ הַכְּתוּב: כִּי זָרַע הַשָּׁלוֹם הִגְפִן תִּתֵּן פְּרִיָּה וְהָאֶרֶץ תִּתֵּן אֶת יְבוּלָהּ וְהַשָּׁמַיִם יִתְּנוּ טֶלֶם וְהַנְּחִלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם אֶת כָּל אֵלֶּה. (כמו זכריה ח:יב) וְהִייתֶם בְּרָכָה אֵל תִּירָאוּ: (זכריה ח:יג חלק) וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן</p>
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