

Prayers and Readings for Women's League Shabbat 5784

1. From 'Seven Principles for Maintaining Jewish Peoplehood' (July 21, 2019)
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, z"l

Remember that the ultimate basis of Jewish peoplehood is "*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*", "All Jews are responsible for one another". We may not agree on anything, but we remain a single extended family. If you disagree with a friend, tomorrow he or she may no longer be your friend. But if you disagree with a family member, tomorrow he or she is still part of your family. Being a family is what keeps us together. We don't need to agree with each other, but we do need to care about each other.

God chose us as a people. He didn't choose only the righteous; He chose all of us. It is as a people we stand before God, and it is as a people we stand before the world. The world doesn't make distinctions, anti-Semites don't make distinctions. We are united by a covenant of shared memory, shared identity, and shared fate, even if we have differing perspectives on our faith.

2. Perhaps: A Prayer with God for the World

Dear God, Holy One, Beloved,

This fragile, beautiful world of ours stands at a precipice.
It always has. Perhaps it always will.
Every moment seems to be a crossroad.
Perhaps that was the plan.
Perhaps there was no plan.

But we promise again, Mother of All:
You've got us.
And we've got a plan.

Perhaps, Divine Mystery, that's You, in us.
Perhaps our yearning for a more created world
is truly Your Spirit stirring in our minds' eyes,
inspiring us to be the change we dream to see.

Perhaps, after all,
Yours has never been a plan,
but rather seeds of sacred vision.
Perhaps You, Dear One, and we, your children,
are learning every day and doing our best
to see more clearly and feel more fiercely.

God, that is a true gift:
to see with Your Eyes
and to love with Your Love.

For these blessings,
and the gift of more days in which to be of service with You
as partners in Creation,
may we be ever thankful.

We know we are called to repair
that which remains broken.
And so, we pray:

May we walk humbly but not too humbly
as we channel Your Spirit, coursing through our bodies
to bring more justice, more kindness, more hope,
and more love into the world.

May the coming days find us ever ready
to walk in Your ways by walking with each other
to do with our bodies what we often ask of You:
to see, to discover, to build
a truly beautiful world,
a world of *Hesed*, of Love.

Amen.

“Perhaps: A Prayer with God for the World” by Rabbi Menachem Creditor was first published by the author on 8 July 2022

Princeton University Shabbat Readings

3. God, help us now to make this new Shabbat.
After noise, we seek quiet;
After crowds of indifferent strangers,
We seek to touch those we love;
After concentration on work and responsibility,
We seek freedom to meditate, to listen to our inward selves.
We open our eyes to the hidden beauties
and the infinite possibilities in the world You are creating;
We break open the gates of the reservoirs
of goodness and kindness in ourselves and in others;
We reach toward one holy perfect moment of Shabbat.
-Ruth Brin

4. If I could reach that certain star
And make a wish so true
It would not just be a wish for me
but a wish for all of you.

In a world so full of problems,
My wish would be for peace
People of all nations joining hands
Not wanting to escape or be released.

War, crime destruction
These three words we use every day

If I had that one wish
These three words would be wiped away.

Countries would no longer be at war
People would be good to each other
We were all created equal
God said to love one another.

So if I had that one wish
It would be for peace not sorrow
This way children just like you and me
Would have a future – a tomorrow.

-Written by a twelve year old in a letter to President Clinton