

ECUMENICAL WORSHIP

# IT'S TIME FOR PEACE

## *A Service of Reflections*

Featuring the voices of young Palestinians and Israelis

For use during the ecumenical week of action

[‘World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel 29 May – 4 June 2010’](#)

Inspired by an Irish Church visit to Israel and Palestine

Offered with sincere hopes for a peace that is just, that comes soon,  
and will end the suffering of all concerned

An order of service from Ireland for the ecumenical week of action

**World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, 29 May – 4 June 2010**

*Joint action for a just peace convened by the World Council of Churches*

## *Notes for the use of this liturgy*

### **Voices**

It is suggested that the four stories of the young people and the nine prayers in the liturgy might be read by young people in the parish or congregation.

### **Stories**

Each of the four stories (pages 4-7) carries the heartfelt message of a young Palestinian or Israeli. If possible, relate each one to a phrase from the lesson, e.g. 'a time to hear,' 'a time to plan,' 'a time to build up,' 'at time to mourn,' 'a time to speak,' and finally 'a time for peace'—which echoes the theme of World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel.

It is suggested that each story is read by a young person of a similar age to the author.

Please note that further stories from Palestinian daily life, including diary fragments, moral stories of remarkable civil courage, peace and non-violence stories are available from the Arab Educational Institute, Bethlehem. Look for: 'Palestinian stories from daily life' on this website: [www.aeicenter.org](http://www.aeicenter.org).

### **Prayers**

The prayers offered for use in this service are by people in Israel and Palestine, including a prayer by a Jewish rabbi in Jerusalem and a prayer by a Muslim carpenter in Gaza.

### **Time as the theme**

At the beginning of the service, to call attention to the passage of time and especially to demonstrate support for those affected by more than 40 years of occupation, a large clock might be placed at the front of the sanctuary, perhaps with a wreath around it, or surrounded by thorns, and/or flowers.

The leader may also wish to invite parishioners to participate, for example, inviting them to:

Take off their watches and lay them out in view the way some people do when conscious of time, or, invite them to bring their watches and place them on the altar during the first reading ('For everything there is a season', page 4) and, later, to collect them after the Jerusalem prayer (page 11), or at the end of the service during the postlude.

As watches are retrieved from the altar, parishioners might be encouraged to say a silent or spoken prayer for peace and for their part in peace.

### **Music**

Hymns are suggested at certain points in the liturgy. In two places, specific hymns are indicated (see next paragraph). Where no specific hymn is indicated, consider choosing from the easy-to-learn songs of peace available in English, French, German and Spanish for download (text, music, sound): <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/other-liturgical-resources/advent-resources/advent-resources-2008.html>.

'Make me an instrument of your peace,' is also known as 'Make me a channel of your peace.' If the melody is not familiar, a recording is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtJeI4Q9nBE>.

An appropriate folk song is Pete Seeger's arrangement of the Ecclesiastes text which is the theme of this liturgy. This song 'Turn, turn, turn' sung by Pete Seeger and Judy Collins is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DejUPN4SksU>.

The song suggested at the end, 'Yarraba Salami,' is available in the following international ecumenical hymnbooks: 'Thuma Mina', #160, (Basel Verlag); and 'Agape', #110, (Oxford/LWF).

## PRELUDE MUSIC

## GREETINGS

**OPENING INVOCATION:** In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

*Leader reads:*

**T**he conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has gone on too long. Ordinary people on both sides have suffered immeasurably, and many yearn for a just peace. The three-week bombardment of Gaza, in response to rocket attacks on southern Israel, at the beginning of 2009 caused great loss of life, thousands of injuries, widespread destruction and untold trauma and suffering. On occasion, rockets and missiles continue to fall on both sides. There is daily misery in Gaza and throughout the West Bank. Ordinary civilians separated by a man-made Wall are not safe or secure, and live their lives in fear. Instead of more violence, both sides urgently need a new way.

At the outset of this service we wish to affirm that, where even one life is lost or one child is orphaned, our humanity is diminished. Our hope is for the spiral of violence to be broken and security to be shared by all, for a new beginning and a new commitment to parity of esteem.

The Holy Land is HOLY for each of the Abrahamic faiths: Christian, Muslim and Jewish. As people of faith, we believe peace is possible. Majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians continue to support a negotiated solution based on two secure and sovereign states as the best way to end this tragic conflict.

In today's service we will hear the words of young Israelis and Palestinians. Their stories reflect the lesson from the Book of Ecclesiastes and say what more and more people are saying: **"It's time for peace. Without further delay, it's time for peace."**

In our prayers we will support these young people, their hopes for the future, and the new beginning that a just peace would bring them, their families and their communities. We join with them, and all people of faith – Jewish, Christian and Muslim, Israeli and Palestinian – to say we will never give up HOPE that peace will come.

*Leader:* Let us pray.

Our loving heavenly Father, more than ever before, the security and well-being of one people cannot be separated from the fate of another people, nor from us. With our Israeli and Palestinian brothers and sisters, we pray for sustained political engagement leading to a treaty of peace that will finally put an end to the occupation imposed by one people on another, granting freedom to Palestinians, giving security to Israelis, and freeing all from fear.

**RESPONSE: Amen.**

## HYMN

*During the lesson, parishioners may bring their watches to the altar or place them in view at their seat.*

**LESSON: ECCLESIASTES 3: 1-8** (Arabic, English, or Hebrew)

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to reap, and a time to sow; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for PEACE.

**STORY ONE: BY AREEN ARAMIN**, A 15-YEAR-OLD PALESTINIAN GIRL FROM ANATA, JUST OUTSIDE JERUSALEM, WHOSE SISTER ABEER WAS KILLED BY AN ISRAELI SOLDIER THREE YEARS AGO.



*I cannot believe that I lost my sister so quickly and so suddenly. I now have lost the meaning and taste of life. Abeer was killed by a rubber bullet shot straight in her head while we were leaving our primary school in Anata, a village surrounded by the wall and settlements. The soldier killed my sister in front of my eyes and I could do nothing to save her except shout and cry.*

I still wake up at night waiting for her to join me in my room and snuggle close to me as we used to in the past, but she will not come.

I only wish to know why she was killed and how does the soldier who committed such a crime against an innocent child feel? Why do the Israeli soldiers kill our children, yet are spared from punishment and trial? A killer of innocent children cannot be a hero. I honestly wish that no child in the world, either a Palestinian or an Israeli child, would be harmed...for children are innocent.

My eyes are filled with hot, sincere tears. Despite the irreparable loss and separation of my sister Abeer, I believe that her memory and soul deserve a constant non-violent response. We must achieve a minimum degree of justice for all.

**MUSIC (or silence)**

**STORY TWO: AN ENCOUNTER** WITH AN ANONYMOUS 19-YEAR-OLD SOLDIER IN THE WEST BANK, BY MANDLA HK MNDEBELE (AKA – ABO SAMURA) OF THE ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAMME IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL.

The Accompaniment Programme supports local and international efforts to end the Israeli occupation and bring about a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a just peace based on international law and United Nations resolutions. 'Ecumenical Accompaniers,' volunteers who serve in this WCC programme, accompany Palestinians and Israelis affected by the occupation and carry out advocacy work for peace in their home countries.

*On a cool morning in early September*, I stood with a colleague at the Falameya agricultural gate in the north of the West Bank. I had been there since 4:30 a.m., watching as Palestinian farmers queued to reach their land on the far side of the gate. Many Palestinians need permits to access their own land, which has been swallowed up by Israel's separation barrier. We were present to ensure that the "lucky" few who had the right papers were able to reach what had been taken from them by the miles of razor wire and concrete walls.

As the early morning queue faded away and we prepared to leave, a soldier manning the gate came up to me. He asked where I was from and what I was doing; then he did something surprising. He sat down on a small cement block that marked the approach to the gate, and invited me to do the same. Reluctantly, I sat next to him, and we began to talk.



His name was Michael, and soon he would be 20 years old. He lived at a nearby army base. Soon, he would have some time off to visit his family. He had not seen his best friend for three months.

Michael asked me about my country, South Africa. He had heard of the seaside town of Richards Bay, and said he would like to live there for a while. But the subject inevitably turned back to the army. I told him that in South Africa, military service was optional. He said he wished it was so in Israel.

"I know of people who, after their army term, they are half crazy. It is not good, my friend. I was once stationed in Gaza...." Michael was silent for a long time. "My friend, it was bad...I tell you now it is very bad. I have seen people dying, people being brutally killed, and I have lost a lot of friends and family. I am saying 'family' because, when you are in the army, the troops that you serve with are your family."

Michael turned to another topic. "As a sergeant, I have nine new young people that have just completed their training, and they are so excited....I feel pity for them, because they do not know anything about the army."

I was not sure what to say, but the young officer filled the silence. He started talking about his dreams. "When I was a little boy I was a good swimmer, but that has all being destroyed by the army," he said. "After my army service, I want to go to Australia to train and learn more about swimming and surfing, and to start my own club. I will make sure that I discourage all the kids there from joining the army – I want to be as far away from it as possible," he said.

As we sat there in the morning sun, I realized we had been deep in conversation for over half an hour. I got up to leave, and carry on with my day. Michael said, "You know, my friend, I so wish to wake up one day and have somebody tell me that the conflict, or the war, or the whole situation between Israel and Palestine is over. That is my dream."

### **MUSIC (or silence)**

**STORY THREE: BY FATIMA THAHER NA'AMNEH, A 16-YEAR-OLD PALESTINIAN GIRL FROM FAQUA' VILLAGE IN THE WEST BANK.**

*How beautiful is the drop of rain* falling from the sky while bringing life to earth. Each drop is very precious. Unfortunately, the Israeli occupation army still denies us our basic right of life by denying us access to our water resources.

Since I was small I was taught this verse of Quran: “We made from water every living thing.” I did not really understand what that meant until I became a grown up, and realized that without water there will be no life on the face of earth. Water is a gift from God that brings life to humans, animals and plants.

Water scarcity is a major obstacle to our agricultural and economic development. In the West Bank and Gaza strip there are aquifers with a capacity of 750 million cubic meters, but Israel confiscates 89% of it, thus denying the Palestinian people their own resources. Palestinians must seek permission from Israel to access water resources in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel also denies the Palestinians from constructing sanitation projects, which causes sewage water to reach the aquifers and is creating a huge health problem for the Palestinians who drink from shallow water wells. Palestinian farmers are denied water to irrigate their crops, and overpumping of water has left 90% of the land in the Jordan valley unusable.

Water is God's gift to the world. It should be used to bring life, not to deny life. My village of Faqua', located to the northeast of Jenin in the northern West Bank, is suffering from lack of access to water. Because there is no clean water network connected to West Bank villages, we have to buy water from private vendors, which is very expensive to my family. Many families cannot afford to buy clean water. Many children in my village regularly get sick because they are forced to drink contaminated water. Clean drinking water—it has been created by God, and should be available to all.

### **MUSIC (or silence)**

**STORY FOUR: BY CHEN ALON, A FORMER ISRAELI MAJOR AND NOW ACTIVIST WITH “COMBATANTS FOR PEACE,” AN ORGANIZATION OF PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS WHO HAVE RENOUNCED VIOLENCE AND NOW STRUGGLE TOGETHER FOR PEACE, SPEAKING BEFORE A GROUP OF PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS GATHERED IN BEIT JALA.**

*I was recruited for the IDF* (Israeli Defence Force) at the very beginning of the first Intifada. I feel emotional now because although I have spoken many times in the past of my experiences from the time of serving in the occupied territories, I have never spoken about it in front of Palestinians until today, especially not ones that I may have even fired at.

In 2001, on my last night in the occupied territories, I demolished a house not far from here, in El Chader. Later on during the same day, we initiated a curfew over the village of Husan and I could see Arab girls, at the same age as my daughter, in the village which in fact became a jail. While looking at these young Palestinian girls on the embankment which blocked the village, I was speaking to my wife on the telephone. She was troubled, telling me that no one can bring our daughter Tamar home from the

kindergarten, and that she must find a solution. The memory of my daughter and the reality of the routine and the simple daily problems had shaken me.

I guess I was brought up with paranoia, thinking that everyone is out to get us. At the age of 32, after seeing the Palestinian girls on the embankment in the village which I closed off, and after demolishing a house the previous night, it hit me profoundly that these girls are no different than my own daughter. It was then that I decided that I will no longer take part in this situation, no matter what price I would have to pay.

I believe that our voice can make a difference in our societies. I hope that we may be able to turn all those incidents in which we crossed the lines and carried out forbidden actions into means for finally ending the occupation before it ends our societies and leads to their total collapsing. I would like to act upon my realization, translate it into actions together with representatives from the other side and draw red lines for both of our societies.

### **SHORT SILENCE FOR MEDITATION**

*Leader:* We have heard the voices crying for peace on both sides, young Israelis and Palestinians saying: It's time for peace!

### **CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION**

**HYMN OF PEACE:** LORD MAKE ME A CHANNEL OF YOUR PEACE (a prayer of St. Francis)

*[Chorus]*

*Make me a channel of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred let me bring your love.*

*Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord.*

*And where there's doubt, true faith in you.*

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

*[Chorus]*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, only light.  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

*[Chorus]*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
In giving to all men that we receive,  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

**GOSPEL: MARK 12: 28-31 (Arabic, English, Hebrew)**

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

**AFFIRMATION**

*Leader:* Christ, You are our Peace.

**All: You have broken down the hostility between us.**

*Leader:* There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female.

**All: We are all one in You.**

*Leader:* God was in You, reconciling the world to God,

**All: And has enlisted us in this service of reconciliation.**

*Leader:* We are in Your body,

**All: And are members one of another.**

*Leader:* We are a community of the Holy Spirit,

**All: Called to be witnesses of God’s love.**

**THE PEACE**

*Leader:* Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body on the cross; we meet in His name and share His peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All: And also with you!**

**SHARING OF THE PEACE:**

*Each person turns to share a sign of peace with others.*

**HYMN**

**PRAYERS**

*Leader:* Let us pray.

**Prayer 1:**

We remember all the people of Israel and Palestine who suffer - Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, Israeli and Palestinian - all those who have been victims of violence, who are bereaved, who are isolated by checkpoints and walls, who are in prison, and all those who live in fear.

We ask that you will intervene and allow all people of faith to join together to make their beliefs a driving force for peace. Let the power of your Redemption and your Peace transcend all barriers of cultures and religions and fill the hearts of all who serve you, of both peoples - Israeli and Palestinian - and of all religions. Lord, we pray for Peace.

**RESPONSE: O Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Prayer 2:** A JEWISH PRAYER FOR PEACE, by Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Jerusalem. (*The full text is included as an Appendix on p. 12, and may be used.*)

*Eloheinu V'Elohei Kadmoneinu* (Our God and God of our Ancestors), strengthen us to overcome our fear and to be Your partners in creating the world that You envisioned when You promised our ancestors, "Through you shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1, 26:4, 28:14).

When we think that we protect ourselves by doing to others what has been done to us, help us realize that today it is we Israelis who have the overwhelming power to act justly or unjustly.

Both we and the Palestinian people with whom we are destined to share this land strive to strengthen our claims to this land by denying claims of the other. May we all come to understand that two peoples have deep roots in this land. Both we and those with whom we will either live together or die together have desecrated Your Image as we have harmed each other. However, we all so deeply feel our own victim-hood that we are furious when accused of being victimizers. Help us all to understand that violence corrupts even when our cause is just, and that the difference between being a victim and a victimizer is less than a hair's breadth (Rabbi Shmuel Tamerat). We Israelis and Palestinians know how to see each other as strangers – as "other". Yet the word *shalom* (peace) comes from the same root as *shalem* (whole). Open our hearts to perceive that through your Oneness, we are all one.

Help us to overcome and grant us courage. Though we know in our hearts the path we must take, we have failed to do so. *Barukh Ata Adonai* (Blessed are You Adonai) Sovereign of the universe, who gives strength to the weary.

**RESPONSE: Amen.**

**Prayer 3:** A CHRISTIAN PRAYER FOR PEACE, by Elise Aghazarian, Jerusalem.

We pray for more active voices that challenge ambivalence.  
For a more effective, profound, and empathetic spirit of solidarity.  
For Palestinian farmers whose lands are expropriated, for families whose houses  
are demolished, for people who are losing their right to live in their cities.  
For West Bankers who are not allowed to pray in Jerusalem.  
For students who are tired from standing on checkpoints.  
For Palestinian women.  
For political prisoners.  
For those challenging different forms of pain.  
For the besieged in Gaza.  
For horizons that challenge walls, for steadfastness that challenges despair.  
For the freedom of Palestine.

**RESPONSE: Amen**

**Prayer 4:** A MUSLIM PRAYER FOR PEACE, by Abd Al-Rahman, a carpentry student at the Vocational Training Center, in Gaza, a Church-related institution.

In The Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,  
Liberate our prisoners.  
Assist us, for our homes are destroyed.  
Protect us from frightening Wars.  
Lead us everywhere.  
Show us the right Path.  
Let it rain and do not leave us thirsty.  
Make our country safe.  
Fix our hurt from corruption.  
Mend our internal affairs in this country.  
Make this country peaceful.  
Protect us from air strikes.  
Free us from occupation.

**RESPONSE: Amen**

**Prayer 5:**

We thank you for the links of Churches worldwide with Bethlehem, root of our Christian faith, and throughout the Holy Land. We thank you for the friendships of ordinary people worldwide with Christian communities in the Holy Land.

We remember the humanitarian work of aid agencies and their local partners in the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and Israel, who work to make peace possible. For the pastoral care of many doctors and nurses, and the work of many teachers, priests, and religious, who give committed service working together for the good of others: Father, we thank you.

**RESPONSE: O Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Prayer 6:**

We thank you for the work of the World Council of Churches and of churches throughout the world that lift up the need for solidarity with the Christians in the birthplace of Christianity and with their neighbours, all of whom are suffering very much.

We remember the work of the Ecumenical Accompaniment teams who stand with ordinary people, of all faiths, in daily lives so marked by Occupation. Father, we pray for peace.

**RESPONSE: O Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Prayer 7:**

We ask for your mercy and support for the Christian presence in the birthplace of Christianity. And we remember especially the tiny Christian community in Gaza, and all in Gaza who live in the midst of despair, isolation and immense suffering.

We ask that they will feel your light working to bring them through the darkness. We ask that the people of Gaza will be inspired by peace, resist oppression with love, and that the siege of Gaza will be lifted and dignity restored to all.

Jesus, through your birth, life and death, you gave us a ministry of reconciliation. We ask you to give strength to all who work for peace in Israel and Palestine and to all who promote the need for dialogue and understanding. Lord, uphold them in their work.

**RESPONSE: O Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Prayer 8:** A JERUSALEM PRAYER FOR PEACE, from the Churches in Jerusalem.

*Leader:* Finally, as part of this World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, the Churches in Jerusalem have sent us a prayer for peace. We are invited to pray with them, joining churches around the world, and saying together:

**Gracious God our Heavenly Father, Creator and sustainer of each human life, we give you thanks and praise for your gift to us of your only Son, Jesus Christ -- His birth in Bethlehem, His ministry throughout the Holy Land, His death on the Cross and His Resurrection and Ascension. He came to redeem this land and the world. He came as the Prince of Peace.**

**We give thanks to you for every church and parish around the world that is praying with us this day for peace. Our Holy City and our land are much in need of peace.**

**In your immeasurable mystery and love for all, let the power of your Redemption and your Peace transcend all barriers of cultures and religions and fill the hearts of all who serve you here, of both peoples - Israeli and Palestinian - and of all religions.**

**In the land you made holy, free us all from the sin of indifference, contempt and violence which only brings hatred and killing. Free the souls and hearts of Israelis and Palestinians. Give liberation, freedom and dignity, to the people of Gaza who live under trials, threats and blockades. Guide the leaders in this land, purify their minds and hearts, to become true servers of their peoples. Speak your word of love for all to hear, guide us to justice in all lands, grant us power to proclaim your reign, bridge the gaps that divide and unsettle us and let your Kingdom come.**

**All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, barrier breaker and sharer of our humanity, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, who prays in and with us all. Amen.**

*Watches placed on the altar may be retrieved at this time, or as part of the final recessional.*

**THE LORD'S PRAYER:** *Said by all in their own language.*

**THE BLESSING**

**FINAL HYMN:** YARABBA SSALAMI *(The final hymn may be sung as a procession of light, with each member of the congregation receiving a lighted candle to carry from the church as they leave.)*

رطمأ انيلء ماسلا ايء ر ماسلا Yarabba ssalami amter aalalya ssalam  
م لأما انبولق لاسلا ايء ر ماسلا Yarabba ssalami imla' qulubana ssalam

God of peace, in your wisdom  
Give us the will to seek peace;  
God of peace and of healing,  
Fill with your peace every heart!

## **Appendix:** A JEWISH PRAYER FOR PEACE, by Rabbi Arik Ascherman, Jerusalem.

*Eloheinu V'Elohei Kadmoneinu* (Our God and God of our Ancestors), strengthen us to overcome our fear and to be Your partners in creating the world that You envisioned when You promised our ancestors, "Through you shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1, 26:4, 28:14).

You know that we have so many reasons to hate and fear after 2,000 years of exile and oppression, and after 100 years of struggling for survival against those who would exile us again from our homeland. We have so many reasons to believe that most of the world is against us, that we are a small nation surrounded by enemies much more numerous than we, and that we must rely on our own military might and the might of our allies.

However, our prophets taught us, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely upon horses. They have put their trust in abundance of chariots, in vast numbers of horseman, and they have not turned to the Holy one of Israel" (Isaiah 31:1). Zechariah declared in Your name, "Not by might and not by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

Help us to understand that today it is we Israelis who hold overwhelming power in our hands. That power is the greatest challenge to Your ethical imperatives that we passed from generation to generation, because we now have the ability to do to others what was done to us. Our sages have taught us, "Who is truly mighty? One who overcomes his/her impulses" (Pirkei Avot), and "One who turns an enemy into a friend" (Pirkei Avot D'Rabbi Natan).

All too often we have used our newfound power to act unjustly. Yet, You know that we will enjoy the peace and security we so deeply desire and deserve only when we recognize Your Image in every human being and fulfil Your command, "Justice, Justice shall you pursue, that you may live and inherit the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Deuteronomy 16:20). Even just goals must be pursued in a just manner (Midrash).

When we think that we protect ourselves by doing to others what has been done to us, help us realize that today it is we Israelis who have the overwhelming power to act justly or unjustly. Both we and the Palestinian people with whom we are destined to share this land strive to strengthen our claims to this land by denying claims of the other. May we all come to understand that two peoples have deep roots in this land. Both we and those with whom we will either live together or die together have desecrated Your Image as we have harmed each other. However, we all so deeply feel our own victim-hood that we are furious when accused of being victimizers. Help us all to understand that violence corrupts even when our cause is just, and that the difference between being a victim and a victimizer is less than a hair's breadth (Rabbi Shmuel Tamerat). We Israelis and Palestinians know how to see each other as strangers – as "other". Yet the word *shalom* (peace) comes from the same root as *shalem* (whole). Open our hearts to perceive that through your Oneness, we are all one.

You help those who are willing to help themselves, and we know in our souls the path we must take. Yet we fail to do so. We therefore turn to You, Who know the desperate desire to find the way to peace embedded in our innermost thoughts and the deepest recesses of our hearts. We cannot pray to You to do our work for us. We pray that You grant all the peoples of your Holy Land the strength and courage to carry out in deeds what we already know in our hearts – Justice, wholeness and honouring Your Image in every human being will bring us all the peace and security You ordained of old.

Help us to overcome and grant us courage. Though we know in our hearts the path we must take, we have failed to do so. *Barukh Ata Adonai* - Blessed are You *Adonai*, Sovereign of the universe, who gives strength to the weary.