



PRAYER FOR PEACE

יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהינו ואלהי
אבותינו,
שתבטל מלחמות ושפיכות דמים מן
העולם.
ותמשיך שלום גדול ונפלא בעולם.

ולא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד
מלחמה,

רק יכירו וידעו כל יושבי תבל האמת
לאמתה,

אשר לא באנו לזה העולם בשביל ריב
ומחלוקת חס ושלום,
ולא בשביל שנאה וקנאה וקנטור
ושפיכות דמים חס ושלום,
רק באנו לעולם כדי להכיר ולדעת
אוהך, תהבךך לנצח,

ויקים מקרא שקתוב:

“ונתתי שלום בארץ
ושכבתם ואין מחריד,

May it be Your will, *Adonai*, our
God, and God of our ancestors,
that You annul war and
bloodshed from the world,
and that You extend a vast and
wonderful peace to the world.

Nation shall no longer “take
up sword against nation; they
shall never again know war.”⁴¹

Rather, may all the earth’s
inhabitants recognize and
know the essential truth:

That we’ve not come into this
world for strife and divisiveness,
nor for hatred, provocation,
or bloodshed;

We’ve come to this world
only to encounter You, Holy
Blessed One, forever,

That through us be manifested
what is written:

“I shall grant peace in the land,
and you shall rest without fear,



השבתי חיה רעה מן הארץ.

“חרב לא תעבור בארצכם.”

ונאמר אמן.

and I will remove vicious
beasts from the land,
and no sword will pass
through your land.”⁴²
And let us say, Amen.

— Rabbi Natan Sternhartz (1780–
1844), *Likkutei Tefilot*, II, 53,
Ukraine

In the 1830s, Rabbi Natan Sternhartz (known as Reb Noson) and his small community of friends faced public criticism, boycotts, arrest, and even physical violence at the hands of their opponents. Nonetheless, Reb Noson followed his teacher, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, in emphasizing joy, humility, and the yearning for peace in the face of attacks. Over the course of his life, he composed many prayers based on the Torah teachings of Rebbe Nachman, translating the ideas of his master into what the rabbinic sages of the Talmud called “the service of the heart.” This prayer, based on a teaching of Rebbe Nachman responding to the Napoleonic wars of the early 1800s, articulates the painful absurdity of war, and its impact on human beings, the economy, and even the earth. By expressing his deepest longing for peace in the form of prayer, Reb Noson models how we too might express our heartbreak and vision of a world without violence and war.⁴³

⁴² Leviticus 26:6.

⁴³ Rabbi Dr. Ariel Burger, founding director of The Witness Institute and author of *Witness: Lessons from Elie Wiesel’s Classroom*.