



*JUFJ member Virginia Spatz prepared these readings and prayers for those who want to join us in their Shabbat observances at home or in their own congregations or minyans. Feel free to use these texts in your Shabbat observance in whatever way makes sense to you.*

---

It is not permitted to fast, to entreat, or to plead asking mercy from heaven on Shabbat. Even those terrible times when a public fast would be decreed and the shofar blown, one does not fast or blow the shofar on Shabbat or on holidays. If a city is besieged by a foreign force or endangered by a flood, or if a boat is threatened with capsizing at sea, then an exception is made and one sounds the alarm in order to help those who are in danger, and one prays and asks for mercy for them.

— Maimonides (1135-1204 CE), Mishneh Torah, Hilkhhot Shabbat 30:7-8, 12  
*Siddur Lev Shalem*, Rabbinical Assembly 2016, p.33

---

Holy One,  
wherever lamps are burning,  
tables set, and seating arranged on Sabbath Eve,  
nurture those gatherings;  
**inspire all who experience this sanctuary in time  
to renewed effort toward safety, nourishment, and comfort for all.**

Hear this, too, Holy One —  
wherever light is lacking,  
food sparse, and conditions rough this week,  
**accept no prayer** — angel or human — on our behalf **for a continuation of suffering.**  
Let no appearance of indifference, helplessness, or political confusion  
be understood as a plea in our name for the perpetuation of evil.

Holy One, we welcome the Sabbath  
in gratitude for its peace and blessing  
and we dedicate ourselves, and beg Your help,  
to extend that peace and blessing to those most in need.  
**Help us, as we work to end the horrors perpetuated in our name.  
May this week's lamps and tables and seating persist and multiply.**

And we all say: **Amen**

— Virginia Spatz (<http://songeveryday.org>), in support of Lights for Liberty

Prayer must not be dissonant with the rest of living. The mercifulness, gentleness, which pervades us in moments of prayer is but a ruse or a bluff if it is inconsistent with the way we live at other moments...

We do now know what to pray for. **Should we not pray for the ability to be shocked at the atrocities committed by man, for the capacity to be dismayed at our inability to be dismayed?**

Prayer should be an act of catharsis, of purgation of emotions, as well as a process of self-clarification, of examining priorities, of elucidating responsibility. Prayer not verified by conduct is an act of desecration and blasphemy. Do not take a word of prayer in vain. Our deeds must not be a refutation of our prayers...

**Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods.**

— Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-72). "No Man Is An Island"  
*Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays*. NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1996. p.261-262.

## Ana B'Khoach

---

Strengthen us, please, for this night  
Help us, guide us, to unite  
Too many crying far too long  
Cleanse us of hatred, angers, wrong  
Amplify what's good in our song  
With mighty hand all bonds untie  
Release all captives, hear our cry

— Virginia Spatz, inspired by, but no attempt at translating, 42-word mystical prayer, *Ana, B'khoach*

---

*Lights for Liberty Kabbalat Shabbat in DC is cosponsored with Adat Shalom, Am Kolel, Bethesda Jewish Congregation, Fabrangen Havurah, HIAS, Hill Havurah, the Jewish Studio, and Kol Ami of Northern VA.*

*Lights for Liberty Candle Lighting and Vigil in Baltimore is cosponsored with CAIR and CASA.*

*This document is a resource of JUFJ, created by JUFJ member Virginia Spatz.*

**JEW'S UNITED  
FOR JUSTICE**

**THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.**