

Prayers for Peace in the Middle East

On the Eve of the Annapolis Peace Conference

*From the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative For Peace in the Middle East
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Sustain together in undiminished hope, O God of hope,
those who continue to labor with undiminished determination
to build peace in the land from which, of old,
out of brokenness, violence and destruction,
nevertheless hope emerged for so many of faith. . . .
Bless all the spiritual seed of Abraham together
with the light of your Presence.
For in the light of your Presence
we have found a way of justice and mercy
and a vision of Peace.
We praise you O God, Giver of Peace,
who commands us to Peace. *Amen*

Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, Emeritus
Northshore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL

God of mercy and compassion,
of grace and reconciliation,
pour your power upon all your children in the Middle East:
Jews, Muslims and Christians,
Palestinians and Israelis.
Let hatred be turned into love, fear to trust, despair to hope,
oppression to freedom, occupation to liberation,
that violent encounters may be replaced by loving embraces,
and peace and justice could be experienced by all. *Amen.*

The Reverend Said Ailabouni, Senior Pastor
Grace Lutheran Church, La Grange, IL

In the Name of God, The Everlasting Merciful, The Cherisher
Of the Worlds and Worthy of all Praise,
Our Lord: You have created us from a single (pair) of a male
And a female and made us into Nations and Tribes that we may
Know one another (not that we may despise each other) so
Help us to love each other and take the hatred and anger from our
Hearts so that People of The Book (Jews, Christians and Muslims)
In the Middle East may live in Peace and Justice. *Amen*

Dawud Ahmad Assad
Council of Mosques, USA, New York, NY

O God Source of Life, Creator of Peace. . .
Help Your children, anguished and confused,
To understand the futility of hatred and violence
And grant them the ability to stretch across
Political, religious and national boundaries
So they may confront horror and fear
By continuing together
In the search for justice, peace and truth. . . .
With every fiber of our being, we beg You, O God,
To help us not to fail nor falter. *Amen*

Rabbi H. Rolando Matalon
Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, New York, NY

Lord God, we turn to you in these trying hours when conflict is a daily reality for our sisters and brothers in Israel and Palestine. We promise you to work to our utmost for peace and reconciliation in the region. But we know we cannot do it alone. We very much need the strength of your presence in our midst if we are to overcome the obstacles before us. So our prayer at this moment is that you add your support to our efforts, that you show yourself as a tower of strength in those moments when the barriers seem impassable. Together we can become beacons of hope for just and peaceful societies in the land so very dear to the peoples of your covenant. *Amen.*

Reverend John T. Pawlikowski, OSM
Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, IL

Almighty God!
After almost a century of mistrust and fratricide,
you inspired Jews, Christians and Muslims
to take the path of reconciliation in the Middle East. . . .
We ask for your forgiveness, O God,
yet we find it hard to forgive our past enemies.
May Your Words touch those who still stray
in the wilderness of vengeful violence,
forgetting your command to "forgive and overlook,
till God accomplishes His Purpose;
for God hath power over all things." *Amen*

Abdelwahab Hechiche
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

**(For more information and/or to become involved in the
Interreligious Initiative for Peace contact: usicpme@aol.com)**

Summary of the Geneva Accord Israeli-Palestinian Civil Society Initiative Signed in Geneva December 1, 2003

The Geneva Accord, based on parameters proposed by President Clinton, is an unofficial framework for peace, negotiated by former officials of the Israeli and Palestinian governments. The Israeli team was headed by Yossi Beilin, Minister of Justice in the Government of Yitzhak Rabin. The Palestinian team was headed by Yasser Abed Rabbo, former Minister of Information in the Palestinian Authority. This civil society initiative offers benchmark principles and ideas for realistic compromises for mutually acceptable solutions, including on crucial, final status issues, i.e., borders, security, settlements, refugees and Jerusalem. *(Public opinion polls indicate that majorities of Israelis and of Palestinians would accept a peace agreement along these lines.)*

The Geneva Accord between Israel and Palestine includes:

"Reaffirming their determination to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, and to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity and security based on a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace and achieving historic reconciliation;

"Recognizing that peace requires the transition from the logic of war and confrontation to the logic of peace and cooperation, and that acts and words characteristic of the state of war are neither appropriate nor acceptable in the era of peace;

"Affirming their deep belief that the logic of peace requires compromise, and that the only viable solution is a two-state solution based on UNSC Resolution 242 and 338;

"Affirming that this agreement marks the recognition of the right of the Jewish people to statehood and the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to statehood;

"Recognizing that after years of living in mutual fear and insecurity, both peoples need to enter an era of peace, security and stability, entailing all necessary actions by the parties to guarantee the realization of this era;

"Recognizing each other's right to peaceful and secure existence within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

"Determined to establish relations based on cooperation and the commitment to live side by side as good neighbors aiming both separately and jointly to contribute to the well-being of their peoples;

"Declaring that this Agreement marks the historic reconciliation between the Palestinians and Israelis, and paves the way to reconciliation between the Arab World and Israel and the establishment of normal, peaceful relations between the Arab states and Israel in accordance with the relevant clauses of the Beirut Arab League Resolution of March 28, 2002;..."

Representatives from Israel and Palestine signed the Geneva Initiative (Accord) which presents detailed maps and concrete arrangements and that constitute a final settlement of the major issues between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, including:

The return of Israel to the pre-67 borders with minor border modifications including the trade of land on a 1:1 basis.

Israel will withdraw settlers from the Palestinian areas

Israel will create a corridor for travel between the West Bank and Gaza, which will remain under Israeli sovereignty and under Palestinian administration and run in accord with Palestinian law

Israel and Palestine will establish cooperative security measures and disband all non-governmental armed bands or militias within their territories, and shall work together to create regional security free from all weapons of mass destruction. Palestine will be a non-militarized state with a strong security force that will maintain border security, police functions, and prevent terrorism.

Without prejudice to freedom of expression and other internationally recognized human rights, Israel and Palestine shall promulgate laws to prevent incitement to irredentism, racism, terrorism and violence and vigorously enforce them.

A Multinational Force will be established to provide security guarantees to the Parties, act as a deterrent, against external attacks on either party to the agreement, protect the territorial integrity of the State of Palestine, and oversee the implementation of the relevant provisions of this Agreement

Jerusalem will become capital of both states. The Temple Mount and East Jerusalem will be under Palestinian control and the Wall and West Jerusalem under Israeli control. The Old City will be open, weapons forbidden, free travel inside to all sectors guaranteed.

Refugees will be compensated both for loss of property and for their refugeehood. They can be resettled in Palestine, in host countries where they currently live, in other countries who agree to accept them, and Israel can, at its sovereign decision, bring in a number of refugees (though it is not mandated to do so at any particular number). An International Commission will be established to supervise the resettlement and compensation for refugees.

Release of all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons over the course of the next 30 months after the governments agree to the Accord.

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