

The following prayers and mediations were assembled by the International Committee for the Peace Council. The Peace Council is a diverse group of religious and spiritual individuals who are internationally known and respected and who have decided to come together, as the Dalai Lama wrote in a recent letter, "to understand one another and work together so that those of us who profess belief in our respective faiths can work for the common cause of humanity".

The Peace Councilors met for the first time in November, 1995 to set their goals and programs. They were not concerned with reconciling creed or theology, but with their responsibilities face-to-face with suffering. They identified seven interdependent threats to peace: religious intolerance; war, violence, and the arms trade; environmental degradation; economic injustice; the population "explosion;" patriarchy (cultures of domination, hierarchy, and control); and oppressive globalization.

Peace Council programs are intended to relieve these causes of suffering and to help people and communities grow in the ways of peace. The Peace Council supports local peacemakers in regions of special need. It gives practical assistance to local peace efforts and spiritually-grounded communities of peace. It asks individuals everywhere to do something that brings peace at least once each day and to pause twice a day for reflection, meditation, or prayer.

The Peace Council also works with the United Nations, governments, and non-governmental organizations.

THE HUMAN FAMILY

BAHA'I:

Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself - Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'l'ah, 71

BUDDHISM:

A state which is not pleasant or enjoyable for me will also not be so for him; and how can I impose on another a state which is not pleasant or enjoyable for me? -Samyutta Nikaya, V

CHRISTIANITY:

So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets. -Matthew 7:12

CONFUCIANISM:

Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you. -Analects 15:23

HINDUISM:

This is the sum of duty: do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you. - Mahabharata, XIII:114

ISLAM:

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself -an-Nawawi, 40 Hadith, 13

JAINISM:

In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self -Mahavira

JUDAISM:

What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the law: all the rest is commentary. - Talmud, Shabbat 31a

NATIVE AMERICAN:

Respect for life is the foundation. - The Great Law of Peace

SIKHISM:

Don't create enmity with anyone as God is within everyone. -Guru Arjan Devji 258, Guru Granth Sahib

ZOROASTRIANISM:

That nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self - Dadistan-i-Dinik,94:5

VEDIC PEACE CHANTS

Om. May the circumstances of all beings be auspicious. May all beings enjoy peace. May all be full and may all prosper and be happy and free from disease. May all strive to be kind to others. May none despair.

Om. Lead me from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to life.

Om. That (Brahman) is full, this (this universe) is full. Fullness is born from fullness. If fullness is removed from fullness, fullness remains.

Om. Peace, Peace, Peace.

Om. May there be peace in the heavens, peace in the skies, and peace on earth. May the waters be peaceful. May the grasses and herbs bring peace to all creatures, and may the plants be at peace also. May the beneficent being bring us peace, and may the way of all creation bring peace throughout the world. May all things be peaceful, and may that peace itself bring further peace. May we also bring peace to all.

Om. Peace. Peace. Peace.

I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw that it was holy.

... Grandfather, Great Spirit... give me the strength to walk the soft earth, a relative to all that is!

- BLACK ELK

My heart is moved by all I cannot save: so much has been destroyed

I have to cast my lot with those who age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.

- ADRIENNE RICH

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.

Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

Peace, Peace, Peace.

-ADAPTED FROM THE UPANISHADS BY SWAMI CHIDANANDA SARASWATI

PRAYER & RESPONSES Sr. Denise Coghlan

READER: Today we pray specially for a world of peace, a world free to celebrate and dance, a world free from mines. We pray for families who have members killed by land mines.

ALL: Comfort them.

READER: We pray for children, women and men struggling to build a new life.

ALL: Give them courage.

LEADER: We pray for a change of heart for the producers of land mines.

ALL: May they use their engineering and business skills for development, not war.

READER: We pray for the deminers.

ALL: Grant them safety and perseverance in their holy work.

LEADER: We pray for countries severely afflicted by land mines.

ALL: May their lands be abundant with rice and corn and food, not desecrated by land mines.

READER: We pray for heads of governments.

ALL: May they uphold the Ottawa treaty to ban land mines, and give funds for demining and for victim assistance.

READER: Dear God, thank you for your loving kindness. Forgive our faults; and help us to do good, not evil.

Whatever God does, the first outburst is always compassion.

- MEISTER ECKHART

In this context of suffering, I want to remind you that tomorrow in Geneva, at the United Nations, an important meeting will begin concerning the elimination of particularly cruel conventional weapons; above all, anti-personnel mines. Tens of millions of these weapons have been scattered in many parts of the world, particularly in Cambodia, Angola, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. They produce devastating consequences for the civilian population, especially children.

I feel the need to direct a heartfelt appeal to all of those responsible: renounce these weapons of death, and decide on a definitive ban on their production, trade, and use.

...God, in Your power and mercy, console those who suffer, and inspire responsibility in those who have the power to decide, so that such tragedies may never be repeated.

- H.H. JOHN PAUL II, 21 IV 1996

Hope. Very fortunately, hope is not absent from the horizon of humanity. Disarmament has taken important steps forward with the signing of the treaty completely banning nuclear testing... This must not however make us less vigilant with regard to the production of increasingly sophisticated conventional and chemical weapons, or indifferent to the problems caused by anti-personnel mines. Regarding the latter, I express the hope that a juridically binding agreement with appropriate provisions for inspection will see the light of day at the meeting scheduled in Brussels next June. Everything must be done in order to build a safer world!

-H.H. JOHN PAUL II, 13 I 1997

MINDFULNESS MUST BE ENGAGED

When I was in Vietnam, so many of our villages were being bombed. Along with my monastic brothers and sisters, I had to decide what to do. Should we continue to practice in our monasteries, or should we leave the meditation halls in order to help the people who were suffering under the bombs? After careful reflection, we decided to do both-to go out and help people and to do so in mindfulness. We called it "engaged Buddhism."

Mindfulness must be engaged. Once there is seeing, there must be acting. Otherwise, what is the use of seeing? We must be aware of the real problems of the world. Then, with mindfulness, we will know what to do and what not to do to be of help. ...Are you planting seeds of joy and peace? I try to do that with every step. Peace is every step. Shall we continue the journey?

- THICH NHAT HANH

THERE CAN BE NO PEACE WITH LAND MINES

Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda

We came here to pray for peace and a world free of landmines. And we know there can be no peace with landmines. but to make peace in the world we must have peace in our minds. To make peace we must remove the landmines in our own hearts which keep us from making peace: hatred, greed, and delusion. We can oppose hatred with loving kindness, greed with generosity, and delusion with wisdom.

Peacemaking begins with us.

Peacemaking requires compassion. It requires the skill of listening. As we listen to the people making, selling, placing, and justifying mines, they will come to trust us. They will begin to listen to us when we tell them about the great suffering caused by mines. Perhaps they are ignorant of the effects of mines.

Only when we listen to others will they listen to us.

We must also listen to those disabled by mines. We must listen with compassion, not pity. We must cultivate loving kindness for our disabled brothers and sisters as a mother loves and protects her newborn baby. For the world is our house and all of its people are our brothers and sisters. To love, protect, and serve them is our duty. When we remove mines and make our home safer for someone, it is as if we were protecting our brother, our sister, our parents, our children. We must extend great gratitude to the deminers of Cambodia and the world, who are making our home safe for all of our human family.

Peacemaking requires mindfulness. We must decide that making peace is more important than producing, selling, justifying, or using mines. We must decide to observe the first precept of non-killing and not depriving other beings of life.

Peacemaking requires selflessness. To make peace, the skills of teamwork and cooperation are essential.

To end the devastation caused by landmines we must all work together in Cambodia as well as with our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan, Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, and every country throughout the world. Peacemaking requires wisdom. Peace is a path that is chosen consciously. It is not an aimless wandering, but a step-by-step journey. We pray that wisdom and compassion will be present in the deliberations of the governments.

With peacemakers of all faiths we commit ourselves to making peace every day. We will continue to sharpen our skills for peace. We will continue to pray, walk, and act for peace and a world free of landmines here and in every corner of the world.

May all beings be free from fear.

May all beings be free from suffering.

May all beings dwell in peace.

Close to the mine fields the situation of the hungry is even worse. They are often willing to scavenge in the minefield for food or for something to sell to buy food. Some types of mine casing can be sold for motor bike spare parts, they tell me, but you have to go in there to disable the mine. Sometimes the parents of a hungry family can be recruited to do dangerous or violent acts. A small amount of money can buy the services of a very poor man.

-CAMBODIAN VILLAGER

PRAYER

Baha'u'llih

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.

MEDITATION

Most Rev. Desmond M. Tutu

Lord, how can I serve you without arms?

How can I walk in your way without feet?

I was collecting sticks for the fire when I lost my arms,

I was taking the goats to water when I lost my feet.

I have a head but my head does not understand why there are land mines in the grazing land or why there is a trip wire across the dusty road to the market.

My heart is filled with a long ache. I want to share your pain but I cannot. It is too deep for me. You look at me but I cannot bear your gaze. The arms factory provides a job for my son and my taxes paid for the development of "smart" bombs. I did not protest when the soldiers planted fear into the earth that smothers the old people and the anxious mothers, and fills the young men with hate.

Lord, we are all accomplices in the crime of war which is a lust for power at all costs. The cost is too much for humanity to bear.

Lord, give us back our humanity, our *ubuntu*... Teach us to serve you without arms. Amen

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO A CULTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE, RESPECT, JUSTICE, AND PEACE. WE SHALL NOT OPPRESS, INJURE, TORTURE, OR KILL OTHER HUMAN BEINGS, FORSAKING VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF SETTling DIFFERENCES WE INVITE ALL PEOPLE, WHETHER RELIGIOUS OR NOT, TO DO THE SAME.

- Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration [signed by leaders from the world's faiths at the Parliament of the World's Religions, Chicago, 1993.]

AFFIRMATIONS *Rev. Marcus Braybrooke*

I

READER: We think with compassion of all who have been bereaved, injured, or maimed by land mines.

ALL: May they find comfort.

READER: We think with compassion of communities divided by fear and hatred.

ALL: May they know peace.

READER: We think with gratitude of those who clear land mines and seek to ban them.

ALL: May they have courage.

II

READER: We think of those who make and plant land mines.

ALL: May their consciences be awakened to what they do.

READER: We acknowledge the prejudice, greed, and lack of concern in our own hearts.

ALL: May we become aware of the sufferings of others.

READER: We recognize the failure of the nations to which we belong to seek peace and pursue it.

ALL: May we help awaken our nation to its urgent responsibility.

READER: We know that the religions of the world have been misused to foment violence and hatred.

ALL: May people of faith everywhere work together for understanding and peace.

FROM THE PRAYERS OF THE BUDDHIST MONK TENZIN GYATSO,
14TH DALAI LAMA OF TIBET

Most glorious possessor of all good qualities

Who thinks of all beings as one's own child,

All Buddhas of the three times, Bodhisattvas, and disciples

Please listen to my sad true words.

May those who suffer without interruption

Bearing the burden of countless dark deeds

Find an ocean of peace free from unbearable fears

Of sickness, war, famine, and so forth.

*May those who are crazed by evil delusions
And bring harm to themselves and suffering to others
Be an object of compassion, gain great understanding,
And enjoy friendship and love with all sentient beings.*

*For as long as space remains, For as long as beings reside in
Samsara,
There may I also remain
To clear away the misery of others.*

*Both here and throughout this
entire vast world
May sickness, war, famine, and so forth end now.
May all enjoy the wealth of the Dharma and the bliss of good virtue;
May this glorious wealth and bliss grow without end.*

FOR THE SAKE OF MY BROTHERS AND FRIENDS
FOR THE SAKE OF MY SISTERS AND FRIENDS
SHALOM - PEACE TO YOU.
- Jewish prayer

PRAYER FOR PEACE *Rabbi Nathan of Braslav* [Likkutei Tefilot, 2, 53]
May it be pleasing before Thee, Lord our God and God of our Mothers and Fathers:
To abolish wars and shedding of blood from the world,
And to extend a great and wondrous peace through the world.
No more shall nation lift up sword against nation, and no more shall they learn war.
Only let all the dwellers on earth recognize and know the very truth:
That we have not come to this world for the sake of strife and division (God forbid),
Nor for the sake of hatred and envy, provocation and shedding of blood (God forbid),
Only we have come to the world in order to recognize and know Thee.
Be Thou Blessed Forever. . .
May the Scripture be fulfilled, as it is written: And I will give peace in the land
And you shall lie down with none to make you tremble
And I will cause evil beasts to cease from the land
And the sword shall not pass through your land.

AND THEY SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES
AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS;
NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION,
NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE;
BUT THEY SHALL SIT EVERY ONE UNDER THE VINE
AND UNDER THE TREE
AND NONE SHALL MAKE THEM AFRAID.
- Micah 4:3-4

The World was not left to us by our parents, it was lent to us by our children.
- African proverb

PRAYER & READING

Dr. Dalil Boubakeur

Glory to God, creator of all. It is he who gives us life, he who gives us death. He is most high, omniscient. God of creation, light of lights, created man to benefit from that light which is the mercy of the heavens and the earth.

God is the Peace that is a boon of Allah for all of humanity. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, " A person's faith is expressed by three things: justice, charity, and peace."

The believer prays, "O God, you are Peace; lead us to your Paradise, the home of Peace."

In this world of divisions, atrocities, and wars, may the innocent be spared. Their hands are clean. May their steps never find the minefields of death and mutilation.

May we be horrified and forever haunted by the images of children torn apart, fitted with prostheses, or bedridden for life. As long as humanity can even imagine such crimes, we call upon God to send us his justice and to protect us from evil.

God of all, ruler of humankind, protect us from evil, whether from humans or from the devil's temptation.

QUR' AN: SURAH 1: THE SEVEN VERSES

1. *In the name of Allah the all-merciful, most compassionate*
2. *Praised be Allah, Lord of the universe,*
3. *The all-merciful, most-compassionate,*
4. *Lord of the day of judgment,*
5. *It is you alone we adore, you alone are our succor,*
6. *Show us the straight path,*
7. *The path of those whom you have blessed, not the path of those who have incurred your wrath, nor the path of those who have strayed.*

OH GOD,
YOU ARE PEACE
FROM YOU COMES PEACE
TO YOU RETURNS PEACE
REVIVE US WITH A SALUTATION OF PEACE
AND LEAD US TO YOUR ABODE OF PEACE.

-Muslim daily prayer

I support the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. The terrible toll that landmines take clearly shows the immense destruction and suffering that these awful weapons are capable of causing. We, therefore, should consider the banning of landmines as a step towards ultimately achieving global demilitarization, for which I am determined to do whatever I can.

As a Buddhist monk to whom compassion is the core practice, I especially admire the noble work of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. The ethical aspect of compassion is to refrain from harming others-not just fellow human beings but all living beings. That is why it is important that we try to inculcate the value of compassion in our hearts while making efforts to ban destructive weapons, such as landmines.

-H.H. TENZIN GYATSO, XIV DALAI LAMA

KARANIYAMETTA SUTTA *The Discourse on loving-kindness [Suttanipata: 1-8]*

This is what should be done by one skilled in good who would attain that state of peace: That person should be able, upright, truly straight and gentle and not proud, contented, easy to support, with few duties and frugal habits, calm in faculties and discreet, not puffed up, not greedy among lay-supporters. Let that person not do even the slightest thing which later on the wise might blame. One should contemplate thus: May all beings be happy and secure. Whatever living beings there are, weak or strong,

omitting none, those which are long or great, middle-sized, short, subtle or gross, and those which are seen, or unseen, and those which dwell far or near, beings and spirits: may they all be happy! Let none deceive another, nor despise anyone at all, or with anger or thoughts of hate wish suffering for another. Thus as a mother guards her only child with her life, in the same way one should care for all beings. One's mind should develop loving-kindness for all the world, without limits. One's mind should extend above, below, and all around, unbounded, without malice or enmity. Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, one should remain alert and firmly mindful of this. This is Divine: abiding in the here and now, free from ignorance, not subject to narrow views, free from greed for sensual pleasures, virtuous and possessed of profound insight. This is the way that leads to Nirvana.

MAY I BE HAPPY.
MAY I BE PEACEFUL.
MAY I BE FREE.

MAY MY FRIENDS BE HAPPY.
MAY MY FRIENDS BE PEACEFUL.
MAY MY FRIENDS BE FREE.

MAY MY ENEMIES BE HAPPY.
MAY MY ENEMIES BE PEACEFUL.
MAY MY ENEMIES BE FREE.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY.
MAY ALL BEINGS BE PEACEFUL.
MAY ALL BEINGS BE FREE.

- Traditional Theravada Buddhist Prayer

What is more fluid, more yielding than water? Yet back it comes again, wearing down the rigid strength which cannot yield to withstand it. So it is that the strong are overcome by the weak, the haughty by the humble. This we know, but never learn.

- Lao-tzu

HOLY GROUND

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Genesis 1:1-2

When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. Exodus 3:4-5

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they camped there by the water. Exodus 15:27

He sustained him in a desert land, in a howling wilderness waste; he shielded him, cared for him, guarded him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young; as it spreads its wings, takes them up, and bears them aloft on its pinions, the Lord alone guided him Deuteronomy 32:10-12

...but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isaiah 55:12

WE WILL PRACTICE WHAT WE PROFESS.
-Zoroastrian prayer