

הַשְּׂכִיבְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם,

וְהַעֲמִידְנוּ מִלְּפָנֵינוּ לְחַיִּים,

וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמָךְ,

וּתְקַנְנֵנוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,

וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

וְהִגֵּן בְּעֵדְנוּ,

Some omit on Shabbat:

וְהִסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב, דָּבָר, וְחָרָב, וְרָעַב, וְיָגוֹן,

וְהִסֵּר שָׁטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ,

וּבִצֵּל כְּנַפְיֶךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ,

כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ וּמְצִילֵנוּ אַתָּה,

כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה,

◀ וּשְׂמֹר צַדִּיקֵינוּ וּבֹאֲנֵנוּ, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם,

מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמָךְ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ

וְעַל כָּל־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם.

ALLOW US . . . TO SLEEP
הַשְּׂכִיבְנוּ. Nighttime may
provoke fear: What may
happen to us when we are
asleep? Will we wake up?
Each phrase in the opening
of this prayer begins not
with a noun as a subject,
but rather with a verb,
creating a powerful drama
of motion and movement,
an expression of the will
to live.

וְהִסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ. Some Sephardic
rites follow the custom
of changing the weekday
liturgy to accord with the
spirit of Shabbat. Accord-
ingly they remove the line
“Remove from us enemies,
pestilence, sword, starva-
tion...”—not wanting to
even mention on Shabbat
sources of evil that might
direct our attention away
from the peacefulness that
Shabbat accords. Ashke-
nazic authorities, however,
feared that if the liturgy

changed on Shabbat, congregants would be confused as to the proper language of this blessing and would cease to include the passage on weekdays. In a society that depended on memorization, this may have been a reasonable fear.

EVIL FORCES שָׁטָן. Literally “Satan.” In the Bible, this term is generally used to refer either to evil impulses or to a celestial adversary, but never to a fallen angel.

YOUR CANOPY OF PEACE שְׁלוֹמָךְ. The weekday version of this *b'rakhah* ends with the words *shomer amo yisrael la-ad*, “eternal guardian of Your people Israel.” Medieval commentators quote the Talmud of the Land of Israel to the effect that Shabbat itself guards the people Israel, and so the prayer is changed on Shabbat. (Oddly, however, the extant versions of the Talmud of the Land of Israel do not contain this passage.)

The phrase *sukkat shalom*, “canopy (*sukkah*) of peace,” is seemingly original to this prayer. It is not found in the Bible but may allude to Amos 9:11, where the prophet sees the rebuilding of the fallen *sukkah* of David as an image of redemption; or to Psalm 27:5, where the poet prays to be hidden in God’s *sukkah*, protected from enemies, while gazing peacefully at God’s countenance.

JERUSALEM יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם. In Jewish thought, the peace of Jerusalem symbolizes univer-
sal peace.