ALLOW US... TO SLEEP

Some omit on Shabbat:

REMOVE FROM US

Some Sephardic rites follow the custom of changing the weekday liturgy to accord with the spirit of Shabbat. Accordingly they remove the line “Remove from us enemies, pestilence, sword, starvation...”—not wanting to even mention on Shabbat sources of evil that might direct our attention away from the peacefulness that Shabbat accords. Ashkenazic 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

YOUR CANOPY OF PEACE

The weekday version of this br’akhah 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

In Jewish thought, the peace of Jerusalem symbolizes universal peace.