

Prayer for Sustenance (*Parnassah*)

Lord of the universe! Thou in Thy infinite wisdom didst make provision for every living creature, both small and big, and Thou causest Thy blessing to fall upon the earth in rain and in dew to sate the hungry, and to give them the comfort when they ever stand in need. Without Thy help nothing could live, and no one could have life's needs provided for. Thou didst say: "Then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth produce for the three years," (*Leviticus 25:21*) that is for the sixth, for the seventh, and for the eighth years during the Sabbatical season.

Grant, I pray Thee, that there be none in this world for whose sins Thou causest the heavens to restrain the rain and bringst famine. Implant in the hearts of mankind that willingness to be of help to one another for whose sake Thou givest both heaven and earth as an inheritance to the righteous, even as Thou didst give it to Abraham our father.

O Lord! The time of adversity humbles the soul of man, but how long, O God of Israel, wilt Thou hold out the rod of punishment toward those who are but dust and clay, who are helpless without Thy aid even as is the newly-born babe without its mother.

Cause Thy blessed *Shekhinah** to cast its rays of light upon me and mine so that we all be able to see the path most favored by Thee for us to follow. Thou art the only One to give strength to the weak and bread to the poor. From Thy hand, O Lord, provide the daily needs of my family. Bless the work of my husband the work of all those with whom he is associated! Let not adversity invade my home, and let not my children taste the bitterness of hunger, thirst, cold, disease and pestilence.

Answer my prayer, and grant me of Thy blessings, even as Thou didst answer Ruth, who found her kinsman's field, and became the mother of Thy anointed King David. I beseech Thee not to consider Thy servant begging for riches for its own sake; my contrite heart is poured out to Thee for the sake of Parnassah/Sustenance, which is the daily bread and home of my family. My husband doth not look forward to gain the wealth which in reality brings on poverty to the soul; he merely engages himself in a calling to be Thy messenger to provide for the needs of my home and family. Bless his endeavors, and mayest Thou bring a Redeemer to Zion, *Amen*.

This Tekhineh, or "Women's Prayer," was translated from the Yiddish and included in Techinah: Prayers and Religious Duties for the Daughters of Israel, a collection edited by Rabbi Simon Glazer (Hebrew Publication Company, 1930, pages 106-8). It is probably a couple of hundred years old, and clearly reflects a particular time, culture, and social reality, but nonetheless highlights many issues common to any economic crisis situation – an awareness of dependence, the need for mutual support, psychospiritual challenges, the impact on family relationships, and more. It may be helpful as is, or it may serve as a model for your own original Prayer for Sustenance.

*The *Shekhinah* is the nurturing, indwelling Presence of God