

## Liturgical References to Zion

Zion, *Eretz Yisrael* (The Land of Israel) and Jerusalem are mentioned frequently in ancient Jewish texts: the Bible, the Prophetic Books, the Talmud, and the *Siddur* (Jewish prayerbook). The archeological evidence for Jewish presence in The Land of Israel is abundant. An examination of liturgy reveals the connection of the people to The Land of Israel.

Jews are directed to engage in formal worship services three times a day: in the evening (*Ma'ariv*), in the morning (*Shacharit*), and in the afternoon (*Minchah*). Additional blessings are recited prior to and following meals and on special occasions and holidays. Prayers are collected in the *siddur*, the compendium of liturgy that reflect the core beliefs of Judaism. The liturgy is a window into the unfolding history of the Jewish people, their faith, their relationship with G-d, with other people, with time and place, and to *Eretz Yisrael*. One of the most progressive 19th century thinkers, Franz Rosenzweig, maintained that the prayer book is the enduring “sum and substance of the whole of historical Judaism, its handbook and memorial tablet.” The liturgy contains biblical passages and rabbinic reflections that praise, thank, and declare the wonder of the G-d’s creation. In studying the liturgy and prayers for special occasions at home or in the synagogue, one can see both the physical place and the spiritual aspiration of Zion continually identified. While it has evolved over two millennia, the basic structure and core content of the *Siddur* and the special prayers for home and synagogue were codified and have been set for worship since the early rabbinic period, about the 6<sup>th</sup> century of the common era. The following are a sampling of prayers and blessings that make reference to Zion.

Liturgical Reference	Translation	When it is recited	Context and Origins
כִּי־בָחַר יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן אָנֹהָ לְמוֹנָשׁב לּוֹ	<i>For Adonai has chosen Zion; G-d has desired it for G-d's dwelling place (Ps. 132:13)</i>	<b>Weekday morning</b> during the introductory prayers called <i>P'sukei D'zimra</i> (verses of Psalms)	Throughout the morning prayers, numerous biblical references are made, this one referring to Zion and Jerusalem as G-d's dwelling place (500 CE)
יְמֻלְךָ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדָר וְדָר הַלְלוּהָ	<i>Adonai shall reign forever Your G-d, O Zion, for all generations (Ps. 146:10)</i>	<b>Weekday and Sabbath morning</b> <i>P'sukei D'zimra</i>	The closing line refers to G-d's enduring relationship to Zion (500 CE)
שִׁבְחֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אַתְּ יי הַלְלֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן. כִּי חֻזַּק בְּרִיחֵי שְׁעָרֶיךָ, בְּרַךְ בְּנֵיךָ בְּקַרְבְּךָ. הַשָּׁם גְּבוּלְךָ שְׁלוֹם, הָלַב חֲטִיִּם יִשְׁבִּיעֶךָ.	<i>Praise Adonai, Jerusalem. Zion, sing praises to your G-d who has fortified your gates and blessed your children therein, bringing peace to your borders and satisfying you with choice wheat. (Ps. 147:12)</i>	<b>Weekday morning</b> <i>P'sukei D'zimra</i>	The city of Jerusalem is synonymous with Zion as the place to praise G-d for security and prosperity (500 CE)

אור חדש על ציון תאיר, ונזכה כלנו מהרה לאורו	<i>Let a new light shine upon Zion; may we all speedily merit its brightness</i>	<b>Weekday and Sabbath</b> morning after introductory prayers	Hoping for a swift renewal in Zion (500 CE)
ברוך יי מציון, שכן ירושלים, הללויה.	<i>Blessed is Adonai from Zion; who dwells in Jerusalem, Halleluyah</i>	<b>Weekday and Sabbath</b> <b>morning</b> P'sukei D'zimra	G-d is referred to as dwelling in Zion (500 CE)
סבו ציון, והקיפוה; ספרו, מגדליה. שיתו לבכם, לחילה--פסגו ארמנותיה: למען תספרו, לדור אחרון.	<i>Walk about Zion, circle her, count her towers, pay attention to her ramparts, her apex and her citadel. Then tell her story to later generations.</i>	<b>Weekday morning</b> near the conclusion of the service	Monday's designated Psalm refers to hopes for Zion to be the enduring stronghold of G-d and the people (600 CE)
ותחזינה עינינו בשוכך לציון ברחמים. ברוך אתה יי, המחזיר שכינתו לציון.	<i>May we witness Your merciful return to Zion (Psalm 146:10). Praised are You, Adonai who restores G-d's presence to Zion</i>	<b>Weekdays and Sabbath</b> during the Amidah (the central prayer recited 3 times daily)	A longing for G-d's presence to return to Zion (500 CE)
אב הרחמים, היטיבה ברצונך את ציון תבנה חומות ירושלים	<i>Oh Compassionate parent, may it be your will to favor Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem (Ps. 51:20)</i>	<b>Torah Service weekdays</b> <b>and Sabbath</b> as the ark is opened, worshippers rise and chant (recited 4 times each week)	The hope that Zion will be restored once again as the central place of G-d and Torah. (in place by 8th Century)
כי מציון תצא תורה, ודבר יי מירושלים. ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל בקדושתו.	<i>For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah and the word of Adonai from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3) Praised be the One who gives Torah to Your people.</i>	<b>Torah Service weekdays</b> <b>and Sabbath</b> as scroll is removed from the Ark (recited 4 times each week).	Zion is referred to as G-d's central dwelling place along with the sacred text considered as G-d's word (8th Century)
רחם על ציון כי היא בית חינו, ולעלובת נפש תושיע במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה יי, משמח ציון בבניה.	<i>Have compassion on Zion for she is the home of our life, and the one whose soul is humbled, deliver us speedily in our days. Blessed are you Adonai, Who causes Zion to rejoice with her children.</i>	<b>Sabbath morning</b> - after the Prophetic reading which follows the reading of Torah	This additional paragraph after the Sabbath Torah reading refers to the people of Israel being humbled in exile and longing for the restoration of Zion as their homeland. (8th Century)
והביאנו לציון עירך ברנה, ולירושלים בית מקדשך בשמחת עולם.	<i>Lead us with song to Zion Your city, with everlasting joy to Jerusalem, Your sanctuary.</i>	<b>Yom Kippur and the</b> <b>Three Pilgrimage</b> <b>Festivals</b>	The central prayer during festivals, Zion is mentioned several times as the worshippers yearn to return for a joyous reunification with G-d (500 CE)

<p>רַחֵם, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ, וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ, וְעַל צִיּוֹן מְשֻׁכָּן כְּבוֹדְךָ</p>	<p><i>Have mercy, G-d, on Israel Your people, and on Jerusalem, Your city, and on Zion the abode of your glory</i></p>	<p><b>After weekday meals</b></p>	<p>During the week, meals conclude with blessings asking for G-d's mercy (in place by 137 CE)</p>
<p>עַל נְהָרוֹת בְּבַל נָשָׁב יִשְׁבְּנוּ גַם בְּכִינוּ, בְּזָכְרָנוּ אֶת צִיּוֹן. עַל עֲרָבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ, תְּלִינוּ כְּנִירוֹתֵינוּ. כִּי נָשָׂם שְׂאֲלוֹנוּ שׁוֹבֵינֵנוּ דְּבָרֵי שִׁיר וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ שְׂמֵחָה, שָׁירוּ לָנוּ מִשִּׁיר צִיּוֹן. אֵיךְ נִשְׁרֵי אֶת שִׁיר יי, עַל אֲדָמַת נֹכְרָא?</p>	<p><i>By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, and we also wept, remembering Zion. We hung our lyres on the willows in its midst. For there those who carried us away captive required of us a song; and those who tormented us required of us mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." How shall we sing G-d's song in a foreign land?</i></p>	<p><b>After weekday meals</b> (recited up to 18 times each week)</p>	<p>An introductory paragraph mentions Zion prior to the responsive blessings (in place by 137 CE)</p>
<p>שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת, בְּשׁוּב יי אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן, הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים.</p>	<p><i>A song of Ascent: When Adonai returned us as dwellers in Zion, we were like dreamers.</i></p>	<p><b>After Sabbath meals</b> (recited 3 times a week)</p>	<p>After the Sabbath meals blessings are introduced with reference to a return to Zion (in place by 137 CE)</p>
<p>וְהִרְאָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּנִחְמַת צִיּוֹן עִירְךָ, וּבְבִנְיַן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קִדְשְׁךָ, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בָּעַל הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּבָעַל הַנְּחִמּוֹת.</p>	<p><i>May You enable us to see Your city Zion comforted and Jerusalem, Your holy city rebuilt, for You are the provider of salvation and comfort.</i></p>	<p><b>After Sabbath meals</b></p>	<p>G-d is seen as the rebuilder of Zion/Jerusalem, a hope that is intensified during the Sabbath each week. (in place by 137 CE)</p>
<p>רַחֵם נָא יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ וְעַל צִיּוֹן מְשֻׁכָּן כְּבוֹדְךָ וְעַל מִזְבִּיחְךָ וְעַל הַיְכָלְךָ וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ</p>	<p><i>We pray to You, have pity, Adonai our G-d, on Israel Your people, on Jerusalem Your city, on Zion Your glorious dwelling place, and on Your Temple. Restore Jerusalem, the city of the Holy One, speedily in our days and bring us to it.</i></p>	<p><b>Passover Seder</b></p>	<p>At the fourth and final cup of wine, participants in the seder call upon G-d to restore Zion just before ending the seder with the words: Next Year in Jerusalem! (Possibly 2nd C BCE)</p>

<p>שׁוֹשׁ תְּשׁוּשׁוּ וְתִגַּל הָעֵקָרָה, בְּקִבוּץ בְּנֵיהָ לְתוֹכָהּ בְּשִׂמְחָה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מְשַׂמְחַ צִיּוֹן בְּבָנֶיהָ</p>	<p><i>Bring immense joy and jubilation to the barren one (Jerusalem) by gathering her children amidst her in gladness. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who gladdens Zion through her children.</i></p>	<p><b>Wedding</b></p>	<p>Recited as one of the seven blessings at the wedding service and during seven days following the wedding when it is added to the blessing after meals. (in place by 7th C)</p>
<p>יִרְאוּ עֵינֵינוּ, וְיִשְׂמַח לִבֵּנוּ, וְתִגַּל נַפְשֵׁנוּ בִישׁוּעֶתְךָ בְּאֵמֶת, בְּאֵמֹר לְצִיּוֹן</p> <p>and</p> <p>יְבָרְכֶךָ יְיָ מִצִּיּוֹן, וּרְאֵה בְּטוֹב יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. וּרְאֵה בְנִים לְבָנֶיךָ, שְׁלוֹם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.</p>	<p><i>May our eyes see, and may our heart be gladdened, and may our soul rejoice in Your salvation in truth, when it is told to Zion</i></p> <p>and</p> <p><i>May Adonai bless you from Zion, and may you gaze upon the goodness of Jerusalem, all the days of your life. And may you see offspring to your offspring, peace upon Israel.</i></p>	<p><b>Bedtime recitation of the Shema</b></p>	<p>To be recited each night at bedtime, this is part of a list of Psalms and prayers that are meant to inspire hope as well as encourage calm and serenity as worshippers ask for G-d's protection through the night. (16th C or older)</p>

## Additional Commemorative Days

*Yom HaShoah* - Excerpts from the Book of Lamentations are read

*Yom Ha'atzmaut* - Psalm 126 & Zechariah 8:3-5 are added to the daily worship

*Yom Yirushalayim* - Isaiah 62:1-7, Ps 116:13, and Yehudah HaLevi's poem "My Heart is in the East" are often added to the morning and afternoon service that day

*Tisha Be'Av* - Excerpts from the Book of Lamentations is read

### Source:

Elbogen, Ismar. *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993.