**Interfaith Prayers**

1. **This poem was written by a member of B&H Progressive Synagogue and is based on Concluding Prayer, Al Kein, which is common to all strands within Judaism.  It was contributed by Rabbi Elli Sarah at our Interfaith Prayer Hour on 2 Aug 2017.  She gave permission for it to be used. The final phrase means ‘for ever and ever’.**

***Al Kein***

Therefore we hope

that once upon a time to come

You, O beautiful and terrible, will fill our eyes.

We will see we have made gods

of things as dead as logs.

Then, laughing at our blunder, we will chop

them into kindling size,

fire them and warm cold hearts around the blaze.

Cruelty will turn away from pain,

greed will be sated, arrogance abashed

and hate will drown in tears of tenderness.

Then we will hold our breath (which comes from You)

and set to mend the broken world

to tend the wounded world.

We will know that whenever we have turned

Like a flower to the light,

all the time we were turning to You.

We will hear that all the names

we had for Maker, Saver, Lover, Source

were one name.

All along we were calling You.

Soon and forever we will know your name and remember Your voice

surprised by recognition

as a homecoming having been long away.

We will blink into the light

and live happily ever and ever after, l’olam va’ed.

*By Claudia Gould*

1. **This prayer, from the Baha’i scriptures, was contributed by Ramez Salmanpour on 2 Aug 2017**

O my God! O my God! Verily, I invoke Thee and supplicate before Thy threshold, asking Thee that all Thy mercies may descend upon these souls. Specialize them for Thy favor and Thy truth.

O Lord! Unite and bind together the hearts, join in accord all the souls, and exhilarate the spirits through the signs of Thy sanctity and oneness. O Lord! Make these faces radiant through the light of Thy oneness. Strengthen the loins of Thy servants in the service of Thy kingdom.

O Lord, Thou possessor of infinite mercy! O Lord of forgiveness and pardon! Forgive our sins, pardon our shortcomings, and cause us to turn to the kingdom of Thy clemency, invoking the kingdom of might and power, humble at Thy shrine and submissive before the glory of Thine evidences.

O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life.

Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Self-Subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator.

#### 'Abdu’l-Bahá

1. **This prayer was contributed by Jef Jones, Brighton Unitarian Church, on 6 Sept 2017**

God of All

When we try to define you, to describe you, we learn that language is limited.

But Love knows no limits.

With forgiveness and courage may we seek to love one another, to treat others and ourselves with compassion and respect.

And may we seek to know you, God of All.

In moments of joy and sorrow,

in moments of pain and pleasure,

in moments of fear and hope,

and in the ordinary moments of each day.

And may we know our place.

not grand and all-powerful,

not small and meaningless,

but dignified and free

each of us with our own power

deeply connected,

in the spacious gift of your holding,

held in the grace of life itself.

Amen

(Prayer by Jef Jones, Lay Pastor, Brighton Unitarian Church)

1. **These 2 prayers were contributed by Lisa Mohebati from the Baha’i community, 6 September 2017**

Glory be to Thee, O God, for Thy manifestation of love to mankind! O Thou Who art our Life and Light, guide Thy servants in Thy way, and make us rich in Thee and free from all save Thee. O God, teach us Thy Oneness and give us a realization of Thy Unity, that we may see no one save Thee. Thou art the Merciful and the Giver of bounty. O God, create in the hearts of Thy beloved the fire of Thy love, that it may consume the thought of everything save Thee. Reveal to us, O God, Thine exalted eternity - that Thou hast ever been and wilt ever be, and that there is no God save Thee. Verily, in Thee will we find comfort and strength.

Bahá’u’lláh

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. Bahá’u’lláh

1. **The ‘Prayer of St Francis’ was contributed by Rev Andy Lowe of Hove Methodist Church on**

 **4 October 2017**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

1. **This prayer was contributed by Jonathan Gravestock of Hove Methodist Church on 2 November 2017**

Loving God you are all goodness.
You are our good shepherd.
As you know us, may we know you;
And through knowing you, may we trust in you;

In trusting, follow and in following, serve you.
Be with each of us and all who journey with us.
Fill us all with your love,
as we seek to lead others to you,
that we may be one in you.
Amen.

1. **This prayer, from a Jewish prayer book, was contributed by David Selo of B&H Progressive Synagogue on 2 November 2017**

Along with the endangered owls

and the snow leopards at risk of extinction

and the dying colours of so many species of butterfly,

add this: the gold-winged human soul.

We have forgotten who we are.

We have become estranged from the movements of the earth.

We have turned our backs on the cycles of life.

*We have sought only our own security.*

*We have exploited simply for our own ends.*

*We have distorted our knowledge.*

*We have abused our power.*

Now the land is barren

And the waters are poisoned

And the air is polluted.

Now forests are dying

and the creatures are disappearing

And humans are despairing.

*We ask forgiveness.*

*We ask for the gift of remembering.*

*We ask for the strength to change.*

For it is not yet too late. There is, please God, still time to learn the simple truth:

 *One glorious chain of love, of giving and receiving, unites all creatures; none is by or for itself, but all things exist in continual reciprocal activity – one for all, and all for one.*

1. **This prayer, from a book of Baha’i prayers, was contributed by Brenda Clark on 2 November 2017**

O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou has endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.

O God! Establish the Most Great Peace.

Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.

O Thou kind Father God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy Love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

 Abdu’l-Bahá

1. **This prayer was contributed by Charlotte Gravestock of Hove Methodist Church on 2 November 2017**

God of all, may we learn to look with Your eyes to see what lies in a person’s heart rather than judging others by the labels of religion, race or culture. We pray for all the faith communities of Brighton & Hove that they may be welcoming, inclusive places where people of all kinds and conditions, of all faiths and none, are received with interest and respect. May we feel a deep sense of shared endeavour as we seek, through our various pathways and insights, to draw close to the One True God and to make our world a better place for all. May we, as individuals and as representatives of different faith communities, present to the world, through our relationships with each other, a positive image of what it means to be committed to a life of faith. We thank You for the faith communities to which we belong. We humbly ask that You bless us all and help us to draw ever closer as sisters and brothers on our journeys of faith. Amen.

1. **This ‘motivation prayer’ was contributed by Liz Stead of the Maitrikara Buddhist community on 6 December 2017**

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness;

May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering;

May they never separate from the sublime happiness which is without suffering;

May they be free from attachment to loved ones and rejection of others

And rest in boundless equanimity.

1. **This prayer from *The Prayer Book of the New Heart*, Liberal Judaism, with the following reflection, was contributed by Felice Rhiannon, One Spirit Interfaith Foundation, on 6 December 2017**

May it be Your will, O Eternal One, that war and bloodshed shall vanish from the earth, and that a great and glorious peace may reign forever in the world. Let every human being realise and understand the basic truth, that we have not been created for strife and discord, or hatred and envy, but only so that we may come to know You to whom all praise is due for ever.

Reflection...

It is not enough to *pray* for peace. We have to *work* for it: to challenge those who foster conflict and refute their propaganda; to ascertain and make known the truth, both when it confirms and when it runs counter to conventional views; to denounce injustice, not only when it is committed against us but also when it is committed against others; to defend human rights, not only our own but also theirs; to insist that peace requires sacrifice--of pride, or wealth, or territory; to practise and promote the way of moderation, compromise, and reconciliation; to build bridges of respect and understanding, trust and friendship, across the chasms that divide humanity.

1. **This Prayer for Peace, from *Siddur Kol haNeshamah,* attributed to Nahman of Bretzlav, was contributed by Rabbi Andrea Zanardo of Brighton & Hove Reform Synagogue on 3 January 2018.**

May it be your will, Eternal One, our God, God of our ancestors, that wars and bloodshed be abolished from the world, and bring into the world a great and wonderful and lasting peace. “And let no nation lift a sword against a nation – let them learn no more the ways of war!” (Isaiah 2:4)

Let all who dwell on earth simply acknowledge the truth of truths: that we have not come into this world for the sake of quarrelling and war, nor for the sake of hatred, jealousy, anger or bloodshed; rather, we have come into this world only to know You – may You be blessed eternally!

Therefore, have mercy on us, and fulfil among us what is written in your Scripture: ‘I shall give peace upon the earth, and you shall lie down with none to make you afraid. I shall abolish from the earth the predatory beast. The sword shall never come upon your land’ (Leviticus 26:6). ‘Justice shall roll down like the water, and righteousness like a mighty stream’ (Amos 5:24). ‘For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of The Omnipresent, as the waters fill the seas’ (Isaiah 11:9).

1. **This prayer was contributed by Rev Anthea Ballam of One Spirit Interfaith Foundation and Brighton Unitarian Church on 3 January 2018**

**The Earth is Yours and Mine**

The earth is yours and mine

And the glorious sky.

As you made me

So you made the starling

And the owl

The glorious oak and elm.

In weaving your wisdom

You formed the sea

And her melodious song

Harmonising with the whale and the bird

You are in me

And above me,

You are below me

And beside me.

You created worlds within worlds,

Gifts beyond understanding

Beauty beyond measure

Captured in a sphere of perfect blue.

And so we bow to you…

Call upon angels and spirits

In the leaves and born on the air

Implore you

With power

And glory

To give us strength

That we may share,

In worship and wisdom this day

Let’s join in mind, and spirit

In prayer and love to bring healing

To this most beautiful of worlds

For when this world suffers, we suffer

For we are all as one.