

Peace is Every Step
Silent Walking Meditation for Peace
Multi-faith Event
21 January 12- 3pm

Collation of Peace Prayers offered by Faith Representatives

In a collaborative effort, diverse faith groups came together to organise and lead a silent contemplative Peace Walk in London. Organised in response to escalating violence and warfare worldwide, particularly as occurring in Palestine and Israel, the event advocated for peace amid the rising challenges of hatred, anger, destruction, displacement, suffering and increasing loss of life.

Facilitated by Plum Village UK and the Quakers in Britain, this initiative embodies a shared commitment to non-violence, reconciliation, justice and peace, reflecting the spiritual and ethical values of all spiritual Communities.

Introductory Words

Rehena Harilall, Plum Village UK,

On behalf of the co facilitating organising hosts , Plum Village Buddhist community, the Quakers in Britain and all the faith and peace organisations that have come together to co-create this space, welcome and thank you for your commitment to peace.

Each of you has come not just with your body but also the energy of many people before you. For us to be here today, going back 400 years, we each bring with us the energy of about 1 million ancestors . We also carry the energy for those who come after us. A bow to you.

I recognise that you may not all be able to hear me, as we are beautifully surprised by the number of people keen to be here and our sound system is limited.

We humans have limitations because of our social, historical and cultural conditioning and local context. This may emerge in our speech and language, which may have the potential to cause harm, even unintentionally. For any harm our words may cause please accept our heartfelt apologies.

Today's event has emerged in response to escalating violence in over 30 wars and armed conflicts worldwide, exemplified in Palestine and Israel - the increasing destruction of life, starvation, displacement, lack of humanitarian aid, hostage taking, unjust detentions and the growing retaliatory violence and demonisation of others taking place right here as antisemitism and islamophobia grows.

It feels poignant to have this event commencing here in Trafalgar Square which since 1914 had been a place where advocates of peace have stood, long before us and I truly hope that generations that come may not need to continue to stand here.

You have responded to the heart call reflecting our *shared commitment to live in peace and harmony with others. Amidst the grief, pain, anger and loss we gather in solidarity to non-violence, reconciliation, and peace, reflecting the spiritual and ethical values of all spiritual Communities.*

As Judith Baker of the Quakers shares, " wars are a failure to cultivate and pursue peace and uphold the basic principles of ethical norms"

Today is a reminder, a call to heard that peace is not passive, it is not weak. Sustainable peace requires engaged action rooted in understanding, compassion, love and justice.

Our event walking/rolling together is our shared commitment to respect and cherish all life. Every human life is equally precious.

We walk/move in silence transcending religious and cultural boundaries, uniting all our common aspiration for a world built for and on peace. Our heartfelt aspiration requires no words. We stand together for humanity.

Our walking/moving together reflects the common interconnection we all have. The peaceful living those on opposing sides are intertwined with one another. Israel's peace is bound with that of Palestine and peace for Palestine is bound up in ours. What is happening there affects us here! What we do here affects others over there! So says Julie Siddiqi from the Together for Humanity Coalition.

Walking together reflects not only our engagement but also our interconnection. Making the white flower is tangible reminder that we all contribute our energy and our actions in cultivating a more peaceful world.

And as we move collectively, each of us like a wave in the ocean, from here to Parliament Sq moving through political landmarks, we weave the energy for peace.

For some of us this is personal honouring the energy of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, peace activist who committed himself to engaging in the world working to bring about peace and reconciliation in the world through his art, his writings and his teachings. Thay (as he is known by his followers) as instrumental in advocating and acting for reconciliation and peace during the Vietnam/American War, was nominated by Martin Luther King for the Nobel Peace Prize, was invited by UNESCO to join the drafting of the 2000 Peace Manifesto charter and by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to draft a faith statement about climate change and our relationship to one another and to the Earth.

In his memory we will remember his energy here in the Square where he led thousands in silent meditation so we continue his energy of peace through our steps. The title of this event "Peace is Every Step" is the title of one of his many books.

AJ Muste's words , "there is no way to peace, peace is the way," encapsulate the essence of this initiative, emphasising the personal and collective journey required by us all to nurture peace.

Peace is every step- every step is a commitment towards cultivating peace within ourselves, in our relationships and in the world around us.

Churches Together Prayer Offering

Rowena Loverance, Quaker, Chair of Churches Together

A prayer for peace

This weekend, Christians throughout the world are celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year, the prayers have been chosen by Christians in Burkina Faso, in West Africa, a country struggling with military coups and terrorism. They have invited us to focus on the story of the Good Samaritan, one of the best-known passages in the Bible. It is a story about crossing boundaries that reminds us of the bonds that unite the whole human family. So as we come together here today to pray for peace, let us join our prayers with those of Christians in Burkina Faso and around the world....The response is:

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

We have been called to love God and our neighbour as ourselves.

As we meet together today, let us renew our commitment to this calling.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God of our journey, in our weakness and fear we often pass by on the other side. Grant us grace to risk embracing the stranger in need, tending their wounds of body, mind and spirit.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God of time and eternity, help us imagine a time when weapons of war are beaten into ploughshares, when nations no longer lift up sword against nation.

Renew in us a passion for justice to prevail and a recognition that we all play a part in peace.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God within us and beside us, protect those who only desire to live in security and safety.

Comfort the bereaved, and those who fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

God of transformation, change the hearts of those set on violence and aggression, and give our leaders the wisdom and courage to take the way of peace.

Fill us with your love. Make us one in you.

Creator of all, hear our prayer and bring us peace.

Amen.

Jewish Prayer Offering

Rabbi Alexandra Wright, President Liberal Judaism, representing Progressive Judaism

Dear Fellow Walkers: in truth, I should stand here before you in silence, allowing the stillness and hush of the moment to hold us together as one humanity, one breath, descendants as our traditions teach, of one human being, created in the image of

God. Human beings are not born with hatred in their hearts, but with the need for nurture and love, with a sense of wonder at the created world, with a yearning for harmony, beauty and peace.

War hurts our hearts; the suffering of innocent human beings scars our spirits. In the noisy, decimating, chaotic theatre of war, a war that is geographically far from us, but whose conflict is felt even here like the ground ruptures of an earthquake, we stand together to mourn and weep for the dead; we stand with those who are bereaved and broken, with children, women and men who have lost homes and livelihoods, who are beset by fear and trauma, who are without hope.

My prayer is addressed to the 'Eternal One, shelter of peace for all nations.' In Hebrew the word for God is not a noun, but a verb, coming from the word for 'to be.' In our Jewish tradition, we address our prayers to the source of our being, to the deepest parts of ourselves that some people call God:

Eternal God, shelter of peace for all nations, at this moment of unity and hope, we come together as one humanity to we pray for peace and mourn the deaths of all who have lost their lives, children, women and men. We ask You to give strength to all those who are bereaved and to console them with Your love and compassion. Heal broken hearts and bind up the wounds of those who are hurt; be with them in their pain and help them towards healing and recovery.

We pray for those who are still held hostage and for their release from captivity; for the thousands in Israel and Gaza who have been displaced from their homes. We associate ourselves with all those who live with trauma and anguish, with uncertainty and despair.

We pray for peace in the region, for the safe passage of humanitarian aid to all those who need it, for the wisdom and moral courage of world leaders, and for civility here in the UK and across the West, among those who may find themselves on opposite sides of this conflict.

We stand together with all those who cherish a vision of freedom, justice and peace, who work for equality and understanding and seek to remove enmity and hatred. And we pray in the words of Torah:

Shalom, shalom la-rachok v'la-karov, amar Adonai – 'Peace, peace to the far and to the near, says the Eternal One.'

V'yiggal ka-mayyim mishpat,u'tzedakah k'nachal etan – 'Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.' And let us say: Amen.

Islam/Muslim Prayer Offering

Imam Asim Hafiz, OBE, Islamic Advisor and Imam, Ministry of Defence

In Islam God is known by ninety nine attributes or names. One of these is 'as-salaam' meaning the source and giver of peace; the One who loves peace and wants peace for His creation. He established peace as the norm in the world and for relations between mankind and for that matter between all forces of nature. Unfortunately, sometimes this gift and blessing is forgotten and disregarded. When this happens humanity fails and conflict, discord, hatred and violence prevails. When this happens, which sadly seems to be very often nowadays, a good way to seek the reinstatement of this divine gift is through collective prayer and reflection. So I would like to join my friends from all faiths and none to pray with them.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

O Lord almighty, We turn to you, as all praises are due to you alone.

We beseech you to shower your mercy upon Mankind and bring peace in all the nations and peoples of the world.

Protect the people who strive to bring peace and harmony in the world and in our communities.

We pray for freedom, peace, security, reconciliation and most of all humanity.

Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy upon us.

You are the eternal Peace and from You comes Peace for everyone. Great are your Blessings,

O Lord of Glory and Honour.

Ameen

Bahá'í Prayer Offering

Padideh Sabeti, Director, Office of Public Affairs, UK Bahá'í

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, confer rest life upon all.

Thou hast 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

Sikh Prayer Offering

Mandip Singh, Khalsa Jatha British Isles

O Nanak, the Boat of Truth will ferry you across;
So contemplate on the Guru.

One comes, and one goes; but is totally filled with ego and pride.

Through stubborn-mindedness, the intellect is drowned;
But the one who becomes saintly and truthful, is saved.

Without the Guru, how can anyone swim across to find peace?
As it pleases You, Lord, You save me.
There is no other for me but you.

In front of me, I see the jungle burning; behind me, I see green plants sprouting.

We shall merge into the divine from where we came.

The Divine is pervading each and every heart.

The Divine unites us with itself; the Divine's palace is close at hand.

With each and every breath, I dwell upon You; I never forget You.

The more you dwell within the mind, the more the saintly ones drink in your ambrosial nectar.

My Mind and body are Yours; You are my Master.

Please rid me of my pride, and let me merge with You.

The Divine who created this this universe, created the three worlds.

The Saint knows the Divine Light.

The foolish self-willed manmukh gropes around in the darkness.

One who sees that divine light within each and every heart,

Understands the essence of the Guru's Teachings.

Those who understand this are Saintly; recognise and applaud them.

They meet and merge with the Divine.

They become the radiant manifestation of the excellence of the Divine.

O Nanak, they are contented with repeating the Naam, the Name of the Divine Lord.

They offer their bodies and souls to the Divine.

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh

Brahma Kumari Prayer Offering

Maureen Goodman, Outreach Director

Meditation for Peace

We are here to invoke the power of peace

Peace is the original nature of each one of us – it is the original nature of the soul itself

As we go deep within we touch our inner peace; an eternal peace which is independent of any external influence.

In peace we connect with the source of peace – the Divine – the unlimited

Let the energy of peace flow into me and through me into our world

Peace brings out our natural nature of love and compassion
God does not give us power to fight one another; God gives us power for peace

At every step, let the vibrations of peace, love and compassion emanate out to our world

Order of Bards Ovates & Druids Prayer Offering

Ricky Gellissen, London Tamesis Seedgroup

Deep within the still centre of my being may I find Peace.
Silently within the circle of the grove may I share Peace.
Powerfully within the greater circle of all beings may I radiate Peace.
So may it be.

Grant, O Spirits, thy protection
and in protection, strength
and in strength, understanding
and in understanding, knowledge
and in knowledge, the knowledge of justice
and in the knowledge of justice, the love of it
and in the love of it, the love of all existences
and in the love of all existences the love of Spirit and all
Goodness.

Zorastarian Prayer Offering

Shahin Bekhradnia

Ashem Vohu Vahishtem asti,
Ushtaa asti;
Ushtaa ahmaai,

Righteousness is the best good
and it is happiness.

Hyat ashaai Vahishtaai ashem

Happiness is to him/her who is righteous for the sake of the best righteousness.

Yatha Ahu Vairyo
Yathaa ratush ashaat chit hachaa
Vangheush dazdaa manangho,
Shyaothananaam Angheush
Mazdaai
Kshathremcha Ahuraai aa
Yim dregubyo dadat vastaarem.

Just as an Elected Leader acts according to his will. So also the religious leader due to his righteousness and other virtues associated with it. The gift of Vohu-Manah (Good mind) is for those working for Ahura Mazda in this world, he who acts as the protector and nourisher of the poor, accepts the sovereign rule of Ahura Mazda for the entire world

The Hamazor Prayer of Unity
Hamazor bim,
Hamazor Hama asho bim,
Hamazor vesh kerfe bim;
Ham kerfe ye kerfe karan bim
Dur az gonah Va gonah karan bim,
Ham kerfe ye basteh koshtian o
nikan o behan e jehan bim Az Pul e
Bozorg e Chinvat sabok o Khorram
o shad o asan eman begzaran

May we be united in strength
May we be united in strength and righteousness
May we be united in strength and good deeds
May we be the doers of good deeds
May we be far from evil & evil-doers
(May we be joined with the good people of the world) (May we cross the great Chinvat Bridge with ease and rejoicing)

Jain Prayer Offering

Paras Meisheri, Statement offered by the Jain Network

Let us follow the Jain path of truth and non-violence and advocate friendship for all living beings. All living beings have a life force (jiv), which should not be violated nor exploited. Instead, all life should be treated with amity and compassion.

Violence towards our fellow beings is equivalent to violence to ourselves. Jains say that we are all interdependent and cannot live without each other.

The fundamental Jain principle of ahimsä (non-violence), advocates non-harm in thought, speech and action. The path of non-violence and amity with all human beings and with all life, is the true wealth of our planet and source of our happiness. Let's live with only love for one another.

Om Shanti Shanti. Eternal Peace for all.

Buddhist Prayer Offering

Offered by Venerable Canda Bhikkhuni, the only fully ordained female monastic in the UK, in the Theravada tradition, and Spiritual Director of the Charity Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project

Reflections on Universal Well-Being: A Powerful Buddhist Blessing Chant

May I abide in well-being
In freedom from affliction
In freedom from hostility
In freedom from ill-will
In freedom from anxiety
And may I maintain well-being in myself.

May everyone abide in well-being
In freedom from hostility
In freedom from ill-will
In freedom from anxiety
and may they maintain well-being in themselves.

All beings be released from all suffering
And may they not be parted from the good fortunes they have
attain.

When they act upon intention
All beings are owners of their action
And inherit its results.

Their future is born from such action
Companion to such action
And its result will be their home.

All actions with intention
Be they skilful or harmful
Of their acts, they will be the heirs.