

## A Prayer For The State of Our Library - תְּפִלָּה לְשָׁלוֹם הַסִּפְרָיָה -

Our librarian in heaven (figuratively; the truth is that our librarian sits high up on the fifth floor), lender of books who seeks their return, bless the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the premier storage-house of our manuscripts. Protect it with the heroism of your lovingkindness and guard it as if it were the library of Gershom Scholem. Send your e-mail and your updates to its heads, to its clientele, and to its interns, and program those through wise counsel despite your pre-technology. Strengthen the programs of its computers, and let us inherit one more hour of openness—and may you crown it somehow with some advanced Technion Israel Institute of Technology crown-award—and make peace on the second floor and the third floor and among all who sit in the library.

As for our books and the pages of Israel, decree their return from the offices of teachers where they have been scattered, and lead them upright to this treasure-house *par excellence* and the house of study in the name of Solomon Schechter—even though such a nicety is not explicitly written anywhere in the Torah of your servant Moses.

Unite our hearts towards love and towards awe for the variety of your books, that we may flip through all of the articles of the quarterly journals, and speedily send us e-reminders about the due date for the return of your books—redeeming those who wait until the last minute when you call.

Let there appear in all its glory the finances that support you; let it be in the hands of all who read the prints of your archive, and let all with thick wallets in their pockets say, “With full faith, I believe in the rebuilding of this library, even though it may tarry and take a least a decade, and even though most of the books might get lost, and even though we may never succeed in our digitization projects—I nonetheless, making no vow, shall give a donation of justice to this wretched library.” And let us say: Amen Selah.

סִפְרָנְנוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים (כְּבִיכּוֹל: אֱמֶת הוּא  
סִפְרָנְנוּ שְׁבִקוּמָה הַחֲמִישִׁית שְׁבַמְרוּם),  
מִשְׁאֵיל כָּל-סִפֵּר וְשׁוֹב שׁוֹאֵלוֹ, בְּרַךְ  
אֶת-סִפְרֵי־בַיִת הַמְדַרְשׁ לְרַבָּנִים  
בְּאֶמְרִיקָה, רֵאשִׁית גְּנִיזַת כְּתָבֵי-יְדִינוּ. הֲגֵן  
עָלֶיךָ בְּאֶבְרַת חֲסִדָּךְ וְשִׁמּוֹר עָלֶיךָ כְּאֵלוֹ  
הַיְתָה הִיא סִפְרֵי־גֵרָשֵׁם שְׁלוֹמָךְ וְשִׁלַּח  
דְּאֲרָךְ וְעֵדְכּוֹנֶיךָ לְרֵאשִׁיָּה, צִרְכְּנֶיךָ  
וּמִתְמַחֶיךָ, וְתַכְנִתֶם בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה לְמַרוֹת  
קֶדֶם-טֶכְנֹלוֹגִיָּתְךָ. חִזַּק אֶת-תְּכַנּוֹת  
מַחְשְׁבֶיךָ, וְהַנְחִילֵנוּ עוֹד שְׁעָה פְּתוּחָה  
וְעֵטְרַת טַכְנִיּוֹן בְּכָל־שָׁחַר וְתַעֲטָרֵם, וְאֲנִתָּה  
שְׁלוֹם בְּקוּמָה שְׁנֵיָה וְשִׁלִּישִׁית וּבִין  
כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵיָהּ.

וְאֶת-סִפְרֵינוּ, כָּל-דַּפֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, פְּקַד-נָא  
בְּכָל-מִשְׁדְּדֵי מוֹרִים פְּזוּרֵיהֶם, וְתוֹלִיכִם  
מִהָרָה קוּמָמִיּוֹת לְמִצְיָנוֹת אוֹצְרֶךָ וּלְבֵית  
הַמְדַרְשׁ עַל שֵׁם שְׁנֵיאוֹר זְלָמָן שְׁכֵטְרֶךָ, אֵף  
עַל פִּי שְׁהַנְהִיגוֹת דְּרָךְ אֲרָץ אֵינָן כְּתוּבוֹת  
בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עַבְדְּךָ.

וְיַחַד לְבַבְנוּ לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת-מַגְוֹן  
סִפְרֶיךָ, וּלְרַפְרָף בְּכָל-מֵאֲמָרֵי רַבְעוֹנֶיךָ,  
וְשִׁלַּח לָנוּ מִהָרָה תִּזְכּוֹרַת אֶלְקִטְרוֹנִית עַל  
תּוֹקֶף הַחֲזָרַת סִפְרֶיךָ, לְפָדוֹת מַחְכֵי קֶץ  
דְּרִישְׁתְּךָ.

הוֹפֵעַ בְּהֶדֶר מָמוֹן סְפוּקֶיךָ בְּיַדִּי  
כָּל-קוֹרְאֵי דְּפוּסֵי גִנְזָךָ, וְיֹאמְרוּ כָּל אֲשֶׁר  
אֲרָנְקָ עַבְדְּכִיסוֹ: אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאַמוּנָה  
שְׁלִימָה בְּבִנְיָן הַסִּפְרָיָה מִחֲדָשׁ אֵף עַל פִּי  
שְׁיִתְמַהֲמָה וְיִקַּח לְפָחוֹת עֶשׂוֹר, וְאֵף עַל פִּי  
שְׁיִאֲבָדוּ רֹב סִפְרֵינוּ, וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׁלֹא  
נִצְלַיִח בְּפְרוּיִקְטִינוּ הַדִּיגִיטִיזָצְיָה,  
בְּכָל-זֹאת אֲתוֹן צְדָקָה בְּלִי נֶדֶר לְסִפְרָיָה  
אֲמַלְלָהּ זוּ, וְנֹאמְרוּ: אָמֵן סֵלָה.

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## An Alternative Prayer For The State of Our Library (A Responsive Reading)

May we see the day when our library fees cease,  
when a great waiver will embrace all student accounts.

*On that day, they shall sound the great shofar,  
For even the books will be found in the right place on the right shelf.*

I have asked the Lord for but one book and one book only.  
I raise my eyes to an empty reference desk; from where shall my help come?

*The foolish cannot comprehend this.  
The reference librarian has moved to the circulation desk.*

The library confounds as a thunderstorm in the wilderness.  
From the circulation desk, I cry out, "Where is the circulation staff?"

*Circulating.*

As in...

*Yes, they are making their rounds,  
Telling the readers of the events to come.*

But of certain librarians, it is said, "They have mouths but cannot speak, eyes but cannot see,  
ears but cannot hear, and noses but cannot breathe."

*The round-makers merely say, "This library shall close in half an hour,"  
But the grievance shall last an eternity.*

The library is closing in half an hour?  
It's not even 2:00.

*The Library's hours have changed.  
The Library giveth, and the Library taketh away.*

Since when does the Library giveth?

*Whatever. If you want to take books out,  
Just hold them above the detector, and nobody will notice.*

So, do you really believe that the new and improved library with fewer books will be a step up  
from the one what we currently have?

*Let us not go there. And let us say: Amen.*