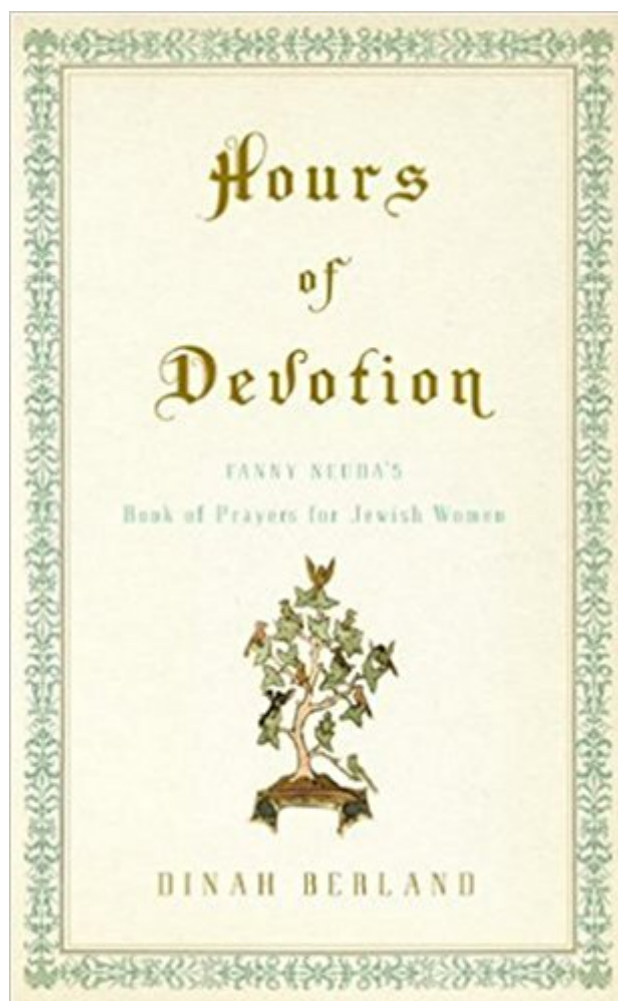


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# Hours Of Devotion: Fanny Neuda's Book Of Prayers For Jewish Women



## Synopsis

Written in the nineteenth century, rediscovered in the twenty-first, timeless in its wisdom and beauty, *Hours of Devotion* by Fanny Neuda, (the daughter of a Moravian rabbi), was the first full-length book of Jewish prayers written by a woman for women. In her moving introduction to this volume--the first edition of Neuda's prayer book to appear in English for more than a century--editor Dinah Berland describes her serendipitous discovery of *Hours of Devotion* in a Los Angeles used bookstore. She had been estranged from her son for eleven years, and the prayers she found in the book provided immediate comfort, giving her the feeling that someone understood both her pain and her hope. Eventually, these prayers would also lead her back to Jewish study and toward a deeper practice of her Judaism. Originally published in German, Fanny Neuda's popular prayer book was reprinted more than two dozen times in German and appeared in Yiddish and English editions between 1855 and 1918. Working with a translator, Berland has carefully brought the prayers into modern English and set them into verse to fully realize their poetry. Many of these eighty-eight prayers, as well as Neuda's own preface and afterword, appear here in English for the first time, opening a window to a Jewish woman's life in Central Europe during the Enlightenment. Reading "A Daughter's Prayer for Her Parents," "On the Approach of Childbirth," "For a Mother Whose Child Is Abroad," and the other prayers for both daily and momentous occasions, one cannot help but feel connected to the women who've come before. For Berland, *Hours of Devotion* served as a guide and a testament to the mystery and power of prayer. Fanny Neuda's remarkable spirit and faith in God, displayed throughout these heartfelt prayers, now offer the same hope of guidance to others.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Dinah Berlan has given us a treasure. Her English rendering of Fanny Neuda's book of prayers for Jewish women is elegant as well as capable of opening hearts. It stirred mine."--Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, coauthor of *Jewish with Feeling*"Berland has been preparing all her life to re-create Fanny Neuda's deeply useful and soulful *Hours of Devotion*. She has given us a woman's book of illuminations, a compilation of prayers that moves from suffering to gratitude, a work that sanctifies life."--Edward Hirsch, author of *Lay Back the Darkness*"This rich, spiritually vital collection shines with integrity and wisdom. Contemporary Jewish life as a whole is immeasurably enriched by Berland's graceful restoration of Neuda's prayers--prayers that had long articulated the deep yearnings of Jewish women. A book every Jewish home should have, to be cherished and transmitted from generation to generation."--Rabbi Miriyam Glazer, editor of *Dancing on the Edge of the World*"Hours of Devotion is, among other splendid things, a book about fate: the fate of these prayers treasured by generations of Jewish women; the intersecting fates of Fanny Neuda and Dinah Berland, who has made the prayers available again; and how fate itself is shaped by prayer, which carries the wisdom of individuals and communities backwards and forwards through time. This is a remarkable book, one that will move the reader both to reflection and to prayer."--Brigit Pegeen Kelly, author of *The Orchard*

Dinah Berland is a poet whose work has appeared in *The Antioch Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *The Iowa Review*, among other journals and anthologies. She lives in Los Angeles, where she works as a book editor for the J. Paul Getty Museum. Visit her on the Web at [www.dinahberland.com](http://www.dinahberland.com).

*Hours of Devotion: Fanny Neuda's Book of Prayers for Jewish Women*, edited by Dinah Berland, was recommended to me by a good friend. When it arrived from , I discovered it to be a remarkable collaboration of two gifted and spiritual women living more than a century and a half and an ocean apart. In Dinah Berland's heartfelt "Editor's Preface," she tells the story of her happening on a 1937 copy of Fanny Neuda's prayer book (without the author's name) in a used book store near her home. The powerful impact these prayers had on Dinah Berland's personal life led her to rediscover the power of prayer, restore a broken relationship with her beloved son and revive her faith. It also started her on a journey to find the author and the story behind the prayers and eventually to edit and publish this 2007 edition. Berland's skills and talents as a both a published poet and a

professional editor were put to good use in creating this edition of Fanny's prayers for a new generation of women. Careful attention was given by Berland to ensure accurate translations of the prayers from the original German to English and prayers omitted in previous editions were reintroduced. The language was given a 21st century makeover to reflect common usage and gender inclusion, and a major enhancement was made to this edition by Berland setting the formerly prose constructed prayers into verse. They are so beautiful in verse! The prayers drew me in with their loving images in the prayers of God ( e.g. All Compassionate One, Creator and Sustainer, Parent of All) and the language of appreciation for the beauty of the natural world they contain. Neuda saw the loving hand of God in every moment and every possible circumstance of a woman's life, and these prayers encompasses every aspect of daily life, holidays and special situations unique to a women's lives. The calming and reassuring language of the prayers give a sense of hope and peace that is hard to find in our troubled and turbulent times. I purchased a second copy to give to a friend and plan to purchase yet one more for another friend who I know will also feel as I do about these very special prayers. Thank you, Dinah Berland, for the sensitivity, skill and passion you have invested to make these beautiful poems available to a new generation of women!

This is a beautifully written book. With tons of personal insight as well as prayers for almost every occasion. At first I was skeptical about a book with so many Very Good Reviews, but after reading just a few of these delightful prayers I am in complete agreement with the reviews I read. With historical content and the prayers themselves I have not been able to put the book down. The Author did a beautiful job in compiling information. This is a book that can be read by all faiths and by men as well as women. Although it speaks primarily to the heart of the Jewish woman it can be read by all. This review was written by Andrew's Wife.

What a treasure! It covers every topic imaginable and I was blessed to have it in time to read at a loved one's bed of transition. Unbelievable that these verses were written so long ago but so apply to today and she writes beautifully for women. Thank you to my awesome cousin who told me about it! I have been recommending it like crazy.

As a 55-year old Jewish woman with no formal instruction but a long personal reading list, I have been devouring Hours of Devotion since I purchased it. This volume speaks to my heart in so many ways, and the Introduction had me in tears. This is, indeed, a work of beauty and depth. Over centuries, these women have worked to share it with the world. Don't miss it. Hours of Devotion will

become part of your soul. Arlene Ross Miami, FL

This is an outstanding book written and translated by Dinah Berland. Ms Berland's introductory pages are informative and loving. The translations of Fanny Neuda's prayers are outstanding. I use this book almost everyday, and give it as a gift for my women friends - for hospital stays, pregnancy, weddings and the loss of a loved one.

It seems true that "there are no accidents". Dinah Berland discovered an old copy of this book in a low moment of her life, and rescued it from oblivion, just as it rescued her from crisis. The prayers, while written in the 19th century, are simple, eloquent and heartfelt, and ring true. Ms. Berland has provided a fascinating context for the prayers, with biographical information about Fanny Neuda and autobiographical reflections about her own spiritual journey. Best of all, she has revived a treasure that was once beloved by generations of women, and was almost lost to us.

I love the book, but I think should be clearer about the condition of their "bargain" books. There were creases on some of the pages inside, the top of a few look like they'd been cut, the dust jacket was creased and damaged in places, and it looks like it's been sitting on someone's shelf for awhile. If I was selling this used, I'd classify the condition as only fair. Because of the price, I don't think it's worth returning, but I was disappointed when I saw the condition it was in when I received it.

This prayer book is one that really touches the heart, and helps give words to us when we need them the most. I like the set up of this book as it has separate prayers for different days, life events, morning, and evening. So often when we pray, when we really need to we may be at a loss for words, this book helps to provide the words that are needed. I highly recommend this book if you are going through a difficult time, or even if you desire a book to assist you in your prayers.

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