

**Readings for**  
**A Day of Silence and Reflection**  
**on Yom Kippur**  
**New York Insight Meditation Center**

Rev. 9/2020

**Yom Kippur 2020**  
**Outline of the day (Times are approximate)**

10:05	Gathering
10:15	Opening Framing the day Taking of the 5 precepts
10:30	Guided Sitting Meditation
11:00	15-minute walk or stretch
11:15	A short dharma talk
11:30	Confessional (Vidui)
12:00	15-minute walk or stretch
12:15	A short dharma talk
12:30	Sit
1:00	Dana Talk
1:15	Walking meditation inside or outside or rest period
2:45	Guided Sitting meditation
3:15	Walk
3:30	A meditation on the 5 reflections. Yizkor – Honoring connection through time
4:00	A short dharma talk
4:15	Confessional
4:30	Guided forgiveness meditation
5:00	Choose your practice - sit, stand, walk, stretch
5:30	Final Confessional
5:45	Group Sharing and Reflection on the day
6:15	Reflections upon, and taking the Five precepts
6:30	Metta sutta and dedication of merit
6:40	Closing <b>SHOFAR</b>
6:45	Break fast

## Kol Nidre

By the authority of all who congregate above  
and all who congregate on earth,  
and with the permission of the omnipresent One,  
and by the consent of this assembly,  
we accept into our midst whoever seeks to pray,  
whether righteous or unrighteous,  
all shall pray as one community.

All vows,  
and formulas of prohibition, and declaration of taboo,  
and promises of abstinence, and names of God  
and pledges one assumes on penalty, and oaths,  
Whatever we have vowed and then forgot,  
Whatever we have sworn but not upheld,  
Whatever we declared taboo that went amiss,  
Whatever prohibitions we assumed upon ourselves to no avail,  
from the last Day of Atonement to this Day of Atonement -  
    may the day come upon us for the good! -  
from all of them we now request release,  
Let their burden be dissolved, and lifted off, and canceled,  
and made null and void, bearing no force and no reality.  
Those vows shall not be binding vows,  
those prohibitions shall not be binding prohibitions,  
those oaths shall not be binding oaths.

*From the Reconstructionist Prayer Book for the Days of Awe:*

On Rosh Hashanah, all is written and revealed,  
And on Yom Kippur, the course of every life is sealed!

How many pass on, how many shall thrive,  
Who shall live on, and who shall die,  
Whose death is timely, and whose is not,  
Who dies by fire, and who shall be drowned,  
Who by the sword, and who by the beast,  
Who by hunger, and who by thirst,  
Who by an earthquake, who by a plague,  
Who shall be strangled, and who shall be stoned,  
Who dwells in peace, and who is uprooted,  
Who shall live safely, and who shall be harmed,  
Whose life is tranquil, and whose is tormented,  
Who shall be poor, and who shall be rich,  
Who shall be humbled, and who is raised up!

But teshuvah\*, and tfilah\*\*, and tzeduakah\*\*  
Make easier what God may decree,  
Make easier what life holds in store,  
Make easier facing the world,  
Make easier facing ourselves.

*\*teshuvah - returning ... (remembering, mindfulness)*

*\*\*tifilah - righteousness, morality, sila*

*\*\*\*tzeduakah - generosity, giving ... dana*

## **Unetaneh Tokef for Black Lives**

By Imani Romney-Rosa Chapman

*Friday (June 5, 2020) would've been the 65th birthday of my first wife and her yahrzeit is this week. As I thought about the beauty of her laugh and the pain of her end, so different from those on whose behalf we cry out, the words of the Unetaneh Tokef—a prayer that inspires fear and awe during the High Holidays—came to me. Both the Unetaneh Tokef and the impact of [this list of killings of Black Americans](#) (compiled by an unknown community member) inspired “Unetaneh Tofek for Black Lives.”*

## **Unetaneh Tokef for Black Lives**

Each day we hazard our Black lives in the Court of the White World

We know our worth

Yet the white world is judge-self-appointed

We pass before you to be counted

12.5 million bodies stolen

1.8 million mercifully avoided your shores

Stolen shores, stolen land

10.7 million arrived unsafely

... times 401 years

... times infinite human indignities

... times  $\frac{3}{5}$  of a human being

We now number 47.8 million

In the morning it is written and by curfew it is sealed

Who shall die while jogging (#AmaudArbery)

Who shall die while relaxing in the comfort of their home (#BothamJean  
#AtatianaJefferson)

Who shall die while seeking help after a car crash (#JonathanFerrell  
#RenishaMcBride)

Who shall die while holding a cellphone (#StephonClark)

Who shall die while decorating for a party (#ClaudeReese)

Who shall die while leaving a party (#JordanEdwards #SeanBell)

Who shall die while enjoying music (#JordanDavis)

Who shall die while selling music ... trying to make a way outta no way  
(#AltonSterling)

Who shall die while sleeping (#AiyanaJones)

Who shall die while worshipping the Lord (#Charleston9)

Who shall die for a traffic violation (#SandraBland)

Who shall die while coming from the store (#MikeBrown and  
#TrayvonMartin)

Who shall die while playing cops and robbers (#TamirRice)  
Who shall die while lawfully carrying a weapon (#PhilandoCastile,  
#FreddieGray)  
Who shall die while on the shoulder of the road with car problems  
(#CoreyJones #TerrenceCrutcher)  
Who shall die in the first hours of the new year (#OscarGrant)  
Who shall die while shopping at Walmart (#JohnCrawford)  
Who shall die while cashing a check in peace (#YvonneSmallwood)  
Who shall die while reading a book in their own car (#KeithScott)  
Who shall die while taking a walk with their stepfather (#CliffordGlover)  
Who shall die while reaching for their wallet (#AmadouDiallo)  
Who shall die while running away (#WalterScott)  
Who shall die while asking a cop a question (#RandyEvans)  
Who shall die while begging for their life, their breath (#EricGarner  
#GeorgeFloyd)

Who shall die by the effects of supremacy, greed, and apathy  
... who by beast, indeed  
"But repentance, prayer and charity temper judgment's severe decree"  
"But repentance, prayer and charity avert judgment's severe decree?"  
But turning, connection and giving these return us to our Gd?  
Whose repentance? Whose prayer? Whose charity?  
Temper, please temper  
Temper already! Temper ...  
For sins against God, the Day of Atonement brings forgiveness; for sins  
against one's fellowman, the Day of Atonement brings no forgiveness till he  
has become reconciled with the fellowman he wronged. ([Mishnah Yoma  
8:9](#))  
"The Day of Atonement brings no forgiveness  
till he has become reconciled with the fellowman he wronged."  
When will you atone? How will you atone?

For you, like us, will be judged.  
You, like us, will return to dust.

this originally appeared in [Lilith](#) magazine downloaded from [Ritualwell.org](#)

The Five Precepts:

1. Refrain from harming living beings; commit to honoring and respecting all living beings.
2. Refrain from taking that which is not freely given; use what we have with care and commit to generosity with our time, our belongs, and our actions
3. Refrain from sensual and sexual misconduct; use our sexual energy with sensitivity and respect.
4. Refrain from false, harmful or reckless speech; commit to speaking honestly, with care and respect
5. Refrain from the misuse of substances that cloud the mind and lead to heedlessness; commit to training the mind in awareness and clarity.

\*\*\*\*\*

What are we? What is our life? What is our kindness?  
What is our righteousness?  
What is our salvation?  
What is our strength?  
What is our might?

What can we say before You?  
Are not all of the heroes like nothing before You,  
the famous as if they had never existed,  
the wise as if devoid of wisdom,  
and the perceptive as if devoid of intelligence?

For most of their deeds are desolate  
and the days of their lives are empty before You.

The pre-eminence of humans over beast  
is non-existent - for all is vain.

(from the Art Scroll)

## The “Vidui” – Confessional

We have acted wrongly,  
We have been untrue,  
And we have gained unlawfully  
And have defamed.

We have harmed others  
We have wrought injustice,  
We have zealously transgressed,  
And we have hurt  
And have told lies.

We have improperly advised,  
And we have covered up the truth,  
And we have laughed in scorn.  
We have misused responsibility  
And have neglected others.

We have stubbornly rebelled.  
We have offended,  
We have perverted justice,  
We have stirred up enmity,  
And we have kept ourselves from change.

We have reached out to evil,  
We have shamelessly corrupted  
And have treated others with disdain.

Yes, we have thrown ourselves off course,  
And we have tempted and misled.

We have done wrong, and have rebelled.  
And so, we were not ready for help.  
May the will to leave behind the path of evil  
Be in our hearts.

May we be granted forgiveness for all of our sins,  
May we receive mercy for all of our injustices,  
And let us atone for all we have done wrong.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
in the closing of the heart,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
without knowing what we do.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
whether open or concealed,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
knowingly and by deceit.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
through the prompting of the heart,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
through the influence of others.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
whether by intention or mistake,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
by the hand of violence.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
through our foolishness of speech,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
through an evil inclination.

And for them all, God of forgiveness, please forgive us, pardon  
us, help us atone!

*Ve'al kulam eloah selihot selah lanu. Mehal lanu. Kaper lanu.*

For the wrong that we have done before you  
in the palming of a bribe,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
by expressions of contempt.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
through misuse of food and drink,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
by our avarice and greed.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
through offensive gaze,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
through a condescending glance.

And for them all, God of forgiveness, please forgive us, pardon  
us, help us atone!

*Ve'al kulam eloah selihot selah lanu. Mehal lanu. Kaper lanu.*

For the wrong that we have done before you  
by our quickness to oppose,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
by deception of a friend.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
by unwillingness to change,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
by running to embrace an evil act.

For the wrong that we have done before you  
by our groundless hatred,  
And for the wrong that we have done before you  
in the giving of false pledges.

And for them all, God of forgiveness, please forgive us, pardon  
us, help us atone.

*Ve'al kulam eloah selihot selah lanu. Mehal lanu. Kaper lanu.*

Those that are known to us  
Are things we have acknowledged  
And confessed before you,  
But those that are not known to us  
Are things revealed and known only to you.

***Vidui adapted from Tikkun.org. Michael Lerner***

On the Jewish High Holidays, we take collective responsibility for our lives and for the activities of the community of which we are a part. Although we realize that we did not create the world into which we are born, we nevertheless have responsibility for what it is like as long as we participate in it.

While the struggle to change ourselves and our world may be long and painful, it is our struggle. No one else can do it for us. To the extent that we have failed to do all that we could to make ourselves or our community all that we ought to be, we ask God and each other for forgiveness and we now commit ourselves to acting differently this coming year.

*Ve-al kulam Eloha selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.*

For all our sins, may the Force that makes forgiveness possible forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.

For the sins we have committed before you and in our communities by being so preoccupied with ourselves that we ignore the large problems of the world in which we live;

And for the sins we have committed by being so directed toward outward realities that we have ignored our spiritual development.

For the sins of accepting the current distribution of wealth and power as unchangeable;

And for the sins of giving up on social change and focusing exclusively on personal advancement and success;

For the sins of feeling so powerless when we hear about oppression that we finally close our ears

And for the sins of dulling our outrage at the continuation of poverty, oppression, and violence in this world.

And for the sins we have committed by allowing our food and our air to be poisoned;

For the sins of not doing enough to save the environment;

And for the sins of not doing enough to challenge sexist institutions and practices;

And for the sins of not doing enough to challenge racist institutions and practices;

And for the sins of turning our backs on—or participating in—the oppression of gays, lesbians and trans people;

And for the sins of not doing enough to alleviate homelessness, poverty, and world hunger;

And for the sins of not recognizing that the deprivation of meaning and spirit is as painful as the deprivation of money or freedom;

For the sins of accepting a world in which the “bottom line” is money and power, and not fighting for a new bottom line of love and caring;

And for the sins of being cynical about the possibility of building a world based on love;

And for the sins of spreading negative stories about people we know;

And for the sins of being passive recipients of negativity or listening and allowing others to spread hurtful stories;

For these sins we ask God and each other to give us the strength to forgive ourselves and each other.

For the sins we have committed by not forgiving our parents for the wrongs they committed when we were children;

And for the sins of having too little compassion or too little respect for our parents or for our children;

For the sins of cooperating with self-destructive behavior in others or in ourselves;

And for the sins of not supporting each other as we attempt to change;

For the sins of not seeing Buddha nature within each person we encounter or within ourselves;

And for the sins of not learning from and giving adequate respect and care to our elders and to our teachers;

For the sins of being jealous and trying to possess and control those whom we love;

And for the sins of being judgmental of others and ourselves;

For the sins of withholding love and support;

And for the sins of doubting our ability to love and get love from others;

For the sins of insisting that everything we do have a payoff;  
For the sins of not recognizing the beauty within ourselves;  
And for the sins of not recognizing the beauty that surrounds us;  
For the sins of not allowing ourselves to play;  
And for the sins of being manipulative or hurting others to protect our  
own egos;

*Ve-al kulam Eloha selichot selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.*

For all our sins, may the Force that makes forgiveness possible  
forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.

For the sins of not honoring diversity of ethnic and cultural  
backgrounds, the diversity of class backgrounds, the diversity of  
sexual orientations and gender identities, and the diversity of ways  
that we address the spiritual truths of the universe;

For the sins of not having compassion for one another;

And for not taking care of one another;

For the sins of not sharing responsibility for child-rearing;

And for the sins of self-absorption, allowing us to be insulated from  
the loneliness and needs of people around us;

For the sins of focusing only on our sins and not our strengths and  
beauties;

And for the sins of not adequately rejoicing and celebrating the  
beauty and

grandeur of creation.

*Ve-al kulam Eloha selichot, selach lanu, mechal lanu, kaper lanu.*

For all these, Lord of Forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us  
atonement.

## Vidui for Yom Kippur by Jill Hammer

Inevitably, all lives  
rub up against other lives  
and so has mine  
for good and for harm.  
For all the ways  
my life has touched others  
in love, in compassion,  
in wisdom, in justice,  
in joy, in wonder,  
in healing, in grace,  
in ordinary kindness,  
knowing or unknowing,  
I am grateful.

For all the ways  
other lives have touched mine  
in love, in compassion,  
in wisdom, in justice,  
in joy, in wonder,  
in healing, in grace,  
in ordinary kindness,  
knowing or unknowing,  
I am grateful.

For all the ways  
my life has touched others  
in anger, in cruelty,  
in hurtfulness, in unfairness,  
in ignorance, in numbness,  
in narrowness, in selfishness,  
in carelessness, in unmindfulness,  
knowing or unknowing,  
I ask forgiveness,  
to the extent that it is possible.

For all the ways  
the lives of others have touched mine  
in anger, in cruelty,  
in hurtfulness, in unfairness  
in ignorance, in numbness,  
in narrowness, in selfishness,  
in carelessness, in unmindfulness,  
knowing or unknowing,  
I offer forgiveness,  
to the extent that I am able.

And to all the mysteries,  
all that remains uncertain and unknown,  
all that I do not know about reasons or outcomes,  
all that I do not know about right or wrong  
or harm or healing,  
I offer my surrender.  
My intention is that the sum total of my life  
be for the good.

Yehi ratzon milifnei Shekhinah:  
May this, may all this, be acceptable  
before the Presence.

I ask this in all the worlds,  
from all the worlds,  
in this time  
and for all time:  
Le'olam ul'almei almaya.  
Amen.

**A Vidui for Martin Luther King Day**  
JANUARY 19, 2015 ~ RABBIADAR

*For all our sins, may the Holy One who makes forgiveness possible forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.*

For the sin of **A**rrogance, that makes it difficult to see our own failings

For the sin of **B**rutality, that makes it possible for us to stand by and think, "He must have deserved it"

For the sin of **C**redulity, in which we have believed "news" from unreliable sources

For the sin of **D**isregarding facts that were uncomfortable for us

For the sin of **E**xecuting those whose offenses did not merit their death, and for standing by as our civil servants carried out those acts

For the sin of allowing unreasoning **F**ear to dictate our behavior towards others

For the sin of **G**reed, underpaying for work or over-charging for services

For the sin of baseless **H**atred, that demonizes entire groups of other human beings

***May the Eternal forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.***

For the sin of willful **I**gnorance, not wanting to know things that are embarrassing to us

For the sin of **J**ailing massive numbers of people for nonviolent crimes, separated from opportunities to better themselves and their families,

For the sin of **K**illing the hope of young men who believe that their only futures lie in prison or the grave

For the sin of **L**aziness in speaking up, when we hear racist language

For the sin of **M**inimizing the discomfort of others

For the sin of **N**on-Apologies that didn't express true sorrow

For the sin of **O**mission, when we failed to act upon our expressed convictions

For the sin of **P**resuming that someone has a particular role because of their skin color

***May the Eternal forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.***

For the sin of **Q**uiescence in the face of the racist behavior of others

For the sin of **R**acism, in all its myriad forms

For the sin of **S**elf-congratulation for acts of common decency

For the sin of **T**aking umbrage when someone calls us on a racist word or act

For the **U**nconscious acts which have injured others without our awareness

For the sin of **V**iolence against other human beings

For the sin of using **W**ords in ways that perpetuate racism in any way

For the sin of **X**enophobia, fearing and hating those who seem foreign to us

***May the Eternal forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.***

For the sin of **Y**akking when we should have been listening

For the sin of **Z**oning out when we assumed this list wasn't about us

For all of the sins of commission and omission, all the sins we committed consciously and unconsciously, for those that were simply accidents and those for which we failed to make an apology

***May the Eternal forgive us, pardon us, and make atonement possible.***

***For it is through true acts of genuine repentance and a sincere desire to change that we will open the future before our nation: a future of fairness, justice and peace. May all troubled hearts be comforted, may all wounded souls be healed, and may we live to see the day when the scourge of racism is truly behind us.***

Amen.

For the Sin of Racism: A Racial Justice Vidui  
FOUND IN: **EVERYDAY HOLINESS, PURSUING  
JUSTICE, HOLIDAYS, YOM KIPPUR**  
Shared by Sarah Barasch-Hagans | Prayer

For the racism we allowed because we felt compelled by fears for our safety if we acted,

and for the racism we allowed willingly, with no justification offered.

For the racist statements we said in private

and for the coded language we said in public.

For the racism committed accidentally

and for the racism committed intentionally.

For the racism that we allowed by failing to take proactive steps to end oppression

and for the racism that we allowed by failing to speak up after violence was perpetrated.

For the racism we committed through our actions

and for the racism we committed through our inaction.

For our racism of which we are conscious

and for the racism that lives in our subconscious.

We have already told You of our racism that we have the awareness to recognize,

And you already know of our racism that we still cannot see.

As it is said, “Adonai our God knows all that is difficult for us to see, and what is clear to us, and to our children forever.

To do all of these mitzvot in this *Torah*.” (Deut. 29: 28)

And David your servant said before You:

“I cannot understand all of my mistakes  
please cleanse me of the sins in my subconscious.” (Ps. 19:13)

God, you are merciful and receive those seeking to become allies.  
From the beginning, you have promised us that we could do  
teshuvah.

So we plead with you to accept our return—  
That, for all the people who commit to justice  
and to leaving their racism in the past,  
you will forgive them  
so that they may keep turning  
inwards and outwards, and always towards truth.

# Al Chet (על חטא) for Destroying God's Creation Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat & Festivals

Rabbi Daniel Nevins, Pearl Resnick Dean of the Rabbinical School and the Division of Religious Leadership, The Jewish Theological Seminary

*This confession, written as an addition to the classic ודוי / Vidui of Yom Kippur, uses traditional language to record our dismay at the changes to the planet wrought by humanity.*

## ¶ For the Sin of Destroying God's Creation

אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם אַתָּה בְּרֵאתָ שָׁמַיִם  
וְאֶרֶץ בְּאַהֲבָה,  
יִצְרַתָּ צְמָחִים וְחַיּוֹת, וְנִפְחַתָּ נְשֵׁמַת  
חַיִּים בְּבִנְיַ אָדָם.  
נִבְרָאנוּ בְּקֶרֶב עוֹלָם נְקִי וְטָהוֹר,  
וְכַעַת הוּא נִהְרַס עַל־יְדֵינוּ.  
לֹא עַל צְדָקוֹתֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מְפִילִים  
תְּהַנוּנוּנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
כִּי אֲשַׁמְנוּ, בְּזַבְזֹנוּ, וְנִרְמַנוּ נֹזֵק כְּבִיר:  
עַל חֲטָא שְׁמַלְאֵנוּ אֶרֶץ וַיָּמִים  
בְּזָבָל וּבְאִשְׁפָּה,  
עַל חֲטָא שְׁהַשְׁמַדְנוּ לְנִצְחָ חַיּוֹת  
נִפְלְאוֹת שְׁהַצַּלְתָּ מִמֵּי הַמַּבּוּל,  
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁהַכְרַתְנוּ יַעֲרוֹת  
עֲצִים הַמְקִימִים נֶפֶשׁ כְּלֵי־חַי.  
אֲנָא ה' פָּקַח עֵינֵינוּ וְנִרְאֵה אֶת־  
הוֹד יִצִּירְתֶּךָ,  
אֲזִ נִשְׁבַּחְךָ כְּמוֹ שִׁכְתוּב: מִה־רִבּוֹ  
מִעֲשֵׂיךָ ה' כָּל־כֶּסֶם בְּחִכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ  
מִלְּאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנְךָ.  
הִסֵּר אֶת־לֵב הָאָבִוּ מִבְּשָׂרֵנוּ, וְתוֹן לֵב  
בְּשָׂר בְּקֶרְבָּנוּ.  
תֵּן לָנוּ חִכְמָה וְאַמִּץ־לֵב לְשִׁמּוֹר עַל  
הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם.

Eternal God, You created the heavens and earth in love. You fashioned plants and animals, breathing Your spirit into humanity. We were created amidst a clean and pure world, but it is now degraded in our grasp. Not on our own merits do we beseech You, Adonai our God, for we have sinned, we have wasted, we have caused vast damage: For the sin of filling the sea and land with filth and garbage; for the sin of destroying species that You saved from the flood; and for the sin of laying bare the forests and habitats that sustain life. Please, God, open our eyes that we might see the splendor of Your creation. Then we shall praise You, as it is written: "How great are Your works, Adonai! You have made them all with wisdom; the earth is filled with Your creations" (Psalm 104:24). Remove the heart of stone from our flesh, and give us a feeling heart. Grant us wisdom and determination to safeguard the earth beneath the heavens.

—DANIEL NEVINS



[opensiddur.org](http://opensiddur.org)

<http://opensiddur.org/new-prayers/collective-welfare/environment/a-prayer-for-our-earth-an-ecumenical-prayer-by-pope-francis-trans-rabbi-david-seidenberg-neohasid-org/>

A Prayer for Our Earth, an ecumenical prayer by Pope Francis (trans. Rabbi David Seidenberg, neohasid.org)

### **A prayer for our earth**

All-powerful God, great and mighty you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.  
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and its beauty.  
Fill us with peace, and settle peace upon us  
that we may live as brothers and sisters together, harming no one.

O God of the poor, orphan, and widow, help us to rescue  
the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow life's beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look for gain at the expense of the poor  
and the earth. Teach us to discover the divine worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly  
united with every creature, as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you who dwells within us for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray,  
to do Your will with a whole heart  
to pursue righteousness in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

An ecumenical prayer by Pope Francis from his encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* from May 24th, 2015.

## COMMENTARY on the Confessional from the Prayer book for the Days of Awe (Reconstructionist)

1. “The Hebrew expressions for sinful postures are often bodily postures – condescending glance is literally “lofty eyes”; arrogance and pride are literally “stretching of the throat”; refusing compromise is literally “fortifiedness of the forehead”; unwillingness to change is literally “stiffness of the neck.” ... In reciting this confession, one need not have enacted directly every one of its actions and states; one simply reminds oneself how habitually and systemically connected we are to a climate of wrongdoing. And thus, by naming its postures, we gain a certain freedom from what seemed to be their inevitability. We regain, in no small measure, the capacity to choose what we do and what we say.”
2. A large portion of the sins listed refer to a part of the body (mouth, lips, tongue, eyes, throat, neck) for two reasons. First, our bodies need to know the nature of our wrongs. We need to experience the pain of our behavior viscerally before we are willing to change. Our confession and acknowledgment cannot remain a purely intellectual activity. We must feel, in our guts, the ill we cause ourselves and others, or we will not be motivated to really change. Second, most of the sins derive from forgetting our connection to the whole. We imagine that we can act as if there were no consequences, as if we were loose limbs and eyes and mouths divorced from a larger body, the body of our fellow human beings, the body of organic life on earth, the body of all life. Most sins derive from our separation and isolation from past and future. Most sins spring from the illusion of separateness. We think we can get away with it. But there is no getting away. There is no forgetfulness. All is remembered. All is related.

*From: Gates of Repentance Prayer Book*

We tremble.

At what did we aim?

How did we stumble?

What did we take? What did we give?

To what were we blind?

Last year's confession came easily to the lips.

Will this year's come from deeper than the skin?

Say then:

Why are our paths strewn with promises like

Fallen leaves?

Say then:

When shall our lust be for wisdom?

Say now: Love and truth shall meet;

Justice and peace shall embrace.

In our weakness, give us strength

In our blindness, be our guide

When we falter, hold our hand

Make consistent our impulse for good;

Let us know the joy of walking in Your ways.

Before the light is harsh to your eye;  
before your eye dims to the glory of sun, moon and stars;  
before the clear sky seems clouded;  
before your limbs tremble and your back is bent;  
before you teeth blunt and your eyes fog;  
before your bowels tighten and your stomach slows;  
before your sleep is fitful and your ears seem stuffed with cloth;  
before the slightest incline seems like a great mountain;  
before the easiest task becomes a great challenge;  
before tumors threaten and boils erupt;  
before your spine twists and you cannot stand erect;  
before sexual desire fails;  
before your mind dwells on death and your friends appear as mourners;  
before your bones become brittle and your thoughts muddled;  
before your connection to this world is severed  
and the dust of you returns to the earth  
and the breath of you returns to the One Who Breathes Us All;  
Before all this, know:

The whole of life is empty of permanence;  
there is no certainty  
no surety,  
no salvation to lift you out of impermanence;  
There is only doing without reward;  
seeing without payment;  
learning without knowing;  
rejoicing without reason;  
loving without controlling;  
walking without a map and measure.  
To think otherwise is to pursue the wind,  
and vanity piles upon vanity  
as you seek to freeze that which is forever melting.

Ecclesiastes 12:2-8

Translated and re-interpreted by Rami Shapiro  
(from *The Way of Solomon*)

## **The Five Reflections**

1. I am of the nature to grow old; I have not gotten beyond old age.
2. I am of the nature to become ill; I have not gotten beyond illness.
3. I am of the nature to die; I have not gotten beyond death.
4. All that is mine, dear and delightful, will change and vanish.
5. I am born of my karma; I will inherit my karma; whatever I do whether good or evil, that I will inherit.

## **Yizkor**

*A commentary from the Reconstructionist Mahzor:*

“As we gather together for this solemn moment, we are touched by a horizontal connection, a circle of individuals reaching out to each other for comfort and nourishment as we each acknowledge our loss. We are also empowered by a vertical connection with those souls who have cherished the chain of tradition that stretches far back in time. We are all a part of that chain. By honoring it, both in its horizontal form and its vertical dimension, we are proclaiming our faith in its continuity.”

*From the Gates of Repentance Prayer Book:*

Birth is a beginning  
And Death a destination.  
And life is a journey:  
From childhood to maturity  
And youth to age;  
From innocence to awareness  
And ignorance to knowing;  
From foolishness to discretion  
And then, perhaps, to wisdom:  
From weakness to strength –  
Or strength to weakness –  
And, often, back again;  
From health to sickness  
And back, we pray, to health  
again;  
From offense to forgiveness,  
From loneliness to love,

From joy to gratitude,  
From pain to compassion  
And grief to understanding –  
From fear to faith;  
From defeat to defeat to death  
Until, looking backward or  
ahead, we see that victory lies  
Not at some high place along  
the way,  
But in having made the journey,  
stage by stage,  
A sacred pilgrimage.  
Birth is a beginning  
And death a destination  
And life is a journey,  
A sacred pilgrimage  
To life everlasting.

*from the Psalms:*

What are human beings  
That you take note of them?  
The children of humanity  
That you should think of them?  
A human being is like a momentary breeze,  
A person's days are but a passing shadow.  
At dawn, life blossoms and renews itself,  
At dusk, it withers and dries up.  
You return a person unto dust.  
You say: Return, O children of Humanity?

*From the Diamond sutta:*

"All composed things are like a dream,  
a phantom, a dewdrop, a flash of lightning.  
That is how we should observe them."

"Love is not changed by Death,  
And nothing is lost and all in the end is harvest."  
Edith Sitwell

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,  
we remember them  
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,  
we remember them

In the opening of the buds and the rebirth of spring,  
we remember them  
In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer  
we remember them

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn  
we remember them  
In the beginning of the year, and when it ends,  
we remember them

When we are weary and in need of strength,  
we remember them  
When we are lost and sick at heart  
we remember them

When we have joys we yearn to share,  
we remember them  
So long as we live, they too shall live, for  
they are now a part of us as  
we remember them

Jack Riemer & Sylvan D. Kamens

## **Epitaph**

*By Merrit Malloy*

When I die  
Give what's left of me away  
To children  
And old men that wait to die.

And if you need to cry,  
Cry for your brother  
Walking the street beside you.  
And when you need me,  
Put your arms  
Around anyone  
And give them  
What you need to give to me.

I want to leave you something,  
Something better  
Than words  
Or sounds.

Look for me  
In the people I've known  
Or loved,  
And if you cannot give me away,  
At least let me live on in your eyes  
And not your mind.

You can love me most  
By letting  
Hands touch hands,  
By letting bodies touch bodies,  
And by letting go  
Of children  
That need to be free.

Love doesn't die,  
People do.  
So, when all that's left of me  
Is love,  
Give me away.

**In Blackwater Woods**  
**-Mary Oliver**

Look, the trees  
are turning  
their own bodies  
into pillars  
  
of light,  
are giving off the rich  
fragrance of cinnamon  
and fulfillment,  
  
the long tapers  
of cattails  
are bursting and floating away  
over  
the blue shoulders  
  
of the ponds,  
and every pond,  
no matter what its  
name is, is  
  
nameless now.  
Every year  
everything

I have ever learned  
  
in my lifetime  
leads back to this: the fires  
and the black river of loss  
whose other side  
  
is salvation,  
whose meaning  
none of us will ever know.  
To live in this world  
  
you must be able  
to do three things:  
to love what is mortal;  
to hold it  
  
against your bones knowing  
your own life depends on it;  
and, when the time comes to  
let it go,  
to let it go.

## **Mourner's Kaddish**

Let God's name be made great and holy in the world that was created as God willed. May God complete the holy realm in your own lifetime, in your days, and in the days of all the house of Israel, quickly and soon. And say: Amen.

May God's great name be blessed, forever and as long as worlds endure.

May it be blessed, and praised, and glorified, and held in honor, viewed with awe, embellished, and revered; and may the blessed name of holiness be hailed, though it be higher by far than all the blessings, songs, praises, and consolations that we utter in this world. And say: Amen.

May Heaven grant a universal peace and life for us, and for all Israel. And say: Amen.

May the one who creates harmony above, make peace for us and for all Israel, and for all who dwell on earth. And say: Amen.

*Yitgadal veyitkadash shemey raba*

*Be'alma divra hirutey veyamliv malhutey*

*Behayeyhon uvvomeyhon uvhayey dehol beyt yisra'el*

*Ba'agala uvizman kariv ve'imru amen.*

*Yehey shemey raba mevarah le'alam ulalmey almaya.*

*Yitbarah veyishtabah veyitpa'ar veyitromam*

*Veyitnasey veyit-hadar veyitaleh veyit-halal*

*Shemey dekudsha berih hu*

*Le'ela le'ela mikol birhata vehirata*

*Tushbehata venehemata d'amiran be'alma ve'imru amen.*

*Yehey shelama raba min shemaya vehayim aleynu ve'al kol*

*Yisrael veimru amen.*

*Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom aleynu ve'al kol yisra'el ve'al kol yoshvey tevel ve'imru amen.*

*ghosteen meditation*

There is a landscape  
beneath the push, the pull  
the taut face turned into a wall.

There is a distant sea  
where the sail ship,  
chartered by winds of loss,  
carries your hurting soul...

Across  
that buttoned down  
defense of a hopeful future.

Here lives a musical box  
of wailing hearts  
waiting for your presence  
to enter their memory hall.

Meet the ghosts...  
lost to the fires of annihilation  
the Covid dead roaming,  
the psychotic war dogs unleashed.

They all wail at the empty feast  
served in the valley of loss.

They surf the rip tide  
where litanies  
list the losses  
echoing up from  
lattice grids shut down  
over the cargo of our long gone pieces.

While silent ash  
of burnt forests  
charred animals  
birds dashed to earth,  
billions of tiny workers of evolution

houses, cars, and life dreams ...  
Vanish  
Algorithms march those confused  
into the razor vortex  
of truth is no more.

Fragments of countries,  
families, friends,  
swirl like ash storms  
from fallen worlds  
disintegrating our beleaguered minds.

The dark red sky at midday  
announces, 'you cannot live here  
anymore.'

We are now all queued refugees  
from America's strangeness.

In the gaping void  
monsters rush in.

Float anyhow in your tear filled body.  
Allow your aching chest,  
gasping to hold  
the karmic storehouse  
of wounds,  
to soften even more...

As you sail into shore  
to meet the ancient siren  
of ancestors grief,  
your grief,  
and all our grief  
at this  
nearing last station  
of our world's end.

thanissara – sept 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## **Avinu Malkenu: Our Creator, Our Sovereign**

Our creator, our sovereign, we have done wrong in your presence.

Our creator, our sovereign, we have no one to rule over us but you.

Our creator, our sovereign, help us for the honor of your name.

Our creator, our sovereign, renew us for a good year.

Our creator, our sovereign, nullify the plans of any who may seek to do us harm.

Our creator, our sovereign, grant forgiveness and atonement for all of our transgressions.

Our creator, our sovereign, help us to return wholeheartedly into your presence.

Our creator, our sovereign, send thorough healing to all those who ail.

Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us for good fortune in the Book of Life.

Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Redemption and Salvation.

Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Sustenance and Livelihood.

Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Merit.

Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Forgiveness and Atonement.

Our creator, our sovereign, let grow for us the tree of imminent redemption.

Our creator, our sovereign, remember us, though we are made of dust.

Our creator, our sovereign, be merciful to us and to all our offspring.

Our creator, our sovereign, act in memory of all those who have been killed while honoring your name.

Our creator, our sovereign, act in honor of your great and mighty, awe-inspiring name, which has been called out over us for our protection.

Our creator, our sovereign, be gracious with us and respond to us for we have no deeds to justify us; deal with us in righteousness and love, and save us now.

*Avinu malkenu. Avinu malkenu*

*Avenu malkenu honenu va'anenu ki eyn banu ma'asim*

*asey imanu tzedakah vahesed vehoshi'enu.*

## Kuan Yin Vidui

### **Bow & Recite Together**

I, and all living beings, from beginning-less time have been constantly obstructed by ignorance of the three karmic actions and the six sense faculties, not knowing the essentials of escape, merely complying with birth and death and not knowing the wonderful Dharma. Now, although we know we continue to be hindered by all kinds of difficult conditions. Now, before Kuan Yin and the Buddhas of the ten directions, for the sake of living beings everywhere, we acknowledge harm done and we return to our lives, making a clear intention to transform our unskillful tendencies, praying there will be protection and that offenses are dissolved.

### **Stand After Bell**

Everywhere for the sake of all in the triple world, for living beings of the Dharma realm, we vow to transform greed, hatred and delusion.

### **Recite Together While Head Bowed**

Along with living beings, from beginning-less time, because of attachments and deluded views based on a distorted selfishness, we have committed countless unwholesome deeds. Therefore, on this day, we have come to trust deeply in cause and effect. We give birth to a healthy sense of remorse for harm done to self and others and resolve to make amends by seeking the Buddha wisdom. Knowing that all dharmas are empty, and still, for the sake of all living beings, we abandon the unwholesome tendencies and cultivate the good. We pray that Kuan Yin Bodhisattva will compassionately gather in this offering and receive it.

### **Chanting Together**

Namo Da Bei Kuan Shr Yin Pu Sa

### **Recite Together**

With the utmost sincerity of mind, I, (*say your name*), acknowledge harm I have done. This very mind, shared by all living beings of the Dharma realm is fundamentally complete with the thousand dharmas. It has, in full, all spiritual strength and the use of bright wisdom. Above, it equals the Buddha-mind; below it is identical to all that lives.

Beginning-less dark movement blocks this still brightness, contact with things dims and confuses it, and thoughts arise and bind it in attachments. In the midst of the sameness of dharmas arises the notion of self and other. In all existence, attachment and views are the basis of unwholesome actions of body and speech and create the conditions that give rise to all suffering.

Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and unskillful speech, misuse of intoxicants, breaking the precepts of blameless living, slandering the triple jewel, not respecting saints and sages and being confused regards right and wrong - karmic actions such as these are measureless and boundless. In the midst of oppressive conditions from the past and present, I am obstructed in the Dharmas of the Path and am hindered in my ability to become well-seasoned in the cultivation of the way. Now having met the perfect spiritual mantra of great compassion and the guidelines of blameless living according to the Bodhisattva Path, I am able to quickly dissolve transgressions like these.

### **Pause to Reflect**

Together, we acknowledge our heartbreak at the devastation and harm done to the bounteous, sacred Earth: to her eco-systems that are tortured due to our greed, to the multitude of peoples decimated through wars, enslavement, oppression, the coveting of their land, theft of their resources, and the lack of respect for their rights; to the billions of animals and creatures who suffer abuse, death, and extinction at our hands; to the exploitation of the great oceans, rivers, magnificent forests, lakes and waterways, mountaintops, minerals, and forms of life that cannot defend against our aggression.

### **Pause to Reflect**

Therefore, on this day, of Yom Kippur, we bring forth the Bodhi Mind and resolve to cultivate the practice of true words. We vow to extend awareness, care and love to this great Earth, and all who live upon her. Together with all living beings, we confess all wrongdoing, seeking freedom from all obstructions.

### **Recite/ Chant Together**

May the greatly compassionate Kuan Shr Yin Bodhisattva protect and uphold us with her thousand hands and illumine us with her thousand eyes so that we may realize the cessation of suffering. We vow to open the knowledge of my original wisdom and to be vigorous in helping the many kinds of beings escape the wheel of suffering. Now that acknowledgement of harm done, and the vows of repentance and aspiration are made, we return our life to the Triple Jewel, the timeless refuge that leads all beings to the radiant heart that is our true home.

## The Thirteen Attributes of God

ADONAY ADONAY, God loving and gracious,  
patient, and abundant in kindness and truth,  
keeping kindness for a thousand ages,  
forgiving sin and rebellion and transgression,  
making pure!

May you forgive our sins and our wrongdoing,  
may you claim us as your own!

Forgive us, our creator, for we have done wrong,  
grant pardon to us, sovereign, for we have transgressed,  
for you, ETERNAL ONE, are good and merciful,  
abundant in your steadfast love  
to all who call on you!

And as for me, my prayer is for you, GENTLE ONE,  
may it be for you a time of desire.  
O God, in the abundance of your love,  
respond to me in truth with your help.

*Adonay, adonay el rahum vehanun ereh apayim verav hesed ve'emet  
notzer hesed la'alafim noseiy avon vafesh vehata'ah venakey.*

*Va'ani tefilati leha adonay et ratzon elohim berov hasdeha aneni  
be'emet yisheha.*

## **The Five Precepts**

The Buddha said “Do not do anything harmful; do only what is good; purify and train your own mind.” This is the teaching of the Buddha, this is the path to enlightenment.

Dhammapada verse 116:

Hasten towards what is wholesome  
Restrain your mind from evil doing  
The mind that is slow to do good  
Tends to delight in Evil

### **The Five Precepts:**

1. Refrain from harming living beings; commit to honoring and respecting all living beings.
2. Refrain from taking that which is not freely given; use what we have with care and commit to generosity with our time, our belongs, and our actions
3. Refrain from sensual and sexual misconduct; use our sexual energy with sensitivity and respect.
4. Refrain from false, harmful or reckless speech; commit to speaking honestly, with care and respect
5. Refrain from the misuse of substances that cloud the mind and lead to heedlessness; commit to training the mind in awareness and clarity.

Right action embodied in the five precepts, asks us, in addition to refraining from to also cultivate integrity, goodness and virtue in the way we live our lives and the way we treat others, creating harmony in our homes, communities, world . It is a commitment to compassion – we undertake to live from the truth of compassion, taking care not to let our words and deeds bring harm to other beings.

## Sharing of Merit

*From the Gates of Repentance Prayer Book:*

Today let us remember the earth's oppressed;  
Let us restore their human heritage  
To the victims of torture,  
The weak and the weary,  
All who are imprisoned without cause.  
Let us remember them,  
Bring peace to every home,  
And comfort to every hearth.  
We know the wisdom by which You would have us live;  
Oceans of ink have been spilled to say it:  
Be faithful, be true, love one another as you love yourselves.  
But the world is dark, Lord, and cold with fear and rage.  
The hammer of Chaos beats loudly within our breasts.  
How can we endure?

*This is the vision of a great and noble life:  
To endure ambiguity and to make light shine through it;  
To stand fast in uncertainty;  
And to prove capable of unlimited love and hope.*

From: This is Real and You are Completely Unprepared  
by Alan Lew

One year at Neilah, Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev declared war on God, but only as a last resort. I heard this story from Rabbi Abraham Karp of Boston. Levi Yitzchak mounted the pulpit to begin the Neilah service in fear and trembling. He was absolutely determined that before the gates of heaven closed he would wrest a promise from God to give his people a year of blessing and happiness instead of the terrible suffering they had been enduring in recent years. So he did three things.

First he tried supplication. He pleaded with God. He said, "Look, God, an ordinary person who drops a treasure on the floor will stoop down and pick it up without even thinking about it. But you, dear God, you have called us your treasure, and yet you let us fall from your hands to the earth and you don't pick us up. For two thousand years, you have let us grovel in the dust of exile and you haven't bent down to pick us up. Is it too much to ask you to act like and ordinary person acts?" Levi saw his words rise up toward heaven in visible waves, and the gates of heaven stopped closing and actually began to open, but just a little bit.

So Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev decided to throw all his energy into the Vidui, the formal prayer of confession that is a standard feature of all Yom Kippur services, including Neilah. If pleading opened the gates of heaven a little bit, he thought, perhaps repentance would open them up the rest of the way. So when it came time to recite the confessional, he began to weep, and he cried out, "Woe to us. We live in a crazy world. It used to be that people told the truth on the streets and lied when they came to synagogue. Since they conducted their business in honesty and truth, when they came to the synagogue and recited the Vidui on Yom Kippur and they said, "We have sinned," they were lying. But now the opposite is the case. They lie on the streets and they tell the truth in the synagogue. They cheat and steal in their ordinary lives, and when they come to synagogue and confess that they have sinned, they are telling the truth.: A bitter cry of remorse and repentance could be heard throughout the synagogue as he concluded his Vidui. Levi Yitzchak saw the cry rising toward heaven, and it opened the gates of heaven a little bit wider, but not very far.

So Levi Yitzchak declared war on God. That was the only course left to him. Now a zaddik, a righteous saint like Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, doesn't wage war the way a king or a general would wage war, and he doesn't use the same weapons either. A zaddik employs an army of the righteous, and their weapons are their good deeds. So, in his last desperate attempt to open the gates of heaven wide, Levi Yitzchak raised his head and cried out to the heavens. "Let them speak, not me," Levi Yitzchak boomed. "Remember the two rubles the widow Sarah paid her son's teacher, instead of spending them on the dress she had longed for. Remember the bowl of soup the Yeshiva student shared with his classmates in spite of the fact that he was starving himself. Remember the bundle of money and the parcel of land Reb Chaim lost because he refused to go back on his word" And so Levi Yitzchak went on and on, listing one by one the simple acts of loving-kindness, unselfishness, and mercy the ordinary men and women of his congregation had performed in the past year. As the congregation raised their eyes, they could see the gates of heaven open completely, and they saw their prayers become a garland and rest on God's head as the Holy One descended from the Seat of Judgment and mounted the Seat of Mercy.

## SHARING OF BLESSINGS

(Now let us chant the verses of sharing and aspiration)

Through the goodness that arises from my practice,  
May my spiritual teachers and guides of great virtue,  
My mother, my father and my relatives,  
The sun and the moon,  
And all virtuous leaders of the world -

May the highest gods and evil forces;  
Celestial beings, guardian spirits of the Earth  
And the Lord of Death;  
May those who are friendly, indifferent or hostile;  
May all beings receive the blessings of my life.  
May they soon attain the threefold bliss  
And realize the Deathless.

Through the goodness that arises from my practice,  
And through this act of sharing,  
May all desires and attachments quickly cease  
And all harmful states of mind.  
Until I realize Nibbana,  
In every kind of of birth,  
May I have an upright mind  
With mindfulness and wisdom, austerity and vigour.  
May the forces of delusion not take hold  
nor weaken my resolve.

The Buddha is my excellent refuge,  
Unsurpassed is the protection of the Dhamma,  
The Solitary Buddha is my noble Lord,  
The Sangha is my supreme support.  
Through the supreme power of all these,  
May darkness and delusion be dispelled.

## **The Buddha's Words on Kindness (Metta Sutta)**

This is what should be done  
By one who is skilled in goodness,  
And who knows the path of peace:  
Let them be able and upright,  
Straightforward and gentle in speech.  
Humble and not conceited,  
Contented and easily satisfied.  
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.  
Peaceful and calm, and wise and skillful,  
Not proud and demanding in nature.  
Let them not do the slightest thing  
That the wise would later reprove.  
Wishing: In gladness and in safety,  
May all beings be at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be;  
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,  
The seen and the unseen,  
Those living near and far away,  
Those born and to-be-born,  
May all beings be at ease!

Let none deceive another,  
Or despise any being in any state.  
Let none through anger or ill-will  
Wish harm upon another.  
Even as a mother protects with her life  
Her child, her only child,  
So with a boundless heart  
Should one cherish all living beings:  
Radiating kindness over the entire world  
Spreading upwards to the skies,  
And downwards to the depths;  
Outwards and unbounded,  
Freed from hatred and ill-will.  
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down  
Free from drowsiness,  
One should sustain this recollection.  
This is said to be the sublime abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views,  
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,  
Being freed from all sense desires,  
Is not born again into this world.