

CONFESSION (VIDUI) FROM RABBENU NISSIM**RECITED BY THE SEFARADIM ON YOM KIPPUR**

From reading this confession we will learn how many aspects of our lives we can improve in order to fulfill the wishes of G-d, Blessed Be He. It is very beneficial to read it because The Creator desires that we admit our sins and errors as a first step to improving our souls. Then, we must strive to make changes and try not to repeat our mistakes and G-d is always open to accept our prayers and our repentance. More than anything, our Father in Heaven wishes and yearns for us to return to Him and “A broken and a contrite heart, O G-d you will not despise” (Psalms 51, 19).

“Master of the Universe, before I begin to speak, I acknowledge that I have no mouth to respond, and no decency to lift my head, because my sins overwhelm me and as a heavy load they weigh me down, and my transgressions are too many to be counted, and my sins too many to tell. I confess before You, Lord My G-d and G-d of my fathers with head bowed down and with my body bent, with a lowly spirit and no strength with a broken heart, bowing and prostrating to You with terror, fear and awe; with trembling, dread and shuddering, for the sins and iniquities I have committed against You, and all that I have transgressed and sinned against You, Lord My G-d. I say before You Lord, My G-d, some of my evil deeds, my perverse ways and my ugly actions, for to make a complete confession is impossible, and I do not have the power to reveal and explain them and I don't have the power of putting them in front of You. And I am not worthy enough to seek Your pardon, forgiveness and atonement for them. What am I? and what is my life? I am vanity and emptiness, dust and ashes, worm and maggot; I am ashamed from my sins and embarrassed because of my transgressions; And if I try to clarify them, compile them or explain them, time will run out but still I would not finish recounting them. Nor I have the eloquence to confess for them. My sin is too big for anyone to bear, and my transgressions can not be numbered. I am ashamed and confounded like a thief caught while hiding.

Master of the Universe, if I come to enumerate and to explain my transgressions, time would run out but they would not. For which of them shall I plead? Which shall I confess? And for which shall I ask pardon, forgiveness and atonement? For the general or for the specific? For sins I committed in public or in private? For early or recent, for

new or old, for the hidden or for the known, for those I remember or for those I have forgotten? I am aware that I have no Torah and no Mitzvot, no knowledge and no understanding, no charity and no justice, no kind deeds and no upright heart. But I am fool and not educated, simple and not understanding, a thief and not faithful, guilty and not innocent, wicked and not righteous, evil and not good, and I have not done any good deeds.

And if You judge me according to my deeds, Woe is for me, Alas for me. And if You wish to cleanse and purify me as is done to silver, nothing would remain of me.

May it be Your will, Lord, my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that you not enter into judgment with Your servant, Because no life can justify itself in front of You. What am I? And what is my life? I am like straw before fire, dry wood before the flame, like silver pottery covered with dross, vanity of vanities with no substance within.

With what shall I present myself in front of You, Lord, my G-d, or what remedy shall I request of You? As a stubborn and rebellious son I have been to do what's wrong in Your eyes. Like a servant rebelling against his master, and a student disrespecting his teacher. What You declared pure I deemed unclean, and what You declared unclean I deemed clean, what You have declared permitted I deemed forbidden, and what You have declared forbidden I have permitted; That which You love I have hated and that which You hate I have loved; And that which You treat with care I treated lightly and that which You treat lightly I have treated with much care, what You have pushed away I brought close, and what You brought close I pushed away. But it was not my intention to anger You. Ashamed I come to ask from You pardon, forgiveness and atonement. I made my face hard like a rock and I know that I shall not be put to shame because in You, I have placed my trust, Lord; I said You are my G-d and I rely on your numerous mercies. Because I know that You are a gracious and merciful G-d, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, withholding evil and Faithful to give Good.

Master of the universe, the custom of Your Righteous Tribunal is not like that of humans. For the nature of flesh and blood is that if a man claims money from his neighbor, he takes that man before a judge, and if he denies any wrongdoing, he is relieved, but if he confesses to taking the money he is made to pay. But in Your Righteous Tribunal it is not so, and if one denies his wrongdoing Woe is to him, Woe is to his soul, but if he acknowledges his fault and abandons his ways, You have mercy on him and You save his soul from the judgment of Gehinam (purgatory)...

Please Lord, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, may our prayers go before You, and do not hide, O King from our supplications; For we are not so arrogant and stiff necked to declare before You Lord, G-d and G-d of our fathers, that we are righteous and haven't sinned, for in reality we have sinned, transgressed and committed iniquity, we and our fathers and the people in our house.

My sin I have acknowledged to You and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said I would confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you have carried the weight of my transgression, sela.

He who seeks to cover up his transgressions will not succeed, but he who confesses and abandons his evil deeds, You will have mercy on Him. (Proverbs 28:13)

Now in the Hebrew comes a confession following the order of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet; when translated they lose the order but we will keep each paragraph separated.

(ALEF) We are guilty. We have eaten forbidden foods. We have eaten without washing our hands. We have eaten without reciting the preliminary or concluding blessings. We have eaten prior to reciting our prayers. We have partaken of food and drink without inspecting for worms, and for each worm we must be punished with five lashings.

(BEIT) We have betrayed. We have neglected the study of Your Torah. We pronounced blessings that were said in vain or that were not necessary. We have said blessings with no concentration and we said blessings in which we missed to pronounce some words or letters. We have neglected to read the Shema and to say our prayers and to wear Tzitzit and Tefillin. We have scorned our father and mother and older brother. We have scorned the sages and the G-d fearing. We blessed the blessing after meals with lightheadedness. We did not answer Baruch Chu u Baruch Shmo while we heard blessings being recited

(GIMEL) We have robbed. We have stolen from Jew and not Jew. We have misled people and tried to fool G-d. We have revealed secrets. We have interpreted the Torah not according to the Halacha. We have been arrogant in thought, speech and deed and have caused the redemption to be delayed, because the Mashiach will not come until there are no arrogant people in Israel. We have caused the King Mashiach to be dishonored through our transgressions and afflicted from our sins.

(DALET) We have spoken slander and evil talk, mockery, gossip, falsehood, flattery and vulgarity. We have talked in the synagogue and we have spoken while wearing tefillin. We have talked during the repetition of the Amidah and during the reading of the Torah. We have spoken on The Shabbat about weekday activities. We have judged our fellow man considering him guilty. We said one thing with our mouth and another with the heart.

(HEI) We have acted perversely. We have been lightheaded. We have been impudent. We had evil thoughts during the day and came to have the contamination produced by seminal emissions at night. We have ashamed our fellow man in public. We have trespassed the border of others. We have walked with our heads fully up (arrogantly) and have forgotten that all the earth is full of His Glory. We were quick to get into conflicts. We have prayed and said confession without concentrating on what we are saying and The Shechina cries out: "With his mouth and lips he honors me but his heart is far from me". We have prayed alone and have neglected to answer (by not praying with a minyan) 90 amens, 4 kedushas, 10 kaddish and 100 blessings and the Tzaddik has lost His vessel for exaltation. We have engaged in much talk with women. We have spoken lies and defamed the living and the dead. We have gained honor through the misfortunes of our fellow man.

(VAV) We have acted wickedly. We have multiplied transgression and evil without limit. We have allied ourselves to conflict and sin. We have been lax with the property of others and misers with ours. We minimized the honor of Heaven and the respect for the Torah and we did not care about our honor (that we should have for being chosen to receive the Torah).

(ZAIN) We have sinned willfully. We have gone astray after our heart and our eyes. We have mentioned the name of Heaven in vain. We have been careless about the Torah, mitzvot and the sages. We were careless in washing our hands. We haven't placed in our hearts the thought of the day of death. We have not put at the head of our happiness the memory of the destruction of Your Temple and the desolation of Your Palace. We have not considered The thought of the Day of Judgment in which we will have to give judgment and accounting in front of Your Seat of Glory, is not that the Day of wrath and chastisement, the Day of trouble and sighing, the Day when the accounts are ordered

and the books are open and the scale of merit is in the hands of The Lord, almighty. A Day that is awesome and dreadful, a Day without ransom, a Day of trembling and shouting, a Day of desolation and groaning. To whom shall we escape for help, and who will help us hide. Let us go and return to the Lord before the stars of our night darken.

(CHET) We have acted violently. We have coveted everything that belongs to our fellow man. We have flattered the evildoers. We have suspected innocent persons. We have profaned Shabbat and Festivals. We have profaned Your Holy Name in private and public.

(TET) We have conceived falsehood and deceit. We have defiled ourselves and our thoughts. We have defiled our soul and it is a part of G-d in the heavens. For three the earth trembles: For the slave that rules and for the handmaid that displaces her mistress. Woe is for our destruction. We have erred in teaching. We have handled Muktzeh items on Shabbat.

(YUD) We have given bad counsel without limit. We have sat with scoffers and in the company of jesters. We have slept without reciting the Shema. We have sat in synagogue with arrogance and contempt, and we have not placed the fear of the Shechina in front of us. And the Shechina cries out: "If I am a father where is the respect due to Me and if I am a Master, where is the fear due to me. Who has asked of You to trample my courts".

(CHAF) We have spoken lies. We have dissembled. We have denied the whole Torah. We have become angry on weekdays and on Shabbat and have torn our souls with our anger. We have consumed our years with the vanities of the world and forgot that we will be brought to judgment for all that was wasted. We have given a bad reputation to our fellow man. We have denied Your good and the good of our fellow man.

(LAMED) We have scoffed. We have mocked. We have studied Torah, not for its own sake, without holiness and purity. We have not answered AMEN when we listen to blessings. We have not risen before the elderly, nor have we shown proper respect for the scholar. We have not concentrated on the blessings of the prayers. We have not contemplated where we came from, nor where we are going and before Whom, we will have to give an account of our actions. We have borrowed money on interest from a Jew. We have borrowed and not paid. We have not set fixed times for the study of Torah. We

have not grieved for the destruction of the Holy Temple. We have taught our tongues false things.

(MEM) We have revolted. We have rebelled against Your commandments. We have revolted against the Kingdom of Heaven. We have revolted against the Kingdom of David. We have despised the Holy Temple and yet we seek the three of them. We have informed on our fellowman and have delivered him and his property into the hands of the authorities. We have trespassed against the bans and agreements of the community. We have filled our mouths with laughter in this world.

(NUN) We have shown contempt. We have been faithless. We have sworn falsely and in vain by Your Great Name. We have sworn and not fulfilled our word. We have made vows and we have not paid up. We have enjoyed this world and its pleasures. We have made improper use of the crown of the Torah and the Holy Names of G-d. **We have taken revenge and borne grudges and hatred in our heart. We have enjoyed pleasures of this world without first reciting the blessing.**

(SAMECH) We have been stubborn. We have been stubborn and rebellious. We have turned away from You, Your Torah and Your commandments. We have turned away our ears from hearing words of Torah. We have turned away from Your righteous judgments.

(AIN) We have sinned knowingly. We have transgressed the 248 positive mitzvot and the 365 negative ones. We have transgressed commandments whose punishment is excision and death imposed by a court. We have transgressed by desecrating the Name of G-d. Woe to us on the Day of judgment. Woe to us on the Day of punishment. We have pained orphans and widows and the poor of Your people. We have performed work on Shabbat and Holy Days. We have answered blessings with Amens said hurriedly or lately or without hearing the blessings being recited. We have transgressed the 24 violations that carry the punishment of excommunication. We have transgressed ordinances of the congregation. We have transgressed the words of our Sages.

(PEI) We have sinned defiantly. We have thrown off the yoke of Torah, commandments and fear of Heaven. We have caused damage to the upper worlds and Your Holy Names. We have applied ourselves to idle matters. We have opened our mouths to speak evil. We

have separated ourselves from the community. We have damaged the sign of the Holy Covenant.

(TZADDI) We have harassed. We have caused anguish to our Father in Heaven, and parents and teachers. We have caused anguish to Jewish scholars. We have caused anguish to creditors.

(KUF) We have been stiff-necked. We have made it difficult for us to learn. We have damaged the channels of Divine influence and transformed them into broken cisterns that can't hold water, and have caused a slave to rule and a handmaiden to supplant her mistress. Let us lie down in shame and let our disgrace cover us, for our sins caused all this and our transgressions have pushed our redemption further away, and our mistakes withheld the good from us. Woe to the children that are exiled from the table of their Father. These long and many evil years. We have closed our hand, so as to not give charity. We have plucked saltwort with wormwood. We have listened to evil talk. We have cursed father and mother. We have cursed our friends and our wives.

(REISH) We have acted wickedly. We have been wicked both to G-d and men. We have argued with others for no reason. We have pursued leadership and honor. We have deceived our fellowman and have run after conflict and sin.

(SHIN) We have corrupted. We have forgotten Your Torah. We have forgotten Your G-dliness. We have been false with all kinds of falsehood and trickery. We have dealt falsely with Your holy covenant. We have rejoiced at the fall of our enemies. We have turned to You in repentance and thereafter returned to our evil ways. We have destroyed holy seeds and created destructive angels. Also on our wings are found the blood of the innocent needy, and the tears of the oppressed, and there is no one to comfort them. O my heart, my heart, how it grieves over the fallen. My bowels, my bowels, how they yearn for the slain. Woe to the evildoer for the work of his hands shall be repaid to him.

(TAV) We have committed abominations. We have detested those who tried to chastise us. We have shaken hands and have not fulfilled our promise. We have regretted our past good deeds. We have gone astray like sheep that are lost. We have gone astray and have led others astray. We have turned from Your good commandments and judgments, and it wasn't worth it. For You are Righteous in all that has come upon us; for You have acted truthfully, but we have been wicked."