Yom Kippur

Morning Service
You stand this day, all of you, in the presence of Adonai your God.

—DEUTERONOMY 29:9
Come, come whoever you are, come, come.
Wanderers worshipers lovers of leaving. It doesn’t matter ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come even if you have broken your vow a thousand times.
Come even if you have broken some promises.
Shuva, Shuva, Shuva, Yisrael.

Blessed are You, Holy One, who has formed the human body with wisdom — an intricate network of channels, vessels, and openings. This wondrous structure, and the flow of life within us, allows us to stand before You and give thanks. Let us cherish this gift of flesh and blood, honor it as God’s creation.

ברוך אתה יהוה, רוקא כל בשר ומלחי לעשוה.

Baruch atah, Adonai, rofei chol basar, umafli laasot.

We praise You, Holy One, for wondrous acts of creation and healing.
Lord prepare me

To be a sanctuary

Pure and holy

Tried and true

In thanksgiving I’ll be your living sanctuary for you

עָשֹו לִי מִקְדָשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִי בּוֹתֵךְ
ואנחנו נבכרו יהיה משמה עד עולם

Pure, my God, is the soul You have given me.
You formed it. You shaped it. You breathed it into me.
You keep it safe within me.
Someday, when this soul returns to You,
I will find a place in eternity.
But as long as spirit breathes within me,
I place before You my thanks,
Eternal my God and God of my ancestors,
Creator of all creation, Sovereign of all souls.

ברוך אתה,י", אשר ביו החדש בל כי, והخلاص בלersh אוש.
Baruch atah, Adonai, asher b’yado nefesh kol chai, v’ruach kol b’sar ish.

We give You praise, Adonai: all life is in Your hand;
and in Your care, the soul of every human being.
Lord prepare me

*To be a sanctuary*

*Pure and holy*

*Tried and true*

In thanksgiving I’ll be your living sanctuary for you

וְעָשֹׁו לִי מִקְדָשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִי בְתוֹכָם

ואנֹכָּנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יָהּ מֵעַתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם

What Color Is Grass?

What color is grass?

The hurried eye said, green.
But following the sheen of spring woods, there stretched meadows marbled in such hues of yellow green, red green, and blues merging—below, between, above.

What color is grass?
The thoughtful eye said, Love.

What color is love?

The harried heart said, flame.
But following the changing years there poured prisms of delight and spectrum flowed out of the name paling moon, stars, and sun.

What color is Love?
The knowing heart said, One.

*WHAT COLOR IS GRASS.* By Ruth Finer Mintz (1919-1997).
Hey, Clockmaker—
I was looking for You.
Builder of the machine,
You lost interest, I guess, and walked away—but I was looking for signs of You.
I saw accidents,
mutations,
disasters unpredicted and unexplained;
pretty sloppy work, if You ask me.
Hey, Clockmaker—
praised be Your name
and the names of Your mechanics.

Sh’ma Uvirchoteha · Sh’ma and Its Blessings

Bar’chu et Adonai hamvorach.
Baruch Adonai hamvorach
l’olam va·ed.

Bless the Eternal, the Blessed One.
Blessed is the Eternal, the Blessed One,
now and forever.
You love us by helping us grow;
You give us Torah, a ladder for the soul.
Words that draw us upward;
Every mitzvah—an invitation to climb.
Forge and kiln and crucible
To purify our hearts—
You give us Torah;
You love us by helping us grow.

Ahavah rabbah ahavtanu,
Adonai Eloheinu,
How deeply you have loved us.
Adonai Eloheinu

Sh’má, Yisrael: Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!
Baruch shem k’vod malchuto l’olam va-ed.

Listen, Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!
Blessed is God’s glorious majesty forever and ever.
V’AHAVTA — WHEN YOU LOVE

When you love *Adonai Elohecha body and soul* these things I ask of you will be possible:

To answer your children’s questions about Me and believe your answers yourselves
To connect religion to your everyday comings and goings . . .
for example,
when you hug them in bed at night
with tender words—*Sh’mi Yisrael*
or when you think to say *Modeh Ani*
in the rush of getting them up and out
in the morning
To be alert enough
to open doors for your children
in every waking moment
and when they dream.

And finally, to remember just why all these things matter:

They matter because I, *Adonai Elohecha*, brought you and your children out of Egypt to be God for you.
I am your God.
And when you do these things I will be your children’s God.
Ahavah rabbah ahavtanu,  אֲהַבָּה רַבָּה אַהֲבַתנוּ,  How deeply you have loved us.
Adonai Eloheinu,  אֲדُונָּי אלהינו,  Adonai Eloheinu

Who is like You among the silent?
Mute and inscrutable You witness our pain.

Once upon a time, the sea was split,
and Israel marveled at Your outstretched arm.
How many have cried out since then?
How many have sunk beneath the waves?

Centuries of innocent blood—
lives lost to hunger, war, to cruelty or indifference;
and those who died with Your name on their lips.
And still they perish in distant lands,
and still they languish on our chilly streets.

Your creatures are drowning even now,
so why should we sing?

Ever-silent, hiding out in history,
You have Your reasons—or so they say.
You left us on our own, so let us give You leave:
withdraw into Yourself,
withhold Your saving power.

And we will live on memories of joy;
and stubborn and stiff-necked, we’ll cling to hope;
and gather strength to fight the Pharaohs when we must.
And hold fast to freedom, and celebrate in song—
and vow that we will never be among the silent.
“Mi-chamochah ba·eilim, Adonai?
Mi kamochah — nedar bakodesh, nora t’hilot, oseih-fele?”
Shirah chadashah shib’chu g’ulim
I’shimcha al s’fat hayam.
Yachad kulam hodu v’himlichu, v’am’ru:
“Adonai yimloch l’olam va·ed.”

“Of all that is worshiped, is there another like You?
Maker of wonders, who is like You —
in holiness sublime, evoking awe and praise?”

At the sea — with a new song on their lips —
the redeemed praised Your name.
Overflowing with gratitude, they proclaimed Your sovereignty
and spoke as one, declaring:
“The Eternal will reign till the end of time.”

Tzur Yisrael,
kumah b’ezrat Yisrael.
Ufdeih chinumecha
Y’hudah v’Yisrael.
Go·aleinu, Adonai Tz’vaot sh’mo,
k’dosh Yisrael.

Rock of Israel, arise and come to the help of Your people Israel.
Keep Your word by redeeming Judah and Israel.
The Eternal and Infinite One is our redeemer,
our source of holiness.

Baruch atah, Adonai, gaal Yisrael.

Blessed are You in our lives, Eternal One, who redeemed Israel.
ה트פילת

HaT’filah · Standing before God

Adonai, s’fatai tiftach, ufi yagid t’hilatecha.

Adonai, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise.


You are the Source of blessing, Adonai, our God and God of our fathers and mothers: God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob; God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel, and God of Leah;

ha Elhagadol hagibor v’hanora, El elyon, gomeil chasadim tovim, v’koneih hakol—v’zocheir chasdei avot v’imahot, umeivi g’ulah livnei v’neihem, l’maan sh’mo b’ahavah.

exalted God, dynamic in power, inspiring awe, God sublime, Creator of all — yet You offer us kindness, recall the loving deeds of our fathers and mothers, and bring redemption to their children’s children, acting in love for the sake of Your name.
Zochreinu l’chayim,
Melech chafeitz bachayim.
V’chotveinu b’sefer hachayim,
I’maancha, Elohim chayim.

Melech ozeir umoshia umagein —
Baruch atah, Adonai,
magein Avraham v’ezrat Sarah.

Remember us for life, sovereign God who treasures life. Inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, God of life.
Sovereign of salvation, Pillar of protection.
Blessed are You in our lives, Adonai, Shield of Abraham, Sustainer of Sarah.

Atah gibor l’olam, Adonai —
m’chayeih hakol/meitim
atah, ravl’hoshia.

Morid hatal.
M’chalkeil chayim b’chesed,
m’chayeih hakol/meitim
b’rachamim rabim

Your life-giving power is forever, Adonai — with us in life and in death. You liberate and save, cause dew to descend; and with mercy abundant, lovingly nurture all life. From life to death, You are the force that flows without end —
You support the falling, heal the sick, free the imprisoned and confined; You are faithful, even to those who rest in the dust. Power-beyond-Power, from whom salvation springs, Sovereign over life and death — who is like You?

Merciful God, who compares with You? With tender compassion You remember all creatures for life. Faithful and true, worthy of our trust — You sustain our immortal yearnings; in You we place our undying hopes.
Study Texts for Untaneh Tokef (Part I)

1

On Rosh HaShanah this is written; 
on the Fast of Yom Kippur this is sealed . . . 
who will live and who will die;  
who will reach the ripeness of age,  
who will be taken before their time;  
who by fire and who by water . . .  
who by earthquake and who by plague . . .  
who will rest and who will wander;  
who will be tranquil and who will be troubled. . .

I sat in shul for years reading these words before I realized the answer.

The answer to each of these questions is “me.” Who will live and who will die? I will. Who at their end and who not at their end? Me. Like every human being, when I die it will be at the right time, and it will also be too soon. Fire, water, earthquake, plague? In my lifetime, I’ve been scorched and drowned, shaken and burdened, wandering and at rest, tranquil and troubled. That has been my life’s journey.

Of course, I prefer to deflect this truth. I would much prefer to let the prayers talk about someone else, perhaps the fellow in the next row. It has taken a lifetime to reveal that defense as a lie.
The prayer is not about someone else. It’s about me. It is a frightfully succinct summary of my existence. So now I read it again, but in the first person, and it makes me shiver.

I will live and I will die, at the right time, and before my time,
I will wander but I might yet find rest.
I will be troubled but I may achieve tranquility.

This is the central truth of the High Holy Days. This is what makes them Yamim Nora’im, days of terror. We are vulnerable.

—Rabbi Edward Feinstein (b. 1954)

Untaneh-tokef k’dushat hayom — 번נה תוקף קדשת היום
ki hu nora v’ayom.

Let us proclaim the power of this day —
a day whose holiness awakens deepest awe and inspires highest praise for Your dominion, for Your throne is a throne of love; Your reign is a reign of truth.

In truth,
You are judge and plaintiff, counselor and witness.
You inscribe and seal. You record and recount.
You remember all that we have forgotten.
And when You open the Book of Memories, it speaks for itself —
for every human hand leaves its mark, an imprint like no other.

Untaneh-tokef k’dushat hayom — 번נה תוקף קדשת היום
ki hu nora v’ayom.

Let us proclaim the power of this day —
a day whose holiness awakens deepest awe and inspires highest praise for Your dominion, for Your throne is a throne of love; Your reign is a reign of truth.
On Rosh HaShanah this is written;  
on the Fast of Yom Kippur this is sealed:

How many will pass away from this world, how many will be born into it; who will live and who will die; who will reach the ripeness of age, who will be taken before their time; who by fire and who by water; who by war and who by beast; who by famine and who by drought; who by earthquake and who by plague; who by strangling and who by stoning; who will rest and who will wander; who will be tranquil and who will be troubled; who will be calm and who tormented; who will live in poverty and who in prosperity; who will be humbled and who exalted —

Utshuvah, utfilah, utzdakah maavirin et roa hag’zeirah.

But through return to the right path, through prayer and righteous giving, we can transcend the harshness of the decree.
THE HOLY WAY:

Kavanah before K’dushat HaShem

The spirit is not holy;
nor ideals, intention or will.

To love God in the heart, to carry a spiritual thought—
this is not the holy way.

Holiness resides in deeds alone;
only these are our task in this world.

But to act without thought is empty,
a mechanical rite without soul.

Consciousness and action,
matter and spirit—all unite in a mitzvah mindfully performed.

We change the world not through our dreams,
but through the way we consume, do our work,
make Shabbat, give to one another.

Were we angels, pure disembodied souls,
we would not need the discipline of deeds.
Were we animals, pure instinct and drive,
we could not rise to touch the sacred.

To join body and mind,
to live our ideals,
to serve in the fullness of our humanity:
this is the challenge of holy living.
We sanctify Your name in the world, as celestial song sanctifies You in realms beyond our world, in the words of Your prophet:

“Holy Holy Holy is the God of heaven’s hosts. The fullness of the whole earth is God’s glory.”

God of Strength who gives us strength, God of Might who gives us might — how magnificent the signs of Your Being throughout the earth. “Blessed is the splendor that shines forth from the Eternal.” Our God is one — Avinu and Malkeinu, sovereign Source of life and liberation — revealing with mercy to all who live: “I am Adonai your God.”
“Yimloch Adonai l’olam; Elohayich, Tziyon, l’dor vador, hal’lu-Yah!”

L’dor vador nagid godlecha.
Ulneitzach n’tzachim k’dushat’cha nakdish.
V’shivchacha, Eloheinu, mipinu lo yamush l’olam va·ed, ki El melech gadol v’kadosh atah.

“The Eternal shall reign for all time, your God for all generations, Zion — Halleluyah!” We will teach Your greatness l’dor vador — from generation to generation. And to the end of time we will affirm Your holiness. Our God, Your praise shall ever be on our lips, for Your power is boundless — sovereign and holy.

I stand at the seashore, alone, and start to think. There are the rushing waves . . . mountains of molecules, each stupidly minding its own business . . . trillions apart, yet forming white surf in unison.

Ages on ages . . . before any eyes could see . . . year after year . . . thunderously pounding the shore as now. For whom, for what? . . . on a dead planet, with no life to entertain.

Never at rest . . . tortured by energy . . . wasted prodigiously by the sun . . . poured into space. A mite makes the sea roar.
Deep in the sea, all molecules repeat the patterns of one another till complex new ones are formed. They make others like themselves, and a new dance starts.

Growing in size and complexity . . . living things, masses of atoms, DNA, protein . . . dancing a pattern ever more intricate.

Out of the cradle onto the dry land . . . here it is standing . . . atoms with consciousness . . . matter with curiosity.

Stands at the sea . . . wonders at wondering . . . I . . . a universe of atoms . . . an atom in the universe.

**To be awake** is to be alive.

Only that day dawns to which we are awake.

One cannot help but be in awe when one contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality.

It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.

Wisdom begins with awe of the Eternal.

_Yiyu l’ratzon imrei-fi_

_v’hegyon libil’fanecha,_

_Adonai, tzuri v’go·ali_

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You, Soul of eternity, my Rock and my Redeemer.
Avinu Malkeinu, choneinu vaaneinu; ki ein banu maasim.
Aseih imanu tz’dakah vachesed, v’hoshi-einu.

Avinu Malkeinu — Almighty and Merciful — answer us with grace, for our deeds are wanting. Save us through acts of justice and love.

Avinu Malkeinu, sh’ma koleinu
Avinu Malkeinu — Almighty and Merciful — hear our voice.

Avinu Malkeinu, chatanu l’fanecha.
Avinu Malkeinu, we have strayed and sinned before You.

Avinu Malkeinu, chamol aleinu, v’al olaleinu v’tapeinu.
Avinu Malkeinu, have compassion on us and our families.

Avinu Malkeinu, kaleih dever v’cherev v’raav mei·aleinu.
Avinu Malkeinu, halt the onslaught of sickness, violence, and hunger.

Avinu Malkeinu, kaleih kol tzar umastin mei·aleinu.
Avinu Malkeinu, halt the reign of those who cause pain and terror.

Avinu Malkeinu, kotveinu b’sefer hayim tovim.
Avinu Malkeinu, enter our names in the Book of Lives Well Lived.
Avinu Malkeinu, chadeish aleinu
shanah tovah.
Avinu Malkeinu, renew for us a year of goodness.

Avinu Malkeinu, malei yadeinu
mibirchotecha.
Avinu Malkeinu, let our hands overflow with Your blessings.

Avinu Malkeinu, hareim keren
m’shichecha.
Avinu Malkeinu, let our eyes behold the dawn of redemption.

Avinu Malkeinu, na al t’shiveinu
reikam mil’fanache.
Avinu Malkeinu, we pray: do not turn us away from You with nothing.

Avinu Malkeinu, kabeil b’rachamim
vratzon et ‘filateinu.
Avinu Malkeinu, welcome our prayer with love; accept and embrace it.

Avinu Malkeinu, aseih imanu
l’maan sh’mechcha.
Avinu Malkeinu, act toward us as befits Your name.

Avinu Malkeinu, aseih l’maancha
im lo l’maaneinu.
Avinu Malkeinu, act for Your sake, if not for ours.

Avinu Malkeinu, ein lanu melech
ela atah.
Avinu Malkeinu, You alone are our Sovereign.

Avinu Malkeinu, p’tach shaarei
shamayim litfilateinu.
Avinu Malkeinu, let the gates of heaven be open to our prayer.
And so, in Your holiness,
give the righteous the gift of a vision bright with joy:
a world where evil has no voice
and the rule of malevolence fades like wisps of smoke.
Good people everywhere will celebrate
the stunning sight of arrogance gone from the earth.

K’riot HaTorah  ·  Reading of the Torah

Bringing the Torah into Our Midst

Let the reading of Torah be like prayer —
a meditation to remind us what we strive for,
a chant that binds us to the chain of generations

Let the reading of Torah be like prayer —
a moment of purest solidarity
with our people’s hopes and history;
an invitation to affirm or dissent,
to challenge or believe,
to ask why or say amen

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Rom’mu Adonai Eloheinu,
v’hishtachavu l’har kodsho —
ki-kadosh Adonai Eloheinu.

Exalt Adonai our God — bow to God’s sovereignty;
bow toward God’s holy mountain, for Adonai our God is holy.

Adonai, Adonai — El rachum v’chanun;
er ech apayim,
v’rav-chesed ve-emet;
notzeir chesed laalafim;
nosei avon vafesha
v’chataah; v’nakeih.

Adonai, Adonai —
God, compassionate, gracious, endlessly patient, loving, and true;
showing mercy to the thousandth generation;
forgiving evil, defiance, and wrongdoing; granting pardon.

Sh’ma, Yisrael:
Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad!

Listen, Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!

Echad Eloheinu, gadol adoneinu,
kadosh v’nora sh’mo.

One and magnificent is our God; God’s name is holy, inspiring awe.

Gad’lu l’Adonai iti;
unrom’mah sh’mo yachdav.

Exalt the Eternal with me; let us extol God’s name together.
L’cha, Adonai, hag’dulah, v’hag’vurah, v’hatiferet,
v’haneitzach, v’hahod —
ki-chol bashamayim uvaaretz.

L’cha, Adonai, hamamlachah v’hamitnasei, l’chol l’rosh.

Yours, Adonai, are greatness, might, splendor, triumph, and majesty — yes, all that is in heaven and earth; to You, God, belong majesty and preeminence above all.

Rom’mu Adonai Eloheinu,
v’hishtachavu l’har kodsho —
ki-kadosh Adonai Eloheinu.

Exalt Adonai our God — bow to God’s sovereignty; bow toward God’s holy mountain, for Adonai our God is holy.

Blessing Before the Torah Reading

Bar’chu et Adonai hamvorach.

Baruch Adonai hamvorach l’olam va-ed.

Baruch atah, Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, asher bachar-banu mikol haamim v’natan-lanu et torato.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.
Bless the Eternal, the Blessed One.

Blessed is the Eternal, the Blessed One, now and forever.

Blessed is the Eternal, the Blessed One, now and forever.

Blessed are You, Eternal, our God, supreme Power of the universe, who embraced us and gave us this Teaching, having chosen us to embody Torah among the peoples of the earth.

Blessed are You, God of eternity, whose gift is Torah.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.

Blessed are You, God of eternity, whose gift is Torah.

You Stand This Day (Deuteronomy 29:9–14; 30:1–20)

9 You stand this day, all of you, in the presence of Adonai your God—your tribal heads, elders, and officials; every man, 10 woman, and child of Israel; and the stranger in the midst of your camp; from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water—11 to enter into the covenant of Adonai your God, and the oath that Adonai your God makes with you this day, 12 to establish you as God’s people and to be your God, as promised to you and sworn to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 13 And not with you alone do I make this covenant and this oath, 14 but with each one who stands here among us this day in the presence of Adonai our God, and with each one who is not here among us this day.
30:1 When all these things happen to you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart, among the nations to which Adonai your God has sent you away, 2 and you return to Adonai your God, listening with all your heart and soul to God’s voice, to everything I command you this day, you and your children—3 then Adonai your God will bring you back from captivity and take you back in love. Adonai your God will return to gather you from all the nations where you were scattered. 4 Should you be banished beyond the horizon, even from there Adonai your God will gather you up and take you back. 5 And Adonai your God will bring you to the land of your ancestors, making it yours and giving you goodness and numbers greater than theirs.
Then Adonai your God will open your heart and the hearts of your children to love Adonai your God with all your heart and all your being—for the sake of your life.

7 Adonai your God will afflict your enemies and those who pursue you with hate. 8 But you, you will return, heeding the voice of Adonai, obedient to all the mitzvot I command you this day. 9 And Adonai your God will bestow abundance through the work of your hands and the fruit of your womb, through the fruit of your livestock and the fruit of your land. Once again Adonai will rejoice in your well-being, as in your ancestors’ before you, 10 because you will heed the voice of Adonai your God, keep the mitzvot and the laws inscribed in this book of the Torah, and return with all your heart and all your being to Adonai your God.
11 For this mitzvah, which I command you this day, is neither beyond you nor far away. 12 It is not in heaven, causing you to say: “Who will go up to heaven on our behalf, get it for us, and let us hear it, that we may do it?” 13 And it is not across the sea, causing you to say: “Who will cross the sea on our behalf, get it for us, and let us hear it, that we may do it?” 14 No, this is so very near to you—in your mouth and in your heart—that you can surely do it. 15 Behold, this day I place before you life and well-being, death and hardship, in that I command you this day to love Adonai and walk in the ways of your God—to observe the mitzvot, laws, and judgments—so you may live and flourish, blessed by Adonai your God in the land that is about to be yours.
17 But if you turn away, refusing to listen—and, going astray, bow down to other gods and serve them—18 I tell you now: you will perish; yes, you will perish. And you will not last long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess. 19 This day I call heaven and earth to witness regarding you: life and death I have set before you, blessing and curse. Choose life—so that you and your children may live—20 by loving, obeying, and staying close to Adonai your God. For God gives you life and length of days to dwell upon the land that Adonai swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam,
asher natan-lanu Torat emet,
v’chayei olam nata b’tocheinu.

Blessed are You, Eternal, our God, supreme Power of the universe, who gave us a Teaching of truth and planted within us eternal life.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.
Blessed are You, God of eternity, whose gift is Torah.

V’zot haTorah asher-sam Mosheh
lifnei b’nei Yisrael —
al-pi Adonai, b’yad-Mosheh.

This is the Teaching that Moses set before the people of Israel — at the command of God, by the hand of Moses.

Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam,
asher bachar binvi·im tovim,
v’ratzah v’divreihem
hane·emarim be·emet.

Blessed are You, our God Eternal, supreme Power of the universe, who called forth noble prophets to speak the truth.

Baruch atah, Adonai, habocheir baTorah, uvMosheh avdo,
uvYisrael amo, uvinvi·ei ha·emet vatzedek.

Blessed are You, God of eternity, who delights in the Torah; in Moses, God’s servant; in Israel, God’s people; and in prophets of truth and right.
Cry from the depth, says God—
do not hold back, lift up your
voice like the shofar!
Tell My people their transgres-
sion, and the House of Jacob
their sin.
2 Yes, they seek Me daily,
as though eager to learn My
ways—
as if they were a nation that
does what is right
and has not abandoned God’s
law.
They ask of Me the right way,
eager for God’s nearness:
3 They say, ‘Why did we fast,
and You do not see it?
We afflict ourselves, and You
do not know it?’
Because even on your fast day
you think only of desire,
while oppressing all who work
for you.
4 Because your fasting is filled with strife, and with callous fist you strike. No, your fasting this day will not lift up your voice before heaven.

5 Is this the fast I desire? A day to afflict body and soul? Bowing your head like a reed, covering yourself with sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast—a day worthy of the favor of Adonai?

6 Is not this the fast I desire—to break the bonds of injustice and remove the heavy yoke; to let the oppressed go free and release all those enslaved? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and to take the homeless poor into our home,
and never to neglect your own flesh and blood? 8 Then shall your light burst forth like the dawn, and your wounds shall quickly heal, your Righteous One leading the way before you, the Presence of Adonai guarding you from behind. 9 Then, when you call, Adonai will answer, and, when you cry, will respond “I am here.”

If you remove the chains of oppression, the menacing hand, the malicious word; 10 if you offer your compassion to the hungry and satisfy the suffering—then shall your light shine through the darkness, and your night become bright as noon; 11 Adonai will guide you always, slake your thirst in parched places, give strength to your bones.
You shall be like a well-watered garden, an unfailing spring.

12 From you they will rebuild ancient ruins, lay foundations for ages to come. And you shall be called “the one who mends the breach and brings back the streets for dwelling.”

13 If you cease to trample Shabbat, stop pursuing your affairs on My holy day; if you call Shabbat “a delight,” the holy day of Adonai “honored”; and if you honor God by not doing business or speaking of everyday matters—

14 then shall you take pure delight in Adonai. I will lift up your journey on earth to the highest of places, and nourish you from the heritage of your father Jacob.

Blessed are You, our God Eternal, supreme Power of the universe, Rock of all ages, Source of justice in all generations, God in whom faithfulness abides, whose word is deed, whose every utterance bespeaks truth and righteousness.
Ne·eman atah hu,
Adonai Eloheinu, v’ne·emanim
d’varecha v’davar echad
mid’varecha achor lo yashuv
reikam — ki El melech
ne·eman v’rachaman atah.

Faithful are You, our God Eternal, and faithful Your words — not one of them rings hollow — for Yours is a reign of loyalty and compassion.

Blessed are You, God of eternity: You are true to Your word.

Racheim al Tziyon,
ki hi beit chayeinu;
v’laaluvat nefesh
toshia bimheirah
v’yameinu.

Have mercy on Zion, our spiritual home. And, through us, hasten Your redemption of the downcast and disheartened.

Baruch atah, Adonai, haEl hane·eman b’chol d’varav.

Blessed are You, God of eternity, who brings joy to Zion through her sons and daughters.

Y’hal’lu et-shem Adonai,
ki-nisgav sh’mo l’vado:

All praise God’s name, for God’s name alone is truly sublime:

hodo al-eretz v’shamayim.
Vayarem keren l’amo;
thilah l’chol-chasidav,
livnei Yisrael am k’rovo —
Hal’luyah!

Your brightness lights the earth and sky raises us up, blares out the note from Your people’s trumpet an exultant blast for all who struggle with You and are close at hand —

Halleluyah!
We stand in humility, conscious of our failings:
*Sh’mà koleinu — Adonai, hear our call!*

True sacrifice to God is a penitent spirit;
You treasure a crushed and repentant heart.

For You are close to the brokenhearted;
and You give strength to a suffering soul.

You are the healer of shattered hearts;
You are the one who binds up their wounds.

For thus says the high and exalted One,
who lives forever, whose name is holy:

“I dwell in a high and holy place;
but also with the downcast and lowly —

to bring new life to despondent souls,
to restore and revive repentant hearts.”

Return now, Israel, to Adonai your God,
for you have fallen because of your sin.

Take words with you, and return to God.
Ask the Eternal: forgive what is wrong;
accept what is good.

We stand in humility, conscious of our failings;
we set before You the wrongs we have done.

We trust in Your compassion, for You know who we are;
*Sh’mà koleinu — Adonai, hear our call.*
Because I was angry
Because I didn’t think
Because I was exhausted and on edge
Because I’d been drinking
Because I can be mean
Because I was reckless and selfish
Because I was worried about money
Because my marriage was dead
Because other people were doing it
Because I thought I could get away with it
Because . . .

I did something wrong.

Because I’m in pain
Because I wish I could undo it
Because I hurt him
Because I lost her trust
Because I let them down
Because I was self-destructive
Because I was foolish
Because I’m ashamed
Because that’s not who I am
Because that’s not who I want to be
Because . . .

I want to be forgiven.

God,
bring down my walls of defensiveness
and self-righteousness.
Help me to stay in humility.
Please—
give me the strength to do what’s right.
Vidui Zuta — The Short Confession

Ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu,
dibarnu dofi. He·evinu, v’hirshanu,
zadnu, chamasnu, tafalnu sheker.
Yaatznu ra, kizavnu, latznu,
maradnu, niatznu, sararnu, avinu,
pashanu, tzararnu, kishinu oref.
Rashanu, shichatnu, tiavnu,
ta·inu, titanu.

Of these wrongs we are guilty:
We betray. We steal. We scorn. We act perversely.
We are cruel. We scheme. We are violent. We slander.
We devise evil. We lie. We ridicule. We disobey.
We abuse. We defy. We corrupt. We commit crimes.
We are hostile. We are stubborn. We are immoral. We kill.
We spoil. We go astray. We lead others astray.

Vidui Rabbah — The Long Confession

For these sins, our God, we ask forgiveness:

Al cheit shechatanu l’fanefcha
b’ones uvratzon;
v’al cheit shechatanu l’fanefcha
b’yodim uvlo yodim.

The ways we have wronged You under duress and by choice;
and harm we have caused in Your world consciously and unconsciously.
The ways we have wronged You through our thoughtlessness; and harm we have caused in Your world through impulsive acts of malice.

The ways we have wronged You by abusing our power; and harm we have caused in Your world through disrespect to parents and teachers.

The ways we have wronged You by giving in to our hostile impulses; and harm we have caused in Your world through inflexibility and stubbornness.

The ways we have wronged You through lies and deceit; and harm we have caused in Your world by making light of serious matters.
Al cheit shechatanu l’faneca
b’siach siftoteinu,
v’al cheit shechatanu l’faneca
b’tzarut-ayin.

The ways we have wronged You in our routine conversations;
and harm we have caused in Your world through envy.

V’al kulam, Elo·ah s’lichot,
s’lach lanu, m’chal lanu, kaper-lanu.

For all these failures of judgment and will, God of forgiveness — forgive us, pardon us, lead us to atonement.

Al cheit shechatanu l’faneca
bagalui uvasater;
v’al cheit shechatanu l’faneca
b’sinat chinam.

The ways we have wronged You openly and secretly;
and harm we have caused in Your world by hating without cause.
Al cheit shechatanu l’faneca bifrikat ol;
v’al cheit shechatanu l’faneca b’maachal uvmishteh.

The ways we have wronged You by losing self-control;
and harm we have caused in Your world through consumption of food and drink.

Al cheit shechatanu l’faneca b’gilui arayot;
v’al cheit shechatanu l’faneca b’imutz halev.

The ways we have wronged You through sexual immorality;
and harm we have caused in Your world by hardening our hearts.

Al cheit shechatanu l’faneca b’neshech uvmarbit;
v’al cheit shechatanu l’faneca b’masa uvmatan.

The ways we have wronged You through greed and exploitation;
and harm we have caused in Your world through dishonesty in business.

V’al kulam, Elo-ah s’lichot, s’lach lanu, m’chal lanu, kaper-lanu.

For all these failures of judgment and will, God of forgiveness —
forgive us, pardon us, lead us to atonement.
Al cheit shechatanu l’fanechab’hirhur halev;
v’al cheit shechatanu l’fanechab’chapat shochad;

The ways we have wronged You through our innermost thoughts; and harm we have caused in Your world through gossip and rumor.

Al cheit shechatanu l’fanechab’chilul hashem.
v’al cheit shechatanu l’fanechab’chilul hashem.

The ways we have wronged You by offering or accepting bribes; and harm we have caused in Your world by profaning Your name in public.

V’al kulam, Elo·ah s’lichot,
s’lach lanu,
m’chal lanu, kaper-lanu.

For all these failures of judgment and will, God of forgiveness — forgive us, pardon us, lead us to atonement.
VIDUI FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

We confess our sins against the earth.
We commit ourselves to saving it.

We have assaulted our planet in countless ways
We have blamed others for the spiraling, deepening crisis
We have consumed thoughtlessly and irresponsibly
We have driven myriad species to the point of extinction
We have exhausted irreplaceable resources
We have failed to transcend borders and act unselfishly
We have given in to our many appetites and our gluttony
We have harmed beyond repair the habitats of living beings

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We have harmed beyond repair the habitats of living beings
We have ignored the signs of change in our climate and our seasons
We have jeopardized the well-being of future generations
We have known the problem but left problem-solving to others
We have lost sight of our role as God’s partners in creation
We have mocked, cynically, those who love creatures great and small
We have neglected the environment, most of all, in places of poverty
We have over-populated our cities and over-fished our oceans
We have polluted seashore and sky, fertile soil and freshwater springs
We have questioned and doubted solid evidence of danger
We have ravaged the old growth forests—ecosystems created over centuries
We have spewed poison into the bloodstream of our land: its rivers, lakes, and estuaries
We have transformed dazzling beauty into industrial ugliness
We have used shared resources for personal gain and corporate profit
We have violated the commandment “Do not destroy”
We have wasted precious treasures, our God-given gifts
We have exploited the weakest and most vulnerable in our midst
And yet we yearn to be better guardians of this earth and the fullness thereof
Let us be zealous now to care for this unique corner of the cosmos, this planet—our sacred home
Infinite Source of goodness,
help us to see the good
in ourselves, in others, and in the world around us.
Teach us to cultivate a discerning mind
to know right from wrong;
and a listening heart
open to love and forgiveness.

Guide us to walk in Your ways with integrity,
ever faithful to the promises our forebears made.
And may Your goodness inspire us to do what is just and right.

Strengthen us this day! Amen.
Bless us this day! Amen.
This day, exalt us! Amen.
Show us kindness this day! Amen.
Inscribe us this day for a life of goodness! Amen.
This day, hear our cry! Amen.
Now and always, support us with the strength of our righteousness! Amen.