

Confessing Our Sins and the Sins of Our Fathers

A Prayer for Ephraim

Guardian of Israel, blessed are You L-RD for having kept Your Covenant, for having preserved us and for not casting us away for ever because of our idolatries. Thank You our Righteous Judge and Father for commuting our death sentence¹ to spiritual death in exile. Only because of Your mercies and love for your people are we not consumed, great is Thy faithfulness².... Everlasting thanks be to You for opening our graves³ and in Your mercies calling us to stand before You. Thank You our Father for having revived us and for calling us to come near to Your altar of mercies⁴....

Almighty G-d, only because of Your faithfulness can we remember at all our sins and offenses against Your Covenant, by which we have become “not Your people.”⁵ Only because You have mercifully awakened us from our graves that we have begun to recognize the wormwood and gall in our souls that we accumulated for centuries. Only by Your grace and testimonies⁶ are we remembering Your works⁷ for us, and are aware of our bones coming together in the Valley of Dry Bones.⁸

Our Father, who sanctifies with Your commandments, we and our fathers before us have committed the great sin of forsaking Your holy Covenant. We transgressed against it and contemptuously cast away Your ordinances.⁹ We rebelled and sought the ways of the nations around us.¹⁰ We and our fathers have traded the precious inheritance of Your Torah of eternal life for the worthless lies of the gods of death.¹¹ We, and our fathers, have forsaken the Ancient Path upon which You led us and watched over us. We confess that we and our fathers have sinned greatly and exceedingly against Your holiness.¹²

¹ Ps. 78:11

² Jer. 31:3, Lam. 3:22-23

³ Ez. 37:12

⁴ I Kings 18:30, Isa. 48:16

⁵ Hos. 1:9

⁶ Deut. 31:21-27, Isa. 49:16, Jer. 16:10-12

⁷ Psalm 78:11-55

⁸ Ez. 37

⁹ Hos. 8:12

¹⁰ Isa. 1:4, 65:2

¹¹ Jer. 23:27

¹² Lev. 26:40, Jer. 14:20, Lam. 5:7, Dan. 9:8

Our Maker, in the stubbornness of our evil hearts, we and our fathers listened not to Your prophets. We have spurned their words,¹³ persecuted them and killed them. We have turned away from Your face, followed the folly of non-gods, shamefully bowed down to them and served them.¹⁴ We have made idols of wood and stone, and have become deaf and blind like them.¹⁵

L-RD G-d, who gave us the Torah of Life, we have blatantly brought abominable idols before Your face and ascribed Your glory to them.¹⁶ For centuries we have mixed Your Truth, with the imaginations of our vanities and delusions.¹⁷ We have become drunkards on our pride and on the follies of the detestable gods of lawlessness and perversity,¹⁸ and multiplied altars to sin.¹⁹ We perverted our inheritance of Your Torah and we made gold and silver idols out of Your Truth²⁰ and served them day and night.²¹ Surely, we have inherited lies from our fathers that profited us nothing and darkened our understanding of Your Torah.²² In all these we heeded not Your warnings²³ but sinned exceedingly and have earned death.²⁴

L-RD God Our Provider, we committed iniquity in thought and deed, and acted wickedly without the guidance of Your commandments. We turned aside from the testimonies of Your servants and despised Your statutes and ordinances.²⁵ With our abominations we polluted the land You gave us and kept not its ordinances.²⁶ We admit we did not obey You L-RD G-d from our youth.²⁷ We provoked You in the wilderness and ever since we followed our stubborn hearts and sacrificed to demons.²⁸ We followed the ways of Jeroboam, set up idols in our lands and in our hearts²⁹ and we reaped curses, the evil fruits of our thoughts.³⁰ We valued not the name of

¹³ Isa. 30:10, Amos 2:12, Zech 1:6

¹⁴ Jer. 1:16, 7:9, 19:4, Hos. 2:13, 4:13, 11:2

¹⁵ Psalm 115:8, Isa. 42:19

¹⁶ I Kings 18:21, Isa. 65:7

¹⁷ Isa. 58:9, 66:4, Jer. 23:25-27, Lam. 2:14

¹⁸ II Kings 17:34-41, Isa. 28:1, Ez. 22:3-33, 23:37

¹⁹ Hos. 8:11

²⁰ Hos. 8:4, 13:4

²¹ Jer. 16:13

²² Jer. 16:19

²³ Jer. 5:19

²⁴ Ez. 18:4, 19-20

²⁵ Jer. 29:19, 35:15, Hos. 6:5, 12:10

²⁶ Ez. 14:6, 20:21

²⁷ Deut. 9:7, Jer. 3:25, Ez. 23:4, 19

²⁸ Deut. 32:16-17, Psalm 78:40, Jer. 8:19

²⁹ Isa. 18:12

³⁰ Jer. 6:19, Ez. 6:16-19, 23:31, 36:19

Israel³¹ and have identified with the heathen around us. We have been a rebellious,³² stiff-necked people, lying children who would not hear the Torah You gave us.³³ Truly we have forgotten your Torah and cast it away.³⁴ Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your Name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.³⁵ We sold the righteous and the poor for silver, and covetously sold out our people to the idols of greed to this day.³⁶ We trusted not in Your salvation, but denied Your promises.³⁷ We were not thankful for Your bountiful blessings, nor for Your deliverances from our enemies, but sought them out for alliances.³⁸ In our afflictions we have not sought You with our whole hearts,³⁹ but are continuing to trust in our hired lovers to save us from our enemies.⁴⁰ To this day we have brought ourselves very low.⁴¹ Truly, we have shamefully forgotten our Maker, the Holy One of Israel.⁴²

Shield of Abraham, by Your testimonies our scarlet sins are witnesses against us,⁴³ surely our manifold sins are upon us and are written on our bones.⁴⁴ The stiff-necked pride and iniquity of our fathers which we have stubbornly followed testify against us to this day.⁴⁵ G-d of Abraham, we and our fathers have grievously and willfully sinned against You.⁴⁶

Our Father, who has delivered Israel from Egypt, we are not worthy to be called Your children. We valued not the office of the firstborn, nor kept its charge that You entrusted to us, but squandered our inheritance among the nations.⁴⁷ We have cast away the Torah of Moses Your servant,⁴⁸ returned to the idols of Egypt and defiled ourselves with them.⁴⁹ We and our fathers have borne the shame of the heathen in our uncircumcised

³¹ Jer. 13:11, Hos. 7:8, Deut. 29:20

³² Deut. 32:27, Ez. 12:9

³³ Deut. 9:6-7, 13, Isa. 30:9, Ez. 20:21, Hos. 9:17

³⁴ Ez. 5:7, 20:16-24, Hos. 4:6, 8:12

³⁵ Neh. 9:34, Jer. 6:17, Ez. 20:7-8, Amos 2:12

³⁶ Jer. 6:13, Isa. 1:23, Ez. 22:1-12, 27, 29, Hos. 4:2, Amos 2:6

³⁷ Psalm 78:22

³⁸ Deut. 8:10-11, 14, 32:15, Psalm 78:42, Isa. 1:3

³⁹ Psalm 78:37

⁴⁰ Hos. 7:14, 8:9

⁴¹ Psalm 79:8

⁴² Jer. 2:32, 18:15, Ez. 22:12, 23:35, Hos. 4:6, 8:14, 13:6

⁴³ Deut. 4:26

⁴⁴ Jer. 2:22, Ez. 33:10,

⁴⁵ Deut. 9:6, 13, Isa. 65:7, Hos. 5:5, 7:10

⁴⁶ Ez. 14:20, Jer. 14:20

⁴⁷ Deut. 11:1, Ex. 4:22, Ez. 44:8

⁴⁸ Isa. 5:24

⁴⁹ Jer. 13:10, Ez. 23:8, 19

flesh and hearts.⁵⁰ We have not executed Your judgments, but despised Your Word,⁵¹ polluted Your Sabbaths and our eyes were after our idols.⁵² We have traded the statutes and ordinances to live by, for the vile doctrines of demons and served the abhorrent gods of the nations.⁵³ Our fathers and false prophets have bequeathed to us the ensnaring gods, and we have done worse by blindly following them.⁵⁴ Instead of teaching the nations Your ways of life and justice, we learned their ways of death.⁵⁵ As individuals, families, and as a nation, we have not sanctified You L-RD of Hosts, but shamefully profaned your holy Name among the nations by the sheer weight of our collective sins, indiscretions, and wickedness.⁵⁶ When You sought a man to stand in the gap for mercy and Truth, You found none of us.⁵⁷ L-RD G-d our Judge, we were responsible for the destruction of the Land, and we are guilty of death.

L-RD G-d, our Peace, we answered not when You called us,⁵⁸ feared other gods, the non-gods of which Your servants the prophets warned us, and blatantly bowed down ourselves to them, served them and sacrificed our children unto them.⁵⁹ We did this according to the customs of our unfaithful fathers and added to them our own folly. We have done worse than our fathers, and walked in the lusts of their and our evil hearts.⁶⁰ Truly, these have been our traditions for millennia, in which we have taken great inordinate pride.⁶¹ We and our fathers did not fear You, L-RD G-d, nor did we follow Your statutes and ordinances You commanded the sons and daughters of Jacob, whom You named Israel.⁶² We tempted and provoked You, the Most High G-d, and kept not Your testimonies.⁶³

L-RD G-d, Our Banner, we have broken the brotherhood with Yehudah, mocked Your Sanctuary and envied the priesthood of Levy.⁶⁴ We have persecuted our brother Yehudah, betrayed his safety and peace,⁶⁵ and often

⁵⁰ Jer. 9:26, Ez. 36:6, 44:9

⁵¹ Isa. 5:24

⁵² Ez. 20:16, 24, 22:25

⁵³ Deut. 32:16-20, Ez. 20: 16

⁵⁴ Psalm 78:57, Jer. 16:12, 23: 21-27, Lam. 2:14, Hos. 11:1, 5:1

⁵⁵ II Kings 17:8-12, Ez. 4:13, 11:12, 20:24-25

⁵⁶ Ez. 36:20-23, 26

⁵⁷ Isa. 58:12, 59:16, Jer. 5:1, Ez. 22:30

⁵⁸ Isa. 66:4, Psalm 78:9

⁵⁹ Deut. 31:29, Josh 24:14, II Kings 17:7, 17, Jer. 1:16, Ez. 20:18, 23:39, Hos. 9:1

⁶⁰ Psalm 81:11-13, Isa. 65:7, Jer. 7:26, 16:12, Ez. 14:3-6

⁶¹ Isa. 9:9, 28:3, 66:3, Ez. 23:49, Hos. 13:1,6

⁶² II Kings, 17:7, 25, Jer. 6:16

⁶³ Deut. 31:16, Psalm 78:56, Jer. 8:19

⁶⁴ Isa. 11:13, Ez. 8:11

⁶⁵ Psalm 78:9, 57

sided with his enemies and murderers.⁶⁶ We confess these heinous sins of ours and those of our fathers.⁶⁷ We acknowledge that we continued in their woeful errors, deceptions and rebellion throughout history.⁶⁸ With our backsliding we limited the Holy One of Israel.⁶⁹ We were and are worthy of all Your righteous judgments and the severe decrees against us.⁷⁰ We and our fathers were and are worthy of having our names erased from your Book of Life.⁷¹ We hearkened not to your commandments, but mixed Your eternal Truth with the wretched lies, wickedness and folly of the nations.⁷² We have forsaken the Fountain of Living Waters, and hewed out cisterns that cannot hold water.⁷³ We heaped to ourselves teachers who defiled Your precious Truth, who knowingly hid their eyes from Your Sabbaths, and who fed us with unclean abominations for body and soul.⁷⁴ Truly the tables of our sanctuaries are full of filthiness and vomit.⁷⁵ We have spoken lies against You,⁷⁶ encompassed You and Your holy Name with flattery, hypocrisy, deceit and lies.⁷⁷ Moreover, we acted like Korach, and blasphemously charged You with being unfair.⁷⁸ We have treacherously cast away Your everlasting Covenant You swore with us, and espoused the base ways of the heathen.⁷⁹ We changed the ordinances,⁸⁰ and we perverted and corrupted the Words of the Living G-d.⁸¹ Master of All Creation, we acknowledge that we grievously offended in worshipping the wood of the false god and savior of the nations; we surely destroyed ourselves and we died.⁸² We have no merits, only shame for our disgraceful ways and the works of our hands.⁸³

L-RD G-d, Our Creator, quicken us that we may break loose from the sediments that hold us in the quagmires of our confusion,⁸⁴ and lead us into the light of Your Truth. Forgive us for having defiled ourselves, and

⁶⁶ Judges 5:14

⁶⁷ Lev. 26:40, Jer. 14:20, Lam. 5:7, Dan. 9:8, Hos. 5:15

⁶⁸ Jer. 14:20, Ez. 12:9

⁶⁹ Psalm 78:41, Isa. 1:4

⁷⁰ Lev. 26, Deut. 29:21

⁷¹ Deut. 29:20, 32:26, II Kings 17:6-7, Hos. 1:9

⁷² Deut. 29:20, Jer. 15:19, Ez. 20:16-26, Hos. 7:8

⁷³ Jer. 2:13

⁷⁴ Isa. 65:4, 66:17, Ez. 4:13, 22:25-26, Hos. 9:3

⁷⁵ Isa. 28:8, Ez. 22:16

⁷⁶ Hos. 7:13

⁷⁷ Hos. 11:12, Psalm 78:36

⁷⁸ Ez. 33:20, Job. 4:17

⁷⁹ II Kings 17:34-41, Psalm 78:10, 37, Jer. 2:11, 3:20, 23:27, Ez. 13:10

⁸⁰ Isa. 24:5, 29:13

⁸¹ Jer. 23:36

⁸² Isa. 45:20, Jer. 2:27, Ez. 18:4, 19-20, Hos. 13:1, 9

⁸³ Deut. 28:28, 31:29, Ez. 36:32

⁸⁴ Isa. 45:16, Jer. 3:25, Dan. 9:8

brought shame upon Your holy Name by brazenly consorting with detestable false gods in Your Presence.⁸⁵ We committed adultery with the idols of the nations and have slain our children unto them and their ideologies; innocent blood is on our hands.⁸⁶ Forgive us the grievous sin of blatantly setting ourselves up as gods in the pride and vanity of our fathers and of ourselves.⁸⁷

Rock of Israel, our Savior, our Deliverer, have mercy on us! Be reconciled and conciliated to our perverse, crooked and afflicted generation.⁸⁸ With the strength of Your Saving Right Arm, untie our bundled sins and strengthen us that we may truly repent of our personal and corporate idolatries. Cut us loose from our vain imaginations⁸⁹ and the idolatrous doctrines of our hearts that we love. Set us free from our bonds to the false gods and their teachings we inherited from our fathers.⁹⁰ Break up the encrustations of error from our souls and subconscious minds and wash us clean with the pure waters of Your Truth.⁹¹ Against You and only against You have we and our fathers sinned the great sin of adding other gods before Your Face. We have willfully committed the great iniquity of transgressing against Your Covenant with us, and trespassing Your Torah.⁹²

G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the G-d of the forefathers of our faith, we acknowledge that there is no other god and savior beside Thee.⁹³ We have no strength and we humbly ask You to empower us to leave our prison houses,⁹⁴ and completely lead us out of our darkness into the light of Your Truth.⁹⁵ Reveal to us Your Truth and help us to separate the precious from the vile.⁹⁶ Turn us again O G-d of Hosts, and cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved.⁹⁷

Shepherd of Israel, we ask You for shepherds after Your own heart to lead us,⁹⁸ for we have chosen false shepherds whose lies we loved,⁹⁹ and who

⁸⁵ Ex. 20:3, Jer. 6:15, Ez. 43:10, Hos. 5:3, 6:10

⁸⁶ Ez. 22:25, 23:30, 24:37-39, 36:19, Hos. 4:14

⁸⁷ Isa. 66:3

⁸⁸ Deut. 32:5, 20

⁸⁹ Ez. 14:3, 23:49

⁹⁰ Ez. 36:25, Hos. 4:17

⁹¹ Ez. 36:25

⁹² Psalm 78:10, Hos. 8:1,3,

⁹³ Hos. 13:4

⁹⁴ Isa. 41:14, 42:22

⁹⁵ Hos. 6:6

⁹⁶ Jer. 15:19

⁹⁷ Psalm 80:3

⁹⁸ Jer. 3:15, 23:4

⁹⁹ Jer. 5:31

have led us astray and devoured us.¹⁰⁰ Give us clear understanding of Your Word, and purge our minds of the misconceptions and misjudgments¹⁰¹ of our fathers. Unite our split heart to reverence Your name¹⁰² and to seek Your Guidance toward the whole, undivided House of Israel. We ask You to place us again on the ancient path of Your Torah,¹⁰³ that we may meet there our brother Yehudah. Set us free from the idols to which we are wedded¹⁰⁴ and heal the lameness of Jacob, that we may walk in Your ways again. Show us the ways of repentance that we may walk therein.

Guardian of Israel, hear the prayer of the remnant¹⁰⁵ of Your people, and forgive our foul sins of omissions and commission, our ingratitude and set us free of the fallacious ways, heresies and lies we have amassed from the nations and inherited from our elders, fathers and teachers.¹⁰⁶ We are calling upon Thy name to help us repent and turn from our ways of death, to Your way of Life in your Torah.¹⁰⁷ Enable us to search and try our ways, that we may turn again to You L-RD G-d of Israel.¹⁰⁸

Healer of Israel, heal our blindness, deafness, lameness, backsliding and our alienated and split froward hearts.¹⁰⁹ Grant healing to all our self-inflicted wounds,¹¹⁰ and restore our ability to hear Your directives again. Let our cries and supplication come before Thee, and give us understanding and deliverance according to Thy Word.¹¹¹ Open our eyes, lest we sleep the sleep of death.¹¹² Send Your Word, that we may be healed.¹¹³ Heal our sight, that we may behold the wondrous things in Your Torah and be convicted by them.¹¹⁴ Only by Your mercies we stand on our feet, but we are cut off from our Life-sustaining connection to Your holy Spirit, and our hope is lost.¹¹⁵ Forgive the stubbornness of our fathers and the pride of our hearts,¹¹⁶ and create a new clean spirit in us.¹¹⁷ We

¹⁰⁰ Ez. 13:1-23, 20:24-25, Lam. 4:13

¹⁰¹ Jer. 23:25-40

¹⁰² Psalm 86:11, Ez. 22:25-26

¹⁰³ Jer. 6:16, 18:15, Isa. 42:16

¹⁰⁴ Hos. 4:17

¹⁰⁵ Micah 5:3, Ez. 14:22, Joel 2: 19, Isa.. 7:3, 10:21, 11:11

¹⁰⁶ Jer. 16:19, Ez. 20:18, Amos 5:23

¹⁰⁷ Lam. 3:55

¹⁰⁸ Lam. 3:40

¹⁰⁹ Isa. 4:16

¹¹⁰ Jer. 6:19

¹¹¹ Psalm 119:169-170

¹¹² Psalm 13:3

¹¹³ Psalm 107:20

¹¹⁴ Psalm 119:18

¹¹⁵ Ez. 37:11

¹¹⁶ Deut. 9:6, 13, Psalm 78:37, Isa. 9:9, 28:1, 3, Ez. 2:5, Hos. 5:9, 7:11, Amos 8:11, Zech 7:12

acknowledge that Thou L-RD are our Father, our Redeemer, the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are our only G-d, Thy name is from everlasting.¹¹⁸ Ransom us from the grave and redeem us from death; we have no savior besides Thee.¹¹⁹

My Redeemer, my Father,¹²⁰ this is Ephraim... returning to You... “Let my soul live and it shall praise Thee, and let Thy judgments help me.”¹²¹

L-RD G-d, our Righteousness, we have gone astray like lost sheep;¹²² because of Your call we are coming near to learn and resolve to not forget Thy commandments.¹²³ We acknowledge our iniquity and the evil ways of our fathers and we seek Your face¹²⁴ We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee.¹²⁵

Turn us again O G-d of Hosts, and cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved.¹²⁶ We long for Your salvation, turn us, and we shall be turned!¹²⁷

L-RD G-d, our Strength, help us, our G-d, Rock of our salvation, for the glory of Your name, deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name’s sake.¹²⁸

L-RD G-d, our Banner, have mercy on Your prodigal tribes, and unite our heart to reverence Your Name. Ensoule us with Your quickening holy Spirit and strengthen Your returning Tribes. L-RD G-d of Hosts, we are seeking Your Face that we may live again; we implore You.... be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.¹²⁹

¹¹⁷ Ez. 37:11

¹¹⁸ Isa. 63:16, Hos. 2:23

¹¹⁹ Hos. 13:14

¹²⁰ Jer. 3:19

¹²¹ Psalm 119:175

¹²² Psalm 119: 176, Isa. 49:20, 21, Jer. 14:20, 50:6

¹²³ Jer. 3:22, Ez. 22:23, 23:35, Hos. 4:6, 8:14, 13:6

¹²⁴ Jer. 15:20, Hos. 5:15

¹²⁵ II Chron. 20:12

¹²⁶ Psalm 80:7

¹²⁷ Psalm 119:174, Jer. 31:18

¹²⁸ Ez. 36:32

¹²⁹ Amos 5:14-15

**“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
Thou who leadest Joseph like a flock;
Thou that dwells between the cheruvim, shine forth!
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up Thy strength
and come and save us!
Restore us O G-d of Hosts!
Let Thy face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.”¹³⁰**

¹³⁰ Psalm 80:1-3