

The Final Confession

From the Code of Jewish Law, Yoreh Deah 338

When one is moving close to death, the person is told, “Many have confessed and not died, and many did not confess and died. With the reward for your confession, may you live”.

All who confess have a share in the world to come.

If one cannot confess verbally, let them confess in their heart.

If they do not know the formula, let them say, “May my death be a *Kapara*, an atonement for my sins.”

Translation by Rabbi Joseph S. Ozarowski

Sh 'ma

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְ-יָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְ-יָ אֶחָד.
בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*Sh'ma Yis-ra-el, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, A-do-nai E-chad.
Ba-ruch Shem k'vod mal-chu-to l'o-lam va'ed.*

Hear, O Israel: Ado-nai is our God, Ado-nai is One. Blessed is God's glorious kingdom forever and ever.

JCFS Chicago helps individuals and families facing life's most difficult transitions, such as illness, addiction and loss, find the comfort of human connection, the spiritual support of Jewish tradition, and a sense of community.

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Vidui

*Prayers for the
end-of-life*

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JCFS Chicago illness, loss and spiritual support services provided in partnership with CJE SeniorLife, Chicago Board of Rabbis and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

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Vidui

The Jewish tradition has a prayer of confession, which should be recited by the rabbi or elder family member together with the person who is so severely ill as to be near death. This does not mean that all hope for recovery is lost, rather that the recitation of this confession should ease the mind and reduce the anxiety while at the same time asking for God's forgiveness.

Brief version

If I die, may my death be an atonement for my sins.

Longer confession

for those with presence of mind:

I acknowledge before you my God and God of my ancestors, that my healing and my death are in Your hands. May it be Your will that You heal me with *Refuah Shelaima*/full healing; and if I die, may my death be an atonement for my sins before You. May my portion be in Heaven, and may I be privileged to the world to come reserved for the righteous.

Translations by Rabbi Joseph S. Ozarowski

Last Moments

At the point of death, when it is perceived that the soul is leaving the body, the following Biblical verses may be recited:

Go, for God sends you. Go and God will be with you. The Lord God will be with him/her and he/she will arise.

May God bless you and keep you. May God cause His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. May God lift up His face toward you, and give you peace.

At your right is the angel Michael. At your left is the angel Gavriel. In front of you is the angel Uriel. Behind you is the angel Raphael. And above you is the *Sh'khinat El*, the loving presence of God

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be saddened, for your God is with you wherever you go.

God will guard you from all evil; God will guard your soul. God will guard your coming and going, now and forever.

Last Days

Guide me, Holy One, on this final journey, Your hand pointing the way, Your loving eye upon my face
As I seek my new dwelling.

Surround me with Your kindness, Embrace me with tranquility; Sooth my fears with the surety of Your care, Even as I release my tears to Your custody.

Then shall I find Your eternal gift of peace, Laid out for my notice and my strength. Linger near, Holy One, through these trials, Easing my way as I fly to Your keeping.

From Flames to Heaven: New Psalms for Healing and Praise.
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