

Vidui for a Time of Pandemic

By Rabbis Manes Kogan and Fabian Werbin with the collaboration of Rabbis
Joshua Kullock and Claudio Kupchik

After a 93-year-old man in Italy got better in the hospital, he was told to pay for the ventilator for one day, and the old man cried. The doctor advised him not to cry over the bill. What the old man said made all the doctors cry.

The old man said: I don't cry because of the money I have to pay. I can pay the money. I cry because I have been breathing God's air for 93 years, but I never paid for it. It takes €500 to use a ventilator in a hospital for one day. Do you know how much I owe God? I didn't thank God for that before.

The truth of the news can't be verified, but the old man's words are worth our reflection.

For the sin that we have sinned before you by taking for granted...

- the **a**ir we breathe, **a**vailability of hospital beds,
- **b**urying our loved ones, attending **B**'nai Mitzvahs, **B**roadway shows,
- **c**arpools, **c**ommuting, **c**amp, normal **c**heckups,
- **d**ating, **d**avening with a minyan, **d**riving our children to sports, **d**ressing up for a party,
- **e**mployment, **e**ducation, **e**vents,
- **f**unerals without restrictions, **f**amily and **f**riends at home, **f**irst responders,
- **g**atherings, **g**randparents' visits
- **h**ugging and kissing our loved ones, **h**ousekeepers, **h**uman touch
- **i**ndoor dining, **i**mmune systems, **I**srael direct flights
- traffic **j**ams, **J**ustice Guinzburg,
- **k**issing the Torah, **K**iddush in the shul, **k**ippot as souvenirs instead of masks,
- **l**arge groups gatherings, **l**earning in person, **l**aughing together, **l**ooking at people in the eyes and not through Zoom eyes
- **m**ovie theatres, **m**eals with family and friends,
- **n**o mask, **n**o social distance, the **n**oise of airplanes in the sky, **n**ot understanding how painful loneliness is,
- **o**pen stores,
- **p**raying with a minyan, **P**esach with family, **p**hysicians seeing patients in person, **p**arties
- **q**uarantine being a foreign word
- **r**iding on the bus and subway
- **s**haking hands, **s**wimming in a pool, **S**habbat with friends, **S**isterhood meetings, **s**teady income, **s**leepovers, **s**pa day, **s**hivah visits in person,
- **t**raveling without restrictions, **t**ea showers, **t**oilet paper
- **u**niversity and college in-person classes, **u**sing a public restroom, **u**sing someone else's phone

- **v**isiting our parents and our children, **v**isiting our loved ones in the hospital, **v**entilators available, **v**accines ready
- attending **w**eddings, **w**orking out at a gym, going to **w**ork every day, **w**earing suits and ties,
- **x**enophobia condemned bay all in our society, **XOXO**
- **Y**om Kippur in person
- **Z**oomless meetings