A #MeToo/#GamAni Confession for the High Holy Days

By Rabbi Mary L. Zamore, Executive Director, Women’s Rabbinic Network

As we enter the High Holy Days, we reflect on our individual failings, but our liturgy also instructs us to confess communally, recognizing the role each person has in shaping their community. In that spirit, I offer this addition to our prayers of repentance to allow us to reflect on the plague of misogyny, which continues to shape women’s experience of the world. Gender harassment has many expressions, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, micro-aggression, wage inequity, and the unequal representation of women in leadership positions throughout all corners of our society. While this confession emphasizes sexual harassment, true equality will not come until we address all expressions of gender harassment. Confessing our communal wrongs is only one step in the tikkun, the repair needed, but it is an important first step.

A #MeToo/#GamAni Confession

על חטא שחטאנו...

Al cheit shechatanu

For the sin we have committed before You . . .

by not believing the victims
by being silent while women were bullied, harassed or undermined
by claiming to be ready to listen when we were not
by claiming equality exists for all
by not supporting victims
by not providing sexual harassment prevention training
by accepting the sexist comments made every day
by blaming the victims
by claiming our workplaces, synagogues, and organizations were safe
By contributing to an environment that allowed harassment
by explaining away harassment
by believing the victims but not acting to make change
by worrying about our community’s reputation instead of the victims’ needs
by not reflecting on the past and present behavior within our community
by denying that gender harassment has many faces
by allowing victims to suffer retribution
by not noticing when women simply walked away from our community or institution
by making the reporting of harassment difficult and hard to engage
by promising change and not fulfilling this promise

על חטא משטחון...

Al cheit shechatanu

For the sin we have committed before You, we ask forgiveness.