



#StayHomeWithAlyth



For the sin we have committed before You, openly or secretly

עַל חַטָּא שֶׁחָטֵאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בַּגְּלוּי וּבַסֵּתֶר.

What is a *Chet*?

Proverbs 19:2

A person without knowledge is no good, and one who makes haste will miss with their feet.

גַּם בְּלֹא־דַעַת נִפֶּשׁ לֹא־טוֹב וְאֵץ בְּרַגְלָיִם חוֹטָא:

Better to keep sins hidden? Psalm 32:1

To David, a maskil. Happy is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is hidden.

לְדָוִד מִשְׁכֵּיל אֲשֶׁרֵי נִשְׁוִי־פֶשַׁע כְּסוּי חֲטָאָה:

Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 86b

וצריך לפרוט את החטא שנאמר אנא חטא העם הזה חטאה גדולה ויעשו להם אלהי זהב דברי ר' יהודה בן בבא רבי עקיבא אומר אשרי נשוי פשע כסוי חטאה אלא מהו שאמר משה ויעשו להם אלהי זהב כדר' ינאי דאמר ר' ינאי אמר משה לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא רבש"ע כסף וזהב שהרבית להם לישראל עד שאמרו די גרם להם שיעשו אלהי זהב

It is necessary to detail the sin, as it is written: 'Please, this people have sinned a great sin and have made for themselves a god of gold' (Exodus 32:31). These are the words of Rabbi Yehudah ben Bava.

Rabbi Akiva says: 'Happy is one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is hidden' (Psalm 32:10).

But why did Moses say 'and they have made for themselves a god of gold?'

It is as Rabbi Yanai says. Rabbi Yanai said: Moses said before the Holy Blessed One, 'Blessed is God, sovereign of the Universe, it is the silver and gold that You gave to Israel in abundance until they said "enough", [which] caused them to make a god of gold.'

Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 34b

ואמר רב כהנא: חציף עלי מאן דמפרש חטאיה, שנאמר: אשרי נשוי פשע כסוי חטאה.

Rav Kahana said: I find impudent someone who specifies their sin, as it is written: 'Happy is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is hidden' (Psalm 32:1).

Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 40a

אמר רבי אבהו משום רבי חנינא: נוח לו לאדם שיעבור עבירה בסתר ואל יחלל שם שמים בפרהסיא, שנאמר: ואתם בית ישראל כה אמר ה' איש גילוליו לכו עבדו [ואחר] אם אינכם שומעים אלי ואת שם קדשי לא תחללו.

Rabbi Abbahu said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: It is better for a person to commit a sin in secret, and [thereby] not desecrate the name of heaven in public, as it is written: 'And you, House of Israel, thus says the Eternal: Each man go serve his idols, and since you do not listen to me, and desecrate My holy name' (Ezekiel 20:39).

אמר רבי אלעאי הזקן: אם רואה אדם שיצרו מתגבר עליו, ילך למקום שאין מכירין אותו, וילבש שחורים ויתכסה שחורים ויעשה כמו שלבו חפץ, ואל יחלל שם שמים בפרהסיא.

Rabbi Ilai the Elder said: If a person sees that their [evil] inclination is overcoming them, they should go to a place where nobody knows them, and they should wear black and cover themselves in black, and they should do as is pleasing to them, and not desecrate the name of heaven in public.

איני? והתניא: כל שלא חס על כבוד קונו ראוי לו שלא בא לעולם מה היא? רבה אומר: זה המסתכל בקשת, רב יוסף אומר: זה העובר עבירה בסתר.

Is it really so? Was it not taught [in a Mishnah]: Anyone who does not have consideration for the honour of their maker, it would have been better for them not to come into the world. Who is that? Rabbah says: This is one who looks at a rainbow. Rav Yosef says: This is one who sins in secret.

לא קשיא: הא דמצי כייף ליצריה, והא דלא מצי כייף ליצריה.

[There is] no difficulty! This one for those who are able to bend [i.e. control] their inclination, and this one for those who are unable to bend their inclination.

Rashi on Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 40a

ואת שם קדשי לא תחללו היינו פרהסיא שהרואה מזלזל בכבוד המקום.

'And desecrate My holy name' The one who sees [the sin] will treat lightly the honour of the Omnipresent.

ילבש שחורים שלא יראה עצמו בכבודו אולי ירך לבבו בכך וגם אם יחטא אין אדם נותן לב לפי שאינו חשוב בעיניהם לכן ילבש שחורים.

They should wear black So that they don't see themselves with honour, [and] perhaps stop them from sinning. And even if they do sin, there will not be anyone who will pay attention, and therefore they should wear black.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayyim 607:2

A Jewish legal code written in the sixteenth century by Sephardi scholar, Joseph Caro. Additions are made by Moses Isserles (indicated by the word *הגה*), which show where the Ashkenazi customs diverge from Sephardi ones.

אין צריך לפרט החטא ואם רצה לפרט הרשות בידו ואם מתודה בלחש נכון לפרט החטא: הגה אבל כשמתפלל בקול רם או ש"ץ כשחוזר התפלה אין לפרט החטא

It is not necessary to specify the sin, but if one wants to specify it, they can. And if confesses in a whisper, it is right to specify the sin.

[Isserles:] But, if one prays with a loud voice, or if one is the prayer leader, who repeats the prayer, one should not specify the sin.

Rabbi Aaron Panken

Jews have moved from enumerating aloud our own personally relevant sins to reciting fixed lists of sins as part of a communal liturgy and only then adding the personal details quietly, and thus privately.

The benefits inherent in this transition are legion. First off, because no one hears the specific confessions of others, individuals may pray without fear of shame, anger, or reprisal. Second, the seemingly endless collection of sins recited is sure to include sins one has committed and forgotten, holding up a critical mirror that reminds us to search ourselves carefully for those sins that might easily slip our minds. In the public listing of sins, strangely enough, there is companionship for sinners and privacy for penitents. I *all* of us sin and *all* of us recite these lists, then *all* of us part of one common community seeking repentance. We confess as part of that community, but not, thankfully, at the cost of exposing details of our own exacting (and embarrassing) list of sins. The Yom Kippur confessions operate within this liminal space between public and private.

Rabbi Jay Henry Moses

The *Vidui* is meant to awaken the recognition that somewhere among the tangle of our actions, motivations, and words are the secrets we are keeping from ourselves. This is the point of the comprehensive acrostics, the *alef-to-tav* listing of sins in both *Ashumnu* and *al Chet*, an effort, apparently, to capture every nuance of transgression. Here am I, we are saying, a faint image of God, part of a species that falls short of our potential in innumerable ways. Let me innumerate them anyway, and in so doing construct a mirror, a sounding board that may reflect back to me a faint echo of my own deepest and most hidden flaws. I turn to You, knower of secrets, revealer of secrets, that by opening my heart to You I may come to know the depths of my own being.