

A new al chet by Rabbis for Human Rights

For the sin we have sinned against You by harshly judging others –

Lacking faith in You, in ourselves, and in our society.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through offensive talk –

Disparaging those whose concept of justice is different than ours.

For the sin we have sinned against You by accepting current reality –

Saying that Tikun Olam (Repairing the World) is “In the heavens” and thus beyond our capability.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through short sightedness –

Ignoring education and long term change, believing we could repair the world instantly.

For the sin we have sinned against you by breast-beating –

Criticizing, teaching and speaking, without translating words into action.

And for the Sin we have sinned against you by through faint heartedness –

Standing confused, without faith that a little light dispels much darkness.

For the sin we have sinned against You by throwing off the yoke –

When we gave up and said “Let others repair the world.”

And for the sin we have sinned against You by foolish talk –

When we preferred complaining to acting.

For the sin we have sinned against You by scoffing –

At those who yet believe that they can bring about a better world.

And for the sin we have sinned against You knowingly deceiving ourselves –

“Everything will be fine,” in order to justify inaction.

And for the sin we have sinned against You saying “We didn’t know”

But, we knew.

For the sin we have sinned against You saying “If I am not for myself who will be for me,”

To justify caring only about Jews.

And for the sin we have sinned against You saying “If I am only for myself, who am I,”

Caring only about non-Jews.

And for the sin we have sinned against You ignoring “If not now, when,” –

Saying to the suffering, “You will have to wait.”

For all these and more, God of forgiveness, we ask forgiveness, pardon, and atonement.

For the sin we have sinned against You through the desecration of Your Name –

Fulfilling the interpersonal commandments only with regards to Jews

And for the sin which we have sinned against You through insolence –

Saying that only Jews have rights to the Land.

For the sin we have sinned against You through drunken vision –

Not seeing Israeli Arabs as equal partners.

And for the sin we have sinned against You consciously or unconsciously-

Denying equal opportunity to every citizen

For the sin we have sinned against You thoughtlessly –

Believing and repeating that the Bedouin are taking over the Negev.

And for the sin we have sinned against You by silencing our conscience –

Telling ourselves that transferring, destroying and dispossessing is “For the good of the Bedouin.”

For the sin we have sinned against You by denial and falsehood –

Not recognizing ownership of lands that the Zionist Movement recognized in the past.

And for the sin we have sinned against You by running to do evil –

Hurrying to steal lands without waiting for the courts to determine ownership.

For the sin we have sinned against You through selfish envy –

Arguing that Bedouin claims to 5.4% of the Negev are too much.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through abuse of power –

Demolishing homes, planting trees on their lands spraying crops.

For all these and more, God of forgiveness, we ask forgiveness, pardon, and atonement.

For the sin we have sinned against You by indulging in food and drink –

While people freeze to death in Levinsky Park and immolate themselves in despair

on the streets of Tel Aviv.

And for for the sin we have sinned against You by sitting and not taking action (Shev v'al ta'aseh)-

In our comfortable homes, even as others are being evicted from theirs.

For the sin we have sinned against You through the words we have mouthed-

As if we truly cared about the weakest and poorest among us.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through quieting our conscience –

By giving charity rather than dealing with the roots of poverty.

For the sin which we have sinned against You by hardening our hearts –

To poverty, hunger and despair.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through Lashon HaRa (slander) –

Claiming that the unemployed and homeless are “faking it” and “parasites.”

For the sin we have sinned against You saying “What’s mine is mine, what’s yours is mine” –

Justifying the unfair distribution of resources.

And for the sin we have sinned against You saying “What’s mine is mine, what’s yours is yours,” –

Refraining from a just distribution of resources.

For the sin we have sinned against You by breach of trust –

Preferring tax breaks for ourselves over long term investment in education, housing, living wage jobs and dignity.

And for the sin we have sinned against You by raising barriers –

Setting unfair eligibility requirements that a home to many.

For the sin we have sinned against You through intentional deception –

To empty the Public Housing Law of any meaning.

And for the sin we have sinned against You by leaving buildings empty –

Even as others lack a home.

For the sin we have sinned against You by casting aside the weak –

Neglecting medicines for the sick and the health system.

And for the sin which we have sinned against You by abandoning your Torah –

Ceasing to be a society responsible for one another.

For all these and more, God of forgiveness, we ask forgiveness, pardon, and atonement.

For the sin we have sinned against You by plotting against our neighbors –

The Palestinians, when we denied them fair zoning and development plans.

And for the sin we have sinned against You knowingly or unknowingly –

Allowing successive governments to steal, demolish, uproot, and humiliate.

For the sin we have sinned against You by ruling high handedly,

While Palestinians are unrepresented among the lawmaking, judicial and planning institutions determining their fate.

And for the sin we have sinned against you through weakness –

Failing to stop “Price tag” attacks.

For the sin we have sinned against You through the abuse of power –

Exploiting State power to prevent Palestinians from building legally in East Jerusalem.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through by closing our ears –

To children crying as we demolished their “illegal” homes

For the sin we have sinned against you through double standards –

Creating separate planning systems for Jews and Palestinians.

And for the sin we have sinned against you because we were seduced and blinded –

By Jerusalem’s magic to covet homes not ours.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through disrespect shown to parents, teachers and children –

By not building needed classrooms in East Jerusalem.

For the sin we have sinned against You through obfuscation –

Planning mass expulsion from the South Hebron Hills for the sake of military exercises.

And for the sin we have sinned against you openly or in secret –

Not wanting to hear the truth about actions of our citizens, soldiers and the institutions responsible for them.

For all these and more, God of forgiveness, we ask forgiveness, pardon, and atonement.

For the sin we have sinned against You by closing our borders –

To refugees and asylum seekers fleeing for their lives.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through imposing borders

So that asylum seekers would live somewhere in South Tel Aviv, but not next to us.

For the sin we have sinned against You through defiling our lips

Calling them “Infiltrators.”

And for the sin we have sinned against you by closing our ears –

Ignoring their pleas for refugee status.

For the sin we have sinned against you through our words –

Inciting and sowing fear

And for the sin we have sinned against You through abuse of power-

Jailing them in the desert.

For the sin we have sinned against you by running to do evil –

Rushing to beat, burn and demonstrate against asylum seekers.

And for the sin we have sinned against you through justifying –

Deporting asylum seekers “By their request” with no responsibility for what will happen at their destination.

For the sin we have sinned against You by eating and drinking –

Even as we denied asylum seekers permits to work and put bread on their tables.

And for the sin we have sinned against You through false denial of responsibility

We have left them without work or food, and them accused them of high crime rates.

For the sin we have sinned against You through forgetting –

The many times borders were closed for us.

And for the sin we have sinned against You for forgetting –

That we were strangers in the land of Egypt

For all these and more, God of forgiveness, we ask forgiveness, pardon, and atonement.

For the sin we have sinned against You through tolerating human trafficking –

Rather than fighting the traffickers and pimps.

And for the sin we have sinned against You by desecrating Your Name –

Abandoning the “agunot” (Women not granted a Jewish divorce) and ignoring the solutions that exist in the Halacha.

For the sin we have sinned against You by educating –

Our children with stereotypes and prejudice against foreigners.

And for the sin which we have sinned against You by scoffing,

Denigrating new immigrants and failing to honor their traditions and cultures.

And for sin we have sinned against You through spiritual blindness –

Not seeing You in all the “others” who live among us.

For all these and more, God of forgiveness, we ask forgiveness, pardon, and atonement.

For the sin we have sinned against You by rushing to do wrongly,

Abandoning alternatives in favor of force.

And for the sin we have sinned against You by causeless hatred

Towards those daring to ask questions or present facts contradicting our beliefs.

For the sin we have sinned against You by breaking the yoke –

Trampling the foundations of democracy and justice because we are the majority

And for the sin we have sinned against You through false oaths –

We promised to ourselves last year, but didn't honor.

And for the sin which we have sinned against You by thinking to ourselves and whispering in closed rooms –

That which we should have cried out loud, raising our voices as a shofar.

For all these and more, God of forgiveness, we ask forgiveness, pardon, and atonement.

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May the words and intentions of our prayer, and the meditations of our hearts, bring us to true teshuva, and lead us forward to acts of righteousness, in order to make our world a place in which the Shekhina can dwell.

May it be Your will merit go give expression to Your Image within us n the coming year through love and generosity.

May it be Your Will that we will in some small way help to contain evil and improve the human condition in our world.

References:

Harshly judging others – plilut

Offensive talk – dibur peh

Accepting current reality – tziduk hadin

Short sightedness – tzarut ayin

Breast-beating – dibur peh

Faint heartedness -timahon levav

Throwing off the yoke – frikat ohl

Foolish talk-tipshut peh

Scoffing – latzon

Knowingly deceiving ourselves B'da'at u'v'mirmah

“We didn't know” lo yodim (Actual phrase is B'yodim u'v'lo yodim)

“If I am not for myself who will be for me,” Im eyn ani li, mi li –All three of these phrases are a well known quote from Hillel in Pirkei Avot

If I am only for myself, who am I – c'sh'ani l'atzmi, mah ani

If not now, when – Im eyn akshav, ei-matai

Desecration of Your Name –khilul HaShem

Insolence – Azut metzakh

Drunken vision – Shikur Ayin

Consciously or unconsciously-b'Zadon u'v'shgaga

Thoughtlessly, b'vli da'at

Silencing our Conscience – Shtikat matzpun

Denial and falsehood – Kakhash u'kazav

Running to do evil-ritzat reglayim le'ha'ra

Selfish envy-Tzarut Ayin

Abuse of power-khozek yad

Food and drink ma'akhal u'mishteh

Sitting and not taking action (Shev v'al ta'aseh)

The words we have mouthed – bitui sfatayim

Silencing our conscience – Hashtakat matzpun

Hardening our hearts – Imutz HaLev

Lashon HaRa (slander)

“What is mine is mine, what is yours is mine,” Sheli sheli, shelkha sheli (Pirkei Avot)

What is mine is mine, what is yours is yours,” Sheli sheli, shelkha shelka (Pirkei Avot)

Breach of trust tzomet yad

Raising barriers-Ha'amadat Mikhsholim

Intentional deception – B'da'at u'v'mirmah

Leaving buildings empty – B'hisharnu binyanim reikim

Casting aside the weak, based on Al taskhlikeinu ...k;khlot kokheinu -prayer recited on Yom Kippur, Hebrew version reads differently – k'fitzat yad – miserliness.

Abandoning Your Torah – B'ozveinu et Toratekha

Plotting against our neighbors, tzidiyat rea'einu

Knowingly or unknowingly- B'yodim u'v'lo yodim

High handedly – yad ramah

Weakness-Ozlat yad

Abuse of power-Khozek yad

Closing our ears – Atimat Ozneinu

Double standards, Eifah v'eifah

Seduced and blinded– shikur ayin

Disrespect shown to parents, teachers and children zilzul l'horim v'morim original is only parents and teachers.

Justifying-Tziduk HaDdin

Foolish talk – tipshut peh

Obfuscation, Eynayim ramot

Openly or in secret – B'gilui u'v'seter

Closing our borders – sgirat gvulot artzeinu

Imposing borders – ha'atzavat khomot

Defiling our lips – t'umat sfateinu

Closing our ears – Atimat ozneinu

Abuse of power – Khozek yad

Running to do evil – Ritzat ragleinu l'ha'ra

Justifying – Tziduk hadin

Makhal u'eating and drinking – makhal u'mishteh

False denial of responsibility – Kakhash u'kazav

Forgetting – Shikhakhah

Human trafficking V'I'dat znut

Educating – Khinukh

Scoffing-Latzon

Spiritual blindness-Ivaron

Rushing to do wrongly, Ritzat ragleinu l'ha'ra

Causeless hatred – sinat khinam

Breaking the yoke – frikat ohl

False oaths – Sh'vuot shav

Doing business – Masa U'Matan

Hard heartedness – Imutz HaLev

Cried out loud, raising our voices as a shofar (Adopted rom Yom Kippur Morning Haftarah, Isaiah 58)