

Teshuvah (Repentance)

In Jewish tradition (and also in Christian traditions), the liturgical calendar includes periods of accentuated focus on repentance. Such is the period leading up to the High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), reaching its climax during Yom Kippur with the recitation of the Al Chet prayer.

As believers in God who have put our trust in Messiah for redemption, we are continuously engaged in the salvation of our souls:

- We have been saved: Romans 8:24, 1 Timothy 1:8, Ephesians 2:5,8; Titus 3:4-5
- We are being saved: 1 Corinthians 1:18, 15:1-2; 2 Corinthians 2:15
- We will be saved: 1 Corinthians 3:15, 5:5, 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Here are some scriptures that speak of continuously carrying out teshuva in our lives:

Therefore, my loved ones, just as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence—work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For the One working in you is God—both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- Philippians 2:12-13 TLV -

If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- 1 John 1:8-9 TLV -

Therefore John was saying to the crowds that came out to be immersed by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance; and don't even begin to say among yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'! For I tell you that from these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees, so every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire!" The crowds were asking him, "What should we do?"

- Luke 3:7-10 TLV -

Therefore if you are presenting your offering upon the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

- Matthew 5:23-24 TLV -

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- Heb 12:12-16
 - Matthew 3:8-12
 - Revelation 3:17-19
 - Matthew 18:23-35

Confession

Our God, and God of our fathers, may our prayer come before Your countenance, and do not ignore our supplication, for we are not so bold faced and stiff necked so as to say before Your countenance, "Lord our God, and God of our fathers, we are righteous and we have not sinned." Indeed, we and our fathers have sinned.

We have been guilty, we have betrayed, we have stolen, we have spoken falsely. We have committed iniquity, we have been found guilty of wickedness, we have sinned willfully, we have wronged *others*, we have smeared with falsehood. We have counselled evil, we have lied, we have been scornful, we have rebelled, we have blasphemed, we have strayed, we have done iniquity, we have sinned *openly*, we have been bound by the stiffness of our necks.

We have turned away from Your commandments, and from Your good precepts, and it was not worthwhile for us. You are righteous in all You have brought upon us, for You have acted correctly while we have acted wickedly.

What can we say before You who dwells on high, and what *stories* can we tell before You who abides in heaven? Is it not the case that You know all that is hidden and rolled up?

The mysteries of the universe are known to You. Nothing is hidden from You, and nothing is concealed from before Your eyes. Therefore, may it be Your will, Lord our God, and God of our fathers, that You forgive us for all of our sins, and that You pardon us for all our transgressions, and grant us atonement for all our rebellion.

If we say, "We have no sin in us," we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. But, if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to make us pure from all our iniquities (1 Yochanan 1:8-9).

Ahl Chet

For the sin we have sinned before You under duress and by our own volition,
And for the sin we have sinned before You in hardness of heart,
For the sin we have sinned before You without knowledge,
And for the sin we have sinned before You with speech from our lips,
For the sin we have sinned before You in the open and in hiding,
And for the sin we have sinned before You that were laid bare and that were secret,
For the sin we have sinned before You in knowledge and through deceit,
And for the sin we have sinned before You by stinging speech,
For the sin we have sinned before You in defrauding a friend,
And for the sin we have sinned before You in the musings of the heart,

Confession

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, תבא לפניך תפלתנו, ואל תתעלם מרחמינו, שאין אנחנו עושי פנים וקושי ערה, לומר לפניך יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, צדיקים אנחנו ולא חטאנו, אבל אנחנו ואבותינו חטאנו.

אשמונו, בגידנו, גזלנו, דברנו דפי. העונו, והרשענו, ודנו, חמסנו, טפלנו שקר. יעצנו רע, בובנו, לצנו, מרדנו, נאצנו, סרדנו, עונו, פשענו, צרדנו, קשינו ערה. רשענו, שחתנו, תעבנו, תענו, תענו.

סרנו ממצותיך ומפושטתך הטובים, ולא שוה לנו. אתה צדיק על כל הבא עלינו, כי אמת עשית ואנחנו הרשענו.

מה נאמר לפניך וישב מרוב, ומה נספר לפניך שובן שחקים. הלא כל הנסתרות והנגלות אתה יודע.

אתה יודע רזי עולם. אין דבר נעלם מפניך, ואין נסתר מנגד עיניך. ובכן יהי רצונך, יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, שתסלח לנו על כל חטאתינו, ותמחל לנו על כל עונותינו, ותכפר לנו על כל פשעינו.

אם נאמר כי אין בנו עון מתעים אנחנו את נפשתינו והאמת אין בנו. ואם נתודה את חטאתינו נאמן הוא וצדיק לסלח לנו את חטאתינו ולטהרנו מכל עון (1 Yochanan 1:8-9).

Ahl Chet

על חטא שחטאנו לפניך באנס ובדבון,
ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך באמוץ הלב.
על חטא שחטאנו לפניך בבלי דעת,
ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בכפוי שפתים.
על חטא שחטאנו לפניך בגלוי עריות,
ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בגלוי ובסתר.
על חטא שחטאנו לפניך בדעת ובמרמה,
ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בדבור פה.
על חטא שחטאנו לפניך בהונאת רע,
ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בהרהור הלב.

And for the sin we have sinned before You by gossip,
 For the sin we have sinned before You by taking an oath in vain,
 And for the sin we have sinned before You by hatred without cause,
 For the sin we have sinned before You by stretching forth our hand
against one less able,
 And for the sin we have sinned before You by the confusion of the heart,

*For all these, O God of forgiveness,
 forgive us, pardon us, and be for us atonement.*

My God, before I was formed I was not worthy, and now that I have been formed it is as if I had not been formed. Dust I am in my life, and all the more so in death. Behold I am before You, a vessel filled with shame and disgrace. May it be Your will, Lord my God, and God of my father, that I sin no more. And in Your abundant compassion cleanse the sins I have committed before You.

Who will redeem me from this body of death? I shall give thanks to God, through Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord. . . . For the principle of the spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua has rescued my soul from the law of sin and death!

(After the Amidah, add the following meditation)

My God, guard my tongue from evil, and my lips from speaking falsehood. May my soul be silent to those who insult me, and may my soul be humble before all. Open my heart to Your Torah, that my soul might follow Your commands. As for all who plot evil against me, thwart their counsel and upset their plans. Do it for the sake of Your Name. Do it for the sake of Your power. Do it for the sake of Your holiness. Do it for the sake of Your Torah, that the one on whom You have set Your love might be rescued; save with Your right hand and answer us. May the words that proceed from my mouth and the secret thoughts that are in my heart be pleasing to You, O Lord, for You are my Stronghold as well as my Redeemer. May He who creates peace in His high heavens create peace for us and for all Israel, and say, "Amen."

Lord our God, and God of our fathers, may it be Your will that the Temple be rebuilt before You, speedily and in our days, and grant us a portion in Your Torah, and in that place we will serve You with reverence, as in days of old and years gone by. And may the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasing to You, Lord, as in days of old and years gone by.

Reader then Congregation:

We beg, "Forgive; pardon sin and iniquity."
 Holy One, may Your strength be magnified now!

Reader then Congregation:

We beg, "Be compassionate, and grant atonement for the iniquity of those who stand in worship, that they might number Your praises."
 Holy One, may they be inscribed in the book for a good life.

וְעַל חַטָּאת שְׁחַמְמָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרִבְיָלוּת.
 עַל חַטָּאת שְׁחַמְמָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁבּוּעַת שְׁוָא.
 וְעַל חַטָּאת שְׁחַמְמָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׂנְאֶת חֵנָם.
 עַל חַטָּאת שְׁחַמְמָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתִשּׁוּמַת יָד.
 וְעַל חַטָּאת שְׁחַמְמָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתַמְהוּן לִבָּב.

וְעַל בָּלֶם, אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת, סֶלַח לָנוּ, מַחֵל לָנוּ, בִּפְרֹ-לָנוּ.

V'ahl choo-lahm eh-loh-ha s'lee-choht, s'lahch lah-noo, m'chahl lah-noo, kah-pehr lah-noo.

אֱלֹהֵי, עַד שֶׁלֹּא נִוצַרְתִּי אִינִי כְדָאִי, וְעַכְשָׁיו שְׁנוּצַרְתִּי כְאֵלֹהֵי לֹא נִוצַרְתִּי. עֹפֶר אֲנִי
 בְּחַיִּי, קֵל וְחֹמֶר בְּמִיתָתִי. הִרִי אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכָלִי מֵלֹא בּוֹשָׁה וּבְלִמָּה. יְהִי רָצוֹן
 מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי, שֶׁלֹּא אֶחְטֵא עוֹד. וּמֵה שְׁחַמְמָתִי לְפָנֶיךָ מִרַק
 בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים.

מִי יִצִּילֵנִי מִגּוֹף הַמָּוֶת הַלּוֹת. אִוְדָה אֶת־אֱלֹהִים בִּישׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ אֲדֹנֵינוּ. . . . כִּי
 תֹוֹרַת רוּחַ הַחַיִּים בִּישׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ חֲלָצָה אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִתּוֹרַת הַחַטָּא וְהַמָּוֶת.

(After the Amidah, add the following meditation)

אֱלֹהֵי, נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִדְּעַי, וְשִׁפְתֵי מִדְּבַר מִרְמָה. וְלִמְקַלְלֵי נַפְשִׁי תִדָּם, וְנַפְשִׁי בְּעֹפֶר
 לִבָּל תִּהְיֶה. פָּתַח לִבִּי בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדּוּן נַפְשִׁי. וְכָל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלַי
 רָעָה, מִהֲרָה הִפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקִלְקַל מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם. עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן שְׁמֶךָ, עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן יִמְיֶיךָ.
 עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן קִדְשָׁתְךָ. עֲשֵׂה לִמְעַן תּוֹרָתְךָ. לִמְעַן יִחַלְצוּ יְדִידֶיךָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה יִמְיֶיךָ
 וְעֲנֵנִי. יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֲמָרֵי פִי וְהִנֵּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי. עֲשֵׂה שְׁלֹם
 בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֻמָּרוֹ, אָמֵן.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁיִּבְנֶה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ.
 וְתֵן חֵלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, וְשֵׁם נַעֲבֹדְךָ בִּירְאָה בְּיָמֵי עוֹלָם וּבְשָׁנִים קְדֻמוֹנוֹת. וְעֲרֹבָה
 לָנוּ מִנִּחַת יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַיִם בְּיָמֵי עוֹלָם וּבְשָׁנִים קְדֻמוֹנוֹת.

Reader then Congregation:

אָנָּה סֶלַח נָא, פִּשְׁעֵנוּ וְעֲוֹן שָׂא נָא, וּבְחַד יִגְדֵל נָא, קְדוּשָׁתְךָ.

Reader the Congregation:

אָנָּה רַחוּם כַּפֹּר, עֲזֹן צַדִּיקִים תִּהְלֶתְךָ לְסַפֵּר, וְיִחַקּוּ לְחַיִּים מוֹבִים
 בְּסַפֵּר, קְדוּשָׁתְךָ.