



Prayer Acknowledging our Wrongdoings in Repentance

This alternate version of *Al Chet* (For the Sin), traditionally read during Yom Kippur, allows us to reflect on our possible complicity in abuses of power within our own communities. Reflecting on how we may have been willfully ignorant to abuse as individuals and as a community enables moving forward with more honesty and humility.

This prayer was written by Danya Ruttenberg, Shira Berkovits, S. Bear Bergman, and Guila Benchimol and published on September 07, 2018. This prayer has been republished with permission of the [Forward](#) and cross-posted on [Ritualwell](#).

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AN AL CHET FOR THE #METOO ERA

For the sin we committed through inappropriate use of power.

For the sin we committed by inappropriate sexual advances.

For the sin we committed by putting people in power without oversight.

For the sin we committed by not taking seriously the complaints of a colleague.
 For the sin we committed by not believing victims when they spoke up.
 For the sin we committed by not being aware of our own power or privilege when making an advance.
 For the sin we committed by pushing forward when we should have waited and listened.
 For the sin we committed by believing that sexual victimization does not happen in the Jewish world.

For all of these sins, God, help us rectify the evil we have brought about, help us to restore justice through the hard work of repentance. Only then, God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

For the sin we committed in choosing to think a person who is appropriate with us is appropriate with everyone.
 For the sin we committed by choosing our own comfort over the safety of others.
 For the sin we committed by focusing on our intent rather than our impact.
 For the sin we committed by prioritizing reputations and money over safety.
 For the sin we committed by ignoring sexual victimization as a problem until #MeToo.
 For the sin we committed by performative wokeness.
 For the sin we committed by failing to acknowledge our ignorance about sexual victimization.
 For the sin we committed by waiting to stand against a perpetrator until we saw others doing so.
 For the sin we committed by making light of victims' suffering.
 For the sin we committed by contributing to rape culture.

For all of these sins, God, help us rectify the evil we have brought about, help us to restore justice through the hard work of repentance. Only then, God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

For the sin we committed by causing survivors to doubt their truth.
 For the sin we committed by misusing Jewish texts to promote silence.
 For the sin we committed by not supporting survivors.
 For the sin we committed by gaslighting victims and victim advocates.
 For the sin we committed by cutting corners in best practice protocols.
 For the sin we committed by talking more than listening.
 For the sin we committed by prioritizing nuance over moral clarity.
 For the sin we committed by urging those who have been victimized to forgive, especially before their perpetrator did the hard work of repentance.
 For the sin we committed by prioritizing some victims' voices over others.
 For the sin we committed by requiring vulnerable people to depend on me, rather than investing in the development of healthy, decentralized systems that empower the entire community, and hold us accountable.

For all of these sins, God, help us rectify the evil we have brought about, help us to restore justice through the hard work of repentance. Only then, God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is your initial reaction to reading this prayer? What do you think this emotion is telling you?
2. Perhaps as you read this prayer, you do not see yourself reflected in its lines. Is there value in reciting the *Al Chet* — either the traditional version or this adaptation — for sins you do not believe you have committed?
3. Which “Al Chet” (for the sin) gives you or your community pause? Why?
4. Reflecting on the community we live in, have we avoided addressing our current and past wrongdoings? If so, what prevents us from facing them?
5. How can the articulation of our wrongdoings support our efforts for complete *teshuvah* (repentance)?

This piece is part of the Respect & Responsibility: A Jewish Ethics Study Guide that is a joint project of Sacred Spaces and the Center for Jewish Ethics. Learn more at www.jewishsacredspaces.org.