

We Admit Our Sins

The Torah teaches us about the various *Korbanoth* that we are required/allowed to bring. Mostly, they are brought when we do a sin, as part of the atonement process.

Various *Korban Chathaths* are brought when one does a sin by mistake. Either they didn't know that it's forbidden to do a certain thing, or the sinner didn't realize that it was forbidden to do on that particular day, etc.

There is one *korban*, known as the *Asham Taluy* that is brought, not when you know that you for sure did an *aveira*, rather it is brought when you think that you **might have** done an *Aveira* but are not sure. (*Mishnas Kerituth* , *Perek 6* , *Halacha 3*)

The halachah goes on to explain, that if you do confirm afterwards that you did in fact do the *Aveira Be'Shogeg*, i.e. by mistake, you then are also required to bring a *korban chathath*.

The question that comes to the mind of a frugal, rational thinking person is that, why would the Torah require you to bring the *Korban Asham Taluy* when you are not sure if you did an *aveira*.

Either you did not do the *aveirah*, and then you would be *Patur* from everything, or you did the *aveira Be'shogeg*, and you will be responsible to bring the *Korban Chathath* later anyway! So why bother bringing the *Korban Asham Taluy* in the first place.

The *Chachamim* ask and the *Chachamim* answer.

They teach us that doing a sin will create a spiritual force, which will eventually bring us harm or damage, *Chas veShalom*, later on. So, as a way to spare us the unfortunate consequences of our sins, HaShem commanded us to bring the *Korban Asham Taluy*, to nullify that potentiality and save us from suffering (*Rabeinu Bartenura* there). Such a big *Chesed*!

Part of bringing a *Korban Asham* or *Chathath* is the placing of the sinners' hands on the animal and the saying of *Viduy*.

The *Chachamim* teach us that the *Thefiloth* take the place of the *Korbanoth* now that we don't have a *Beith Hamikdash*.

Anshei Keneseth Hagedolah took the initiative to standardize our text in order to allow everyone, no matter how well they understand the various aspects of *Thefiloth* or how well they speak Hebrew etc., to be able to pray fully and completely.

The *Chachamim* further teach us that all who change the "mold" that the *Chachamim* made for the *Thefiloth*, *Yado Al Hatachtoneth* / his hand is on the lower one – i.e. it's a mistake to change it.

According to *Shaarei Kedushah* by Rabbi Chaim Vital, not only is *Thefillah* a *Mitzvah Deoraytah*, but so is saying *Viduy*! (They are listed back to back in the list of *Mitzvoth Asei Deoraytah* that he brings down.)

He mentions there the importance of saying *Viduy* not only after *Shemona Esrai* (which is where all *sidurim* have it), but also in *Shema Koleinu* as well. Some *Sidurim* have a text of *Viduy* there.

There is a hint to this in *Thehilim* chapter 51 pasuk 5. In Hebrew 51 is the *gematria* of *Na*- which is translated as “please” as in a request that you make of someone and 5 is the letter *Hei* which is often used to replace the full name of HaShem in certain texts. *Na* also is translated as right away. So when Miriam gets *Tzaraath* , and Mosheh davens for her , he says “ *Kel na refah na lah*/ Please HaShem heal her right away” (*Bamidbar* 12,13).

So in the Chapter of prayer= *Na*, on the pasuk of *Hei*= HaShem, David *Hamelech* states “ ***VeChatathi Negdi Thamid*** = and my sins are in front of me always “ . (In Fact the beginning words of *Shemonei esrei*- “ HaShem *Sefatai Thifthah* , *oofiy yagid thehilatecha* are in this chapter of *Thehilim*- Pasuk 17 !

The Chachamim explain that David *Hamelech* constantly remembered his previous sins, did *viduy* on them and regretted doing them. This is because the mark/affects of the sin are not erased right away the first time that you do *viduy*, rather, they need to be scrubbed and cleansed over and over again until they finally disappear.

It has become somewhat common place to find excuses for not saying Viduy and Thachanoon in the Thefiloth nowadays.

While, the halachah certainly enumerates times and places where they are not said, one must be very careful about extending those exceptions. After all – who would ever take the nullification of a *Mitzvah Assei Deoraytah* so lightly?

There is a teaching brought down in *Mesecheth Avoth* (1,7) that says- “*Al Tityaish Min Hapuranooth*”, which might be translated as – ‘do not lose hope because of sufferings’ (that you have had) .

Avoth Derebi Nathan has a different explanation. He advises one to “ALLWAYS BE WORRIED ABOUT SUFFERINGS THAT MIGHT COME”.

There is a midrash Neelam that also warns that one time one of the Chachamim saw an angel crying, when he asked why, the angel told him to come and sit on his lap so that he could read for him something. The angel read to him all of the travails and sufferings that were waiting to CHAS VESHALOM come upon the world.

Given all of the above- doesn’t it seem clear that we should follow the “mold “that the Chachamim set, and always say Viduy and Thachanoon, unless there is a widely accepted halachic exemption.

After all, the Asham Taluy was brought even though the person wasn’t sure if he sinned, and viduy was said on it, also even though he doesn’t know if he sinned, all in order to avoid getting punished.

There is no one nowadays who can say that they haven’t sinned. Even if one thinks that he is free of sin, stick with the Mesorah and say Viduy. It can at least protect you from all of the bad things that HaShem in his infinite mercy is constantly protecting us from.