

Beginning with Yom Kippur evening and over the course of the day, we confess our sins 10 times. We confess twice during each of the 5 prayers of the day, Maariv, Shacharit, Mussaf, Mincha and Neila, once in the silent Amida and a second time during the repetition of the **שליח צבור**. It is interesting to note that the individual's confession occurs after the conclusion of the Amida with the blessing **המברך בשלום את עמו ישראל בשלום**, while the confession in the repetition occurs prior to the middle blessing that is the core of the Amida, expressing the sanctity and purpose of the day. Why do the confessions occur at different points of the Amida?

On Yom Kippur eve, we add a confession to the end of the individual Amida. As Rambam and others explain the reason for this as we are afraid someone may choke while eating their pre-Yom Kippur meal and pass away without having a chance to confess his sins and atone. Rambam Hilchot Teshuva 2:7 says

מִצֻּת וְדֵי יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים שְׂיִתְחִיל מֵעֶרֶב הַיּוֹם קִדָּם שְׂיֵאכֹל שְׂמֵא יִחַק בְּסַעֲדָה קִדָּם שְׂיִתְנוּדָה

The confession is not included in the repetition, **חזרת הש"ץ**, as we conclude the repetition as we do regularly. Why do we omit the recitation of confession, **ווידי**, at Mincha in the repetition? If it is part of the Amida, we should repeat it like we do during the 5 Tefilot of Yom Kippur day.

The Rambam says (Hilchot Teshuva 3:1,2)

כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִבְּנֵי הָאָדָם יֵשׁ לוֹ זְכוּת וְעוֹנוֹת. מִי שֶׁזְכוּתוֹ יִתְרוֹת עַל עוֹנוֹתָיו צָדִיק. וּמִי שֶׁעוֹנוֹתָיו יִתְרוֹת עַל זְכוּתוֹ רָשָׁע. מִחֲצָה לְמִחֲצָה בִּינוּנִי. וְכֵן הַמִּדִּינָה אִם הָיוּ זְכוּת וְכֵן יוֹשְׁבֵיהָ מִרְבוֹת עַל עוֹנוֹתֶיהֶן הָרִי זוֹ צְדָקָה. וְאִם הָיוּ עוֹנוֹתֶיהֶן מִרְבִּין הָרִי זוֹ רָשָׁע. וְכֵן כָּל הָעוֹלָם כָּלֹ

אָדָם שֶׁעוֹנוֹתָיו מִרְבִּין עַל זְכוּתוֹ מִיָּד הוּא מֵת בְּרָשָׁעוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר עַל רֵב עוֹנָה. וְכֵן מִדִּינָה שֶׁעוֹנוֹתֶיהָ מִרְבִּין מִיָּד הִיא אוֹבֶדֶת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בראשית יח כ) "זַעֲקֵת סֹדִם וְעַמָּה כִּי רָבָה" וְגו'. וְכֵן כָּל הָעוֹלָם כָּלֹ אִם הָיוּ עוֹנוֹתֶיהֶן מִרְבִּין "מִזְכוּתֶיהֶן מִיָּד הֵן נִשְׁחָתִין שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בראשית ו ה) "וַיֵּרָא ה' כִּי רָבָה רָעַת הָאָדָם

Rambam notes 2 personalities where righteousness is manifested and and judged: the individual and the larger community/world. The actions of the individual impact both. When we approach Gd within the the repentance process, we must think of our impact on ourselves as individuals and the community. No man is truly an island unto himself. We cannot separate ourselves from the community with whom we share a common fate and destiny.

This dual responsibility was encoded in man from the dawn of creation. In the first chapter of Genesis the Torah describes man as a solitary individual, consumed with and concerned only for himself. It is not until the second chapter, that man realizes he cannot do it all alone; he needs others to reach his potential. He no longer views life only as the preservation of self above all else, but sees the need for give and take, nurturing others as well as being nurtured by others. Indeed, man has always struggled with balancing his self-centered urges with the needs of society and community. According to Rabbi Soloveichik ZT"l, it is the former, described in chapter 1 of Genesis as Adam 1, that drives man to great individual heights, and the latter, described in Chapter 2 as Adam 2, that drives man to form a covenantal community that includes Gd and others. His relationship with Eve grows out of a desire to share with others. He senses a need for companionship and to build something with others. Likewise, Eve has a desire to share with Adam and to care for her children. Paternal and maternal instincts develop.

Until the arrival of Abraham, both man as individual and the community of men were corrupt. Gd says

that man, individually and collectively must be wiped from the face of the earth. It is the community and individuals of the Tower of Babel and Sodom and Gomorrah that are punished, as Gd could not find a single incorrupt individual worthy of saving.

With the arrival of Abraham, the concept of community was transformed into the Jewish Community, **כנסת ישראל**, discussed extensively by many commentators, including Ramban. The Jewish community has a personality, described in terms of human traits. It experiences love and pain, joy and sorrow, happiness and despair. It is referred to as Gd's daughter, expressing the love and concern shared between parent and child. Each of us plays our individual role and is evaluated according to their deeds and contribution. The Talmud (Shabbos 31A) says:

אמר רבא: בשעה שמכניסין אדם לדין, אומרים לו: נשאת ונתת באמונה? קבעת עתים לתורה? עסקת בפרה ורביה? צפית לישועה

When man appears before the heavenly tribunal for his ultimate judgment, he is questioned about his interactions with others as well as his personal, individual actions. Did you discharge your communal responsibilities faithfully? Did you ensure the continuity of the world? Did you set aside time to study Torah? Man has a dual mission: act properly as an individual and contribute positively to society and community.

Pirkei Avot is replete with aphorisms that reinforce this idea of man's mission duality. Hillel said (Avot 1:14)

אם אין אני לי, מי לי. וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני

Man has an individual and communal responsibility. One cannot stand without the other. Likewise, our sages said (Sanhedrin 37A):

כל אחד ואחד חייב לומר בשבילי נברא העולם

Every person is obligated to say the world was created for him. It is interesting to note the wide range of interpretations applied to this statement. Some view this statement as an obligation for man to view himself as the be all and end all of creation. Others go to the other extreme, charging him with responsibility to maintain and improve the world around him for the benefit of his fellow man. I would say they are all correct. The dual mission entrusted to man encompasses all these viewpoints and more.

During the 40 years the Jews spent wandering the desert, their communal responsibilities were not fully placed on their shoulders. We see with the Korach episode, Moses pleaded with Gd to spare the people punishment for Korach's sin (Numbers 16:22):

ויפלו על-פניהם ויאמרו אל אלהי הרוחת לכל-בשר האיש אחד יחטא ועל כל-העדה תקצף:

Shall the entire community suffer for the sin of 1 individual? However this approach changed prior to the death of Moses and the people entering the promised land (Deuteronomy 29:28):

ה נסתרת לה' אלהינו. ואם תאמרו מה בידנו לעשות? אתה מעניש את הרבים על הרהורי היחיד, שנאמר "פן יש בכם איש וגו'", ואמר כה "וראו את מכות הארץ ההוא", והלא אין אדם יודע טמונותיו של חברו אין אני מעניש אתכם על הנסתרות, שהן לה' אלהינו, והוא יפרע מאותו יחיד, אבל "הנגלות לנו ולבנינו" לבער הרע מקרבנו, ואם לא נעשה דין בהם יענשו הרבים. נקוד על לנו ולבנינו לדרש שאף על הנגלות לא ענש את הרבים עד שעברו את הירדן, משקבלו עליהם את השבועה בהר גרזים ובהר עיבל ונעשו ערבים זה לזה

The people were now responsible for each. They were members of a community with responsibility for their fellow members. It is interesting to note that Jews have always maintained a strong sense of community. The Kehila was a staple of European Jewish Community life, with its leaders granted the power to tax, legislate and enforce rules and behavior. Punishment and coercion were applied swiftly to those who violated the communal norms, so far that **כופין על הצדקה**, communal leaders could tax and enforce collection of communal funds. Everyone had to share in the communal burdens.

The Torah was very concerned with the individual who separates from society and does not share their burdens and concerns. Parshat Nitzavim is the conclusion of the Blessings and Curses, **תוכחה**, from Parshat Ki Tavo. Deuteronomy (29: 17-20) says:

פְּנִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכֶם אִישׁ אוֹ-אִשָּׁה אֹד מִשְׁפָּחָה אוֹ-שִׁבְט אֲשֶׁר לָבָּאוּ פֶּנֶה הַיּוֹם מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לִלְכֹּת לַעֲבֹד אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם הַהֵם פְּנִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכֶם שָׂרֵשׁ פֶּרֶה וְלַעֲנָה: וְהָיָה בְּשִׁמְעוֹ אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הָאֵלֹהִים הַזֵּאת וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבָּבוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה-לִּי כִּי בְּשִׂרְרוֹתַי לָבִי אֶלָּה לְמַעַן סְפוֹת הָרָוָה אֶת-הַצִּמְאָה: לֹא-יֵאבְדָה יְהוָה סִלְחָ לִּי אֲזַי יַעֲשֶׂן אֶף-יְהוָה וְקִנְאָתוֹ בְּאִישׁ הַהוּא וְרִבְצָה בּוֹ כָּל-הָאֵלֹהִים הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה וּמִמָּחָה יְהוָה אֶת-שְׁמוֹ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: וְהִבְדִּילוּ יְהוָה לְרַעְיָה מִכָּל שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־אֵלוֹת הַבְּרִית הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה:

The Torah foretells the terrible punishment that will be meted out the individual, person, family or tribe, that removes itself from the community, that says they will do their “own thing” and go their own way. They will abandon the Torah and follow the desires of their own hearts, relinquishing their communal responsibilities, no longer bound to the covenant and the community, acting as they see fit. Gd cannot abide such a brazen breakdown of community. He will severely punish such an individual and group because their actions tear at the very fabric and heart of the Jewish community, **כנסת ישראל**. The community can only survive as a unit, not as a collection of shattered fragments. The Torah describes how future generations will wonder as to the terrible sin that could have resulted in this terrible devastation. How could this land have been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah? The answer will be because they left the Torah and the covenant. They renounced the community and acted as individuals. Such an attitude leads to a breakdown in society and ultimately devastating consequences.

Unfortunately, we see this before our very own eyes. Societal and communal norms have been shattered in the wake of personal freedoms. Anarchists talk of a “community” that only takes but does not give. A community without rules and responsibilities is not a community at all. The Torah tells us that the individual is precious and every life is sacred. Individuals are obligated to improve themselves as individuals. One should not attempt to hold back others in the name of “community”. On the other hand, an individual must not place their own needs above the needs of society. There is a balance to be found between these two ends that unfortunately has disappeared. The result, as we are witnessing, is not pretty.

We see this behavior in our own communities. The Covid pandemic has hit the Jewish Community very hard, We have lost so many precious lives due to this horrible plague. We ask Gd **אבינו מלכנו מנע מגפה**, prevent the horrible plague from taking hold in your chosen people. The prevention of the plague need not be a miraculous event, Gd works through nature and gave us the ability to assist in fulfilling this request by doing something as simple as wearing a mask. Yet we refuse to lift a finger, instead waiting for the miraculous cure or vaccine to come from heaven. When asked why he was not wearing a mask, a young person replied “I have antibodies”. What about all those around you who do not have antibodies and are in grave danger of infection? Even though you had it, are you 100 percent positive that you cannot infect someone else? When asked would he eat a piece of meat that had .01% of being non-kosher, he replied of course not. He had no response when asked why wouldn't he wear a

mask if there was a .01% chance of saving a life? This is a manifestation of

וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבָּבוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יְהִי־לִי כִּי בְּשִׁרְרוּת לִבִּי אֵלַי לְמַעַן סְפוֹת הָרָחָק אֶת־הַצְמָאָה

the insistence upon and prioritization of personal need and freedom without considering the impact on those around him. Unfortunately this behavior has become commonplace in so many areas of personal and communal life, from a lack of consideration for others who may be susceptible to the Covid pandemic to talking and being disruptive during Tefila and the impact and cost it has to others trying to pray to Gd and on those that are impressionable. Yes we enjoy great freedom in this country. But there are limits to everything and when personal preference erodes communal and societal needs, we have crossed a dangerous threshold that portends grave consequences.

At the outset we asked why we recite the confession at different points of the Amida. This is to stress the roles and importance of both personal and communal confession. The individual approaching Gd for forgiveness must first set the stage and complete his Amida and praise to Gd before he can ask Gd for forgiveness. The community approaches Gd from a different perspective, as the request for forgiveness at the communal level is inextricably connected to confession and forgiveness. The community can make demands for forgiveness; the individual may not. Indeed, this is alluded to in the very blessing of קְדוּשַׁת הַיּוֹם, when we say

מֶלֶךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ לְעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְלְעוֹנוֹת עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַעֲבִיר אֲשָׁמוֹתֵינוּ בְּכֹל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה

While we have confessed our personal sins in the private Amida, we connect the communal confession to the blessing that is at the heart of the communal prayer, חֲזַרְתָּ הַשָּׁ"ץ, תַּפְּלַת הַצִּבּוֹר, חֲזַרְתָּ הַשָּׁ"ץ.

We also asked why there was no repetition of the confession during the repetition of the Amida at Mincha on Yom Kippur Eve, The repetition is considered a חובת ותפלת הצבור, the obligation and prayer of the community, and not specific to the individual. The reason for confessing at Mincha applies only to the individual, as only an individual is at risk of choking during the meal prior to Yom Kippur. The community does not have that issue, hence there is no need to include the confession in חֲזַרְתָּ הַשָּׁ"ץ.

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