

Racial Justice Vidui 5779

Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha...

**For the ways we have wronged You through our innermost thoughts;
And harm we have caused in your world through the words of our mouth.**

From the voices of our congregation:

I don't know how to start a conversation with others, white or people of color, about this topic.

I once gave my roommate in college what I thought (at the time) was a huge compliment: he wasn't black to me. I realized many years later how insulting and dehumanizing that was and have a lot of regret and shame about that.

I failed to recognize that my ability to choose when to speak about racism is itself a privilege.

For the sake of keeping the peace with loved ones, I have not called a family member out on his racist remarks about people of color.

I have talked about the Jewish people as though all Jews are from Europe like me.

I know I have not always spoken up about racism – not timely enough, not clearly enough, not emphatically enough when I have been present for racist comments and racist acts.

Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha...

**For the ways we have wronged You by hating without cause;
And harm we have caused in Your world through hypocrisy.**

From the voices of our congregation:

I am sorry for being afraid of the black people I saw driving through the poor, black neighborhoods in my town.

I want to atone for thinking I was not racist because I could say "I'm not white, I'm Jewish."

I'm aware of the injustice in which I participate and believe myself to be a person wishing to work towards a truly just society; yet, I have done less than I might have done. I have too easily over-valued what I was doing and allowed family responsibilities to distract me from this work.

I am sorry for not looking people of color in the eyes, literally not "seeing them" on the street, at the mall, in my life.

I would like to let go for the feeling that I need to prove how "woke" I am that lends to impatience with others starting out in this journey.

When I'm out and about in the city I pass people of many kinds, yet I treat them differently in my mind. To the white person I see I think, "there's a person, walking." To the person of color, I think, "There's a black person," or "there's an Asian person, I wonder how long their family has lived in America." I find myself identifying non-white people by their appearance and questioning whether they are American rather than just seeing them as people.

Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha...

**The ways we have wronged You openly and secretly;
And harm we have caused in Your world through our thoughtlessness.**

From the voices of our congregation:

For the sin of sitting in comfort, leaving the hard work to others.

I am sorry for not knowing the terrorism inflicted on black people following reconstruction, including lynching and the cruel Jim Crow laws.

For realizing that I cannot even imagine what it must feel like to walk into a room and immediately be hated/feared based on how I look. And I have a good imagination.

I would like to atone for the racial guilt and shame that paralyzes me and leads to inaction.

I have allowed my own fear of failure as a white ally get in the way of reaching out to and building relationships with people of color.

How can we have not known, or did we just turn our eyes? The legacy of this "not knowing" continues today.

V'al kulam, Elo-ah S'lichot, s'lach lanu, m'chal lanu, kapper lanu.

For all these failures of judgment and will –

God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

