

American Ashamnu - Rabbi Katie Mizrahi

When I think of the list of collective sins of the United States of America, it's long. So long that it begs the question, "Is America Possible?" as one recent Op-Ed asked.

The disaster of the pandemic in America is not just the inevitable result of a microbe beyond human capacity to defeat. The disaster of the pandemic in America is a disaster of our own making as well. Our toxic misguided individualism, our disregard for truth, our long broken systems of healthcare, child care, and worker protections, our economic systems that perpetuate exploitation and poverty.

American culture has some beautiful qualities and strengths. We are friendly, optimistic, innovative, hard working, and self reliant. At our best we are courageous, creative, and generous. Our progress in freedom and human rights has been inspirational. But we also have our weaknesses.

We are selfish, greedy, and impatient. Materialistic, wasteful, short-sighted, and hedonistic. In our fear of death and aging, we neglect and undervalue our elders, we abandon the vulnerable. Our individualistic mythology closes our hearts to the poor. We worship the free market like a god, and we pursue security through violence and not peace. We are arrogant and ignorant. And we have never atoned for the sins of past generations – the decimation of first peoples on this land, the enslavement of the children of Africa, the wars we brought to Latin America and the Middle East.

Yes Lord. We have sinned.

