

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

October 2, 2014

Other People's Sins

Why is the confessional on Yom Kippur in the plural? There are many answers to this question, because on some level it seems inappropriate to take upon ourselves sins we have not committed. Why should we admit to things of which we are guiltless?

Yet, we do not shrink from taking advantage of rewards for the efforts of others. The same person who sits in a building he did not build, cooled by air conditioning he neither created nor paid for, reading words he did not write, will protest indignantly at discomforts visited upon him by someone else's mistake. We see our blessings as birthrights and our troubles as undeserved.

Perhaps we confess in the plural to bring home

to us that interconnectedness is true in all ways: in sin, in punishment, in virtue, in reward. We seek to be good not only for our own soul, but to help those around us. You may beat your own chest, but the vibrations echo through the breast of everyone whom you know, and many whom you will never meet. Swift and sure are the currents that tie us to one another. Let us rejoice together, confess together and reach toward God as *Klal Yisrael* — the entire community of Israel.

Rabbi Wolpe's new book *David: The Divided Heart* is available now.