

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

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Posted October 15, 2010, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

SOME PRAYERS FOR TREASURING EVERY MOMENT

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The rescue of the Chilean miners made me sit up and realize what I had forgotten: that every morning, noon and night is precious. The sages, of course, knew it all along. Instead of saying just one, "Thanks, God!" in the morning, they would like you to say it three times:

From whence do they derive the obligation to say three prayers each day? Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said: They parallel the three changes people undergo each day.

In the morning a person must say, "I give thanks, Lord my God and God of my fathers, for you have brought me forth from darkness into light!"

In the afternoon a person must say, "I give thanks to You, Lord, my God and God of my fathers, for just as I have merited seeing the sun rising in the east, now may I merit seeing it set in the west.'

In the evening he must say, "May it be Your will, Lord my God and God of my fathers, that just as I have been in darkness before and You have brought me forth to light, so shall you once again bring me forth from darkness to light." (Y. Berachot 4:1)

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think it is possible that Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani was suggesting that if you couldn't say the Amidah, or didn't know how to do so, that these three heartfelt prayers would suffice? (It wouldn't be the first time the sages go easy on folks who don't know the whole complicated system of blessings.)
2. Why does the sage not face the night with the same thanksgiving as the morning?
3. Wouldn't that last prayer have been a great one for those miners to be saying?
4. Will you try adding these prayers to your spiritual toolkit?