

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

"A TALMUD TALE" PREMIERED FEBRUARY IN HOUSTON, TX!

The musical was an enormous hit! If you'd like a dvd of the show, please send a [contribution](#) of \$18 for an enjoyable, entertaining and inspiring look at the world of the Talmud!

Posted January 24, 2008, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

YERUSHALMI'S RESPONSES TO THE PRIESTLY BENEDICTION © Judith Z. Abrams, 2008

The priestly benediction is one of the high points of a worship service. Most of us respond to each line of the blessing, "Kein y'hi ratson", "Be this God's will." Sometimes we pray for other things. The Yerushalmi offers us another option:

Upon hearing the first blessing (Numbers 6:24) he says: "Bless the Lord, O you his angels [of His, You mighty in strength, that fulfill His word, Harkening to the voice of His word.]. (Psalm 103:20)"

For the second (Numbers 6:25), he says: "Bless the Lord, all his hosts; [You ministers of His, that do His pleasure.] (Psalm 103:21)"

For the third (Numbers 6:26) he says: "Bless the Lord, all his works; [In all places of His dominion; bless the Lord, oh my soul!] (Psalm 103:22)"

In the musaf service he responds to the priestly benediction in this way:

For the first, he says: "A Song of Ascents. Come bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord. (Psalm 134:1)"

For the second he says: "Lift up your hands to the holy place [and bless you the Lord]. (Psalm 134:2)"

For the third he says: "May the Lord bless you from Zion [Even He that made heaven and earth]. (Psalm 134:3)" (Y. Berachot 1:1)

Psalm 103 is a song of praise to God and ends in the three verses cited above. Psalm 134 is only these three verses long. The Yerushalmi seems to want to respond to the priestly benediction not just with Scripture verses, but with them in order.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think these two psalms were chosen? Why was 103 chosen for Shacharit and 134 for Musaf? If you could pick a Psalm with which to respond to the priestly benediction, which ones would you choose (remembering the Yerushalmi's style in assigning three consecutive verses).
2. I know this is probably unfamiliar to you and the "Kein y'hi ratson" verses come most easily to your lips, but

will you try these responses?

3. Why do you think this practice was put aside in favor of the "Kein y'hi ratson" response?

Enjoy!