

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

Posted September 13, 2001 by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

Visit [Talmud: the Musical](#) or download a song! 

[Song 1 \(2409kb\)](#) [Song 2 \(4222kb\)](#)

(If you have trouble playing it as streaming audio, "right click" to download the entire file and then open it.)

Exciting Developments in Long-Term, Intensive Talmud Study at Maqom!

About one year ago, I offered those who study Talmud with Maqom the option of working with me on a one-on-one basis to do research and create articles about rabbinic literature that would be posted [here](#) at Maqom. With this article, that project is bearing its first fruit. I hope you enjoy reading Rabbi Louis Rieser's research and the papers that have yet to come.

--Rabbi Judith Z. Abrams, Ph.D.

BH

HOW CAN YOU SEE GOD FACE TO FACE?

Dear Friends,

Below, will follow our normal study materials but I think we all have to recognize that the world of today is not like the world of yesterday. For comfort, I offer you this passage from the Koran:

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful:

When the sky is rent asunder; when the stars scatter and the oceans roll together; when the graves are hurled about; each soul shall know what it has done and what it has failed to do.

O man! What evil has enticed you from your gracious Lord who created you, gave you an upright form, and well-proportioned you? In whatever shape He could have surely moulded you according to His will. Yes, you deny the Last Judgment. Yet there are guardians watching over you, noble recorders who know of all your actions.

The righteous shall surely dwell in bliss. But the wicked shall burn in Hell-fire upon the Judgment-day; they shall not escape.

Would that you knew what the Day of Judgment is! Oh, would that you knew what the Day of Judgment is! It is the day when every soul will stand alone and Allah will reign supreme. (Koran, Suras 82:1 and 82:19)

If we find that the people who committed these acts of war against our country follow Islam, then we should remember the teaching, above. They have not followed their own teachings and, in their own faith, it is said that they will be brought to justice.

Our own annual Day of Judgment is coming. Let us look into our hearts and find there consolation for the bereaved and resolve to protect all humanity from such further heartache.

At this time of year, our hearts turn toward God and we wonder how we will be judged. The Babylonian Talmud

reassures us that God is faithful and generous. One need do only the smallest of mitsvot in order to greet God's very presence:

Come and see that the measure of the Holy One Blessed be He is not like the measure of flesh and blood. The measure of flesh and blood, a person brings a great gift to the king but there is [still some] doubt as to whether he will accept it from or not accept it from him. And if you wish to say that he accepts it from him [in every case] there is [still] a doubt whether he will see the king's face or not see the king's face. The Holy One Blessed be He is not so. [When] a person gives a small coin to a poor person he [immediately] merits a reception before God's very Presence. (B. Baba Batra 10a)

So, if you want to see the Face of Mercy, do the smallest of kindest acts and you can be confident that you will be able to be in God's very presence. May you be written and sealed for a good new year.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you make of the fact that the smallest act that brings one into God's presence is not a Jewish ritual act but an act of universal kindness?
2. God is always available if we follow this teaching. When you feel spiritual loneliness what other means do you employ to contact God? Study? Prayer?
3. In the face of such massive evil, do you believe that small acts of goodness can count? Or perhaps that they count all the more?