

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

Posted August 16, 2002 by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

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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.

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THE SIX QUESTIONS YOU WILL BE ASKED AFTER YOU DIE

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Dear Friends,

We are now in the month of Elul...a time of preparation for the High Holidays. Ideally, before we get to Rosh Hashanah we should have all our accounts "in balance" meaning that old debts (financial, emotional, intellectual and spiritual) are paid in full.

May I ask you, in your process of balancing your accounts, to become a Maqom Associate by making a tax-deductible contribution of \$36 or becoming a Life Member for \$360? Maqom has no institution backing it up and so is quite dependent on your contributions. Thanks for considering this request.

To help guide you in your introspection and doing teshuvah, let us return to one of my favorite passages in all of rabbinic literature regarding the six questions you will be asked after you die:

Rava said: When one is led in for judgment [after death] one is asked:

Were you honest in business?

Did you fix times for learning?

Did you engage in procreation?

Did you hope for salvation?

Did you engage in dialectics of wisdom?

Did you understand one thing from another? (B. Shabbat 31a)

Some of the phrases in this passage need explaining. Procreation can be the literal act of having children. But those to whom you teach your "Torah", whether that literally be Torah or how to fix a motorcycle if that's your God-given task and pleasure, are considered your children. Therefore, one needn't restrict this question to physical progeny only.

"Dialectics of wisdom" means "adding to knowledge, not just imbibing it".

"Understanding one thing from another" is a code phrase for mystical experiences. In other words, did you have an intimate relationship with God?

Discussion Questions:

1. Notice what is not on this list: lighting candles, dwelling in Sukkot or making sacrifices in the Temple. Why do you think such behaviors weren't listed?
2. If you were to create a set of six questions to determine how a person had lived their lives and used their gifts, what would they be?
3. You don't have to answer this to the group unless you wish to do so but how are you doing? Are you six for six? In what ways do you need to grow to be able to answer well to each six of these questions?