

# PTDT

**PhiloTorah D'var Torah**

## MAARIV

The Gemara in Brachot teaches us of two opinions as to the origin of our three daily davenings.

Rabi Yosi b'Rabi Chanina says, our prayers were established by our Patriarchs.

Rabi Yehoshua ben Levi says, our prayers were established to correspond to the daily korbanot in the Mikdash.

Each view is presented in detail, and the two views do not negate each other, but rather enhance each other.

Without going into the full details, let me present Maariv (or Arvit - take your pick) as being noticeably different from Shacharit and Mincha, in practice and in origin.

As to Temple service, Shacharit and Mincha correspond to the two daily T'MIDIM, the sacrifices of two lambs, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Maariv, on the other hand, corresponds to the simmering of parts and fats of the day's sacrifices that were not fully burned during the day, but were left on the Mizbei'ach throughout the night.

Shacharit and Mincha - concrete connections to specific korbanot. Maariv - kind of vague.

Avraham arose early in the morning to the place where he had stood (before G-d). Strong connection to praying in the morning.

Yitzchak went out into the field to commune (converse) before evening. A strong connection to prayer in the afternoon.

Yaakov was traveling and he 'encountered' the Place because night had fallen. He slept there, had his famous dream and his awareness of the sanctity of the place came in the morning. Because of the word VAYIFGA, a connection is made to P'GI'A being a synonym for prayer - but the pasuk quoted is about G-d asking the navi NOT to pray to Him.

Shacharit and Mincha have specific times during the day - first time and last time. Maariv has timings too, but the language in the Mishna is that Maariv has no set time (meaning all night).

Shacharit and Mincha were set as requirements from the beginning. Maariv, it seems, was optional from the start and later became required.

Originally, it was prayed by people who knew how to daven by heart, but for those who didn't know how to

pray without a siddur, it was optional. This is why there is CHAZARAT HASHATZ - repetition of the Amida for Shacharit and Mincha - it was originally instituted so that the chazan would say his Amida out loud so that people who didn't know how to daven on their own would be able to answer AMEIN to each bracha and have that count as if they said the Amida.

No repetition for Maariv, because those who did not know how to daven, were exempt.

To make it clear, a man is obligated to daven three times a day, with equal requirement to daven Shacharit, Mincha, and Maariv. Nothing optional about Maariv anymore.

Women, who are obligated in one or both of the daytime davenings, are considered to not having been required to daven Maariv.

A woman may chose to daven Maariv, but the majority of authorities do not consider it to be obligatory at all.

Therefore, a woman who decides to daven Maariv, should say that she is doing so B'LI NEDER, without it becoming an obligation due to repeated performance.

A woman's davening Maariv on Leil Shabbat would not obligate her to daven Maariv during the week. There

is more to say about a woman and davening, but we'll leave the topic at what we've already written.

It is important to remember that our Sages joined the nighttime requirement of saying SH'MA with the davening of Maariv. This makes Maariv - as well as Shacharit - a double fulfillment - Prayer and Sh'ma.

And, it should be noted, that besides being a mitzva to recite Sh'ma morning and night, the further mitzva of remembering the Exodus "all the days of our lives" is fulfilled by the recitation of the final pasuk of the Sh'ma's third passage.

None of the above presentation of Maariv as being different from its daytime bothers - Shacharit and Mincha, was meant to give Maariv a lower status than the other daily T'filot.

Just as the simmering of the parts and fats on the Altar all night served to declare that our service in the Beit HaMikdash is 24/7 - and not just for daytime, so too, Yaakov Avinu's Maariv declares that praying to G-d is also 24/7 - a day and night, every day and night - challenge of the Jew throughout his lifetime.

May our prayers be carefully said and sincerely meant and may HaShem answer them all positively for each of us and all Klal Yisrael.