

## **Could You Pass the Conversion Test - Section #1 - Weekday Living:**

### **Section #1 - Weekday Living - Class #3 - Morning Prayer - Part 1:**

#### **Morning Prayers:**

##### **A. Constant Mitzvah # 3 - G-d is One**

1. The autonomy of this world – free will – can mislead a person into thinking there is something else outside of God. Therefore it is a constant, lifelong challenge to overcome this illusion – and see that the only existence is God. That God is one.
2. Everything in life is part of the same system, stemming from the same source, with the same purpose. Obviously, there are different pieces to the puzzle, different spiritual muscles which need to be flexed and exercised. "Bad" and "good" all have the same goal.
3. We must constantly battle the illusion that the forces of good and bad are fighting each other. In reality, every occurrence in life is all pointing in the same direction. "Bad" is a challenge which brings us closer to God – by giving us the chance to make the right choice and earn that closeness.

##### **B. The Obligation to Pray:**

1. Rambam - It is a Biblical commandment to pray every day
2. Ramban - It is only a Biblical commandment to pray in times of distress.
3. Resolving both opinions - Every prayer should be done with the intensity as one who is in distress.
4. Fixed prayers 3 times a day and personal prayers.
5. "If only we could pray all day long!"
6. Prayer should be viewed as the highlight of one's day.
7. Optimal to pray and understand what you are saying in Loshon Hakodesh.
8. It is acceptable to pray in any language that you understand.
9. Better to say less prayers with more concentration than many prayers with no concentration...but everyone's actions should be for the sake of heaven.
10. One should give Tzedakah before praying.
11. One should accept upon himself the positive Mitzvah of 'loving your neighbour like yourself' before praying. You should have in mind to love every Jew like yourself. This unifies all Jewish prayers together at the same time.
12. One should wear the type of clothing that people wear when they go to meet a prominent person.
13. Even when praying at home, your attire should be appropriate.
14. One should not engage in your profession, perform any form of work, or travel until you have prayed.
15. In situations of great urgency, such as, if you will miss your means of transportation, and no other means is available, the person may travel first and pray later.

##### **C. Women vs. Men:**

1. Men are obliged to pray the entire prayers 3 times a day.
2. Women are not obliged to pray at all; however....

##### **D. Women's Obligation in Prayer:**

1. Most halachic authorities maintain that a woman is obligated to recite the morning (shacharis) and afternoon (minchah) shmoneh esreh (silent amidah prayer) every day. If she has limited time to pray, she recites the following, listed in order of priority: (Note that they are always said in the order printed in the siddur.)
2. Priority:

- Birchas HaTorah (Blessings on the Torah) and Birchash Hashachar (morning blessings)
  - First verse of shema, together with baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed.
  - Shemona Esrei
  - Emes veyatziv (the blessing after shema leading into shemoneh esreh)
  - The entire Shema
  - Baruch she'amar, ashrei, yishtabach
  - The entire p'sukei d'zimrah
  - Blessings before the Shema
3. A woman who has very minimal time because of child care or other obligations and can't spare even the short time for shemoneh esreh, must nonetheless fulfill the obligation to offer some form of prayer every day. This prayer must include the following three elements: 1)Praise to G-d; 2)a personal request, and 3) words of thanks to G-d. Since birchas hashachar and birchas haTorah contain these elements, a woman in the above situation should therefore recite birchas hashachar and birchas haTorah.
  4. If time is very short, then one can say Modeh And and one short request.
  5. The time limits for a woman are the same as for a man. So for example, the morning shemoneh esreh should ideally be prayed within the first third of the daylight hours, or at the very latest before midday.