

**Remember to Say Thank You**  
**Rabbi Megan Brumer**  
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There is a story about how God sent two angels to earth to listen to the prayers of humanity. One angel was asked to collect all the prayers in which people asked God for something. The other angel was asked to collect all the prayers of thanksgiving.

The two angels descended on earth and began their task. They agreed to meet in a month with their findings. The angel collecting prayers asking God for something soon became extremely busy. There were prayers that people had to help them earn more money, or get a windfall, or win a lottery. There were prayers for God to cure people of illnesses. There were many prayers for improved health of one's children, spouse, parents, siblings, relatives and friends. The angel filled the basket with prayers that people had for worldly objects such as a bigger house, new car, latest computer, jewelry, expensive clothing and new toys for their children. Some people prayed to God for a spouse, for children or for better relationships. In the meantime, the other angel traveled far and wide looking to fill the basket with prayers of thankfulness.

One day passed, then two days and then the third, but no prayers of gratitude were heard. The angel visited the young and elderly; men and women; people of all countries, all religions and all classes. Still, not a prayer of thankfulness was heard. All that this angel heard were prayers asking for things. Wondering whether they were missing something, this angel contacted the other angel to ask whether their basket of prayers was getting filled.

"Oh yes! I have not only filled one basket but many more," said the angel. "But I, too, have not heard any prayers of thankfulness."

For the rest of the month, the two angels fulfilled their mission and were ready to return to God. The angel collecting prayers of request was laden with many baskets. The angel collecting prayers of thankfulness hardly had any in the basket. There were a few prayers of thankfulness, but a tiny amount compared to the prayers of requests.

When God was presented with these findings, he sighed. "This is nothing new," said God. "You now have a taste of what it is like being God. People are always praying for something from Me, which is all right because at least they are thinking of Me. But few ever thank Me."

We are in the season of thanksgiving, taking time to think about what we are grateful for. Sometimes taking the time to be thankful is hard, especially when there is always something that we want—whether it is for ourselves, our family or our friends.

I know that, for me, my first thought is normally *I want this, I want that*; not thanks for this and thanks for that.

Every week, Shabbat is our day of thanksgiving. During our weekly Amidah, there are many prayers asking God for things; however, on Shabbat, those prayers are replaced and we are just supposed to be thankful. We are told that the week is for asking, and Shabbat is for saying thank you.

This is why we do our Modim moments, to take the time to think about what we are thankful for. Sometimes we might skip over our prayers of thanks, and we want to make sure we take the time to be grateful for what we have.

The next time you pray the Amidah during Shabbat, whether it is tomorrow at services or next Friday night during Rabbi Stoller's installation, I hope you take the time for yourself to reflect and give thanks for the things in your life.