

TEFILLAHL TIPS

TEFILLAT SHACHARIT—SHABBAT

Last year, we studied together Tefillat Mussaf in the fall, and Kabbalat Shabbat in the spring, now archived on www.oucommunity.org, under ‘Tefillah Initiative’. This fall, *B’ezrat Hashem*, we will explore the Tefillat Shacharit of Shabbat morning. As always, we welcome your questions and feedback.

Ha-kel Betaatzumot Uzecha....Shochen Ad...

This opening prayer of Shacharit extols the strength, greatness and awesomeness of G-d. It then states that indeed G-d shall be praised, blessed and sanctified by all of Israel i.e. from the upright, the righteous, the pious as well as the holy ones.

The *Aruch Hashulchan* – Rabbi Yechiel Michel HaLevy Epstein (1829-1908) writes in chapter 53:1 that in earlier times the entire *Pesukei Dezimra* – Opening psalms of the Morning Prayers were recited without a leader; and the Chazzan – Cantorial leader would begin with *Yishtabach*. Nowadays, in a majority of synagogues a leader begins with the morning blessings, continues through *Pesukei Dezimrah*, and a different *Shaliach Tzibbur* ascends the *Amud* /platform at *Yishtabach*.

It is interesting to note where the *Shaliach Tzibbur* begins chanting on *Shabbat*, in contrast to the *Shalosh Regalim* i.e. Pesach, Shavuoth, Sukkoth and the *Yamim Noraim* i.e. Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur. On Shabbat he begins with *Shochein Ad*, on *Regalim*, *Ha-kel Betaatzumot Uzecha*, and on the High Holidays with *Hamelech*. The Tashbatz - Rav Shimon ben Tzemach Duran (1300s) explains that this is because on these different days, unique and different ideas are accentuated in our prayers. On the High Holidays, since G-d is meting out judgment for the world, the *Chazzan* begins ***HaMelech-The King..*** On the festivals we recognize G-d’s strength and involvement in His world through the Exodus and the Revelation at Sinai so the *Chazzan* begins ***Ha-kel Betaatzumot Uzecha-G-d who is intrinsically powerful*** – which emphasizes G-d’s immeasurable strength and power. Finally on *Shabbat*, we focus on G-d as Creator as well the future Redeemer so the *Chazzan* begins ***Shochein Ad- He dwells on high*** - which expresses our wonder and awe of G-d and His Holiness.

I would like to point out two interesting patterns embedded within the *Ha-kel Betaatzumot Uzecha* and the *Shochein Ad*.

Ha-kel Betaatzumot Uzecha, Hagadol Bichvod Shimecha, HaGibor Lanetzach... Vehanorah....

1. These same words that are used in our introduction to Shacharit match the beginning of the silent *Amida* – ***Ha-Kel, Hagadol, Hagibr Vehanorah*** as if to indicate we are beginning the section of Shacharit that culminates in our recitation of the *Amidah*-Silent Meditative Benedictions which addresses ***Ha-Kel, Hagadol, Hagibr Vehanorah – The powerful, great, mighty and awesome One .***

2. In the section *Befi Yescharim...* the beginning letter of each 2nd word - *Yescharim, Tzaddikim, Chassidim, Kedoshim* spells out ***Yitzchak*** and the 3rd letter of each 3rd word *TitRomam, TitBarach, TitKadash and TitHallal* contain the letters that spell out ***Rifkah***. The names of the author, an early liturgist named Yitzchak, and his wife are embedded in the words of this tefillah.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Ephraim Epstein