

TEFILLAH TIPS



Mizmor Shir Chanukat HaBayit L'David

The opening prayer in the פסוקי דזמרה section of our morning prayers is מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית לדוד, King David's song in honor of the Temple inauguration. Rashi explains in Tehillim that this psalm was recited by the Levites at the inauguration of King Solomon's Temple.

The recitation of this prayer each morning is not alluded to or found in the Talmud, Shulchan Aruch, or in any of the early Siddurim. The first mention of it seems to be in the seventeenth century based on a Kabbalistic custom revealed by the Ari Hakadosh (Isaac ben Solomon Luria Ashkenazi; 1534 –1572). Therefore, commentators offer insights to account for the insertion of this psalm.

The Tikkun Tefilla explains that since the Talmud Megillah 29a maintains that all Synagogues and Study Halls today are considered "Mini Modern Day Temple Sanctuaries" it is appropriate to begin our Tefilloth with the psalm of Temple inauguration. In our Temples/Shuls our prayers are offered to G-d just as the sacrifices were offered in the Temples of yesteryear.

The Malbim (Rav Meir Levush ben Yechiel Michel; 1809-1879) advances an entirely different approach to understand the content of the Mizmor. The Malbim writes that the House that King David is referring to is his own physical body that houses his soul. The theme of the psalm is praise and thanksgiving to Hashem for having healed his sadness and frustration.

Finally, the Ibn Ezra explains that when King David discovered that he would not merit to build the Holy Temple he was understandably distraught. However, when the prophet Natan revealed to King David that his son Solomon would indeed construct the Temple it prompted King David to compose this Psalm - מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית לדוד.

The interpretations offered speak strongly to synagogue goers of our day. As we recite Psalm 30 every morning let's remember that just like King David, we offer praises and thanksgiving for the manifold blessings we receive regularly. Like the Malbim teaches, our Bayit, our body is afforded unlimited opportunities to achieve greatness in this world in tandem with our souls. And the approach of the Tikkun Tefilla reminds us to be cognizant that every modern day Halachik Synagogue is a vestige of the Beit Hamikdash, the Holy Temple of Jerusalem for which we yearn for its rebuilding each day.

Take Home Tip: Our prayers in the synagogue each day reflect the service performed over 2000 years ago in Jerusalem at the Beit HaMikdash. When we enter the Shul, let's be thankful that we have our own Temple/Shul where we can address and supplicate unto G-d. Let's look forward to the day that we will all return to the Temple Mount and chant Mizmor Shiur at the 3rd Temple soon in our days.

Shabbat Shalom,

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The image shows the top portion of an open book, with the pages fanning out. The title 'TEFILLAH TIPS' is written across the top in a large, white, outlined font. The background is a grayscale image of the book's pages.

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