

Instant Insight:

Before we begin Pesukei D’Zimrah with its opening brachah of Baruch She’amar, we say this chapter of Tehillim that David HaMelech created for the eventual Chanukas HaBayis—inauguration of the Beis Hamikdash—which interestingly enough, he was not allowed to build!

How is this relevant to us today, and what does it have to do with Pesukei D’Zimrah and the Beis Hamikdash?

This chapter discusses the difficulties (physical, emotional, and spiritual) that David HaMelech faced in his lifetime, and his belief that Hashem could and would pull him through it all. He also expresses his belief that eventually his labors would bear fruit (the Beis Hamikdash would be built), even though he knew it was ordained by Hashem that he would not live to see it! Yet he did the best he could with the struggles Hashem sent his way and thanked Hashem for all he did accomplish.

We too have no idea whether Hashem will allow us to see the end results of all our hard work! Yet we will now say Pesukei D’Zimrah and thank Hashem for all He has done and proclaim our belief that He controls all the circumstances in our lives. We will say the Shema and proclaim our loyalty to His Torah through thick and thin, and based on that, we will ask Him to give us the things we think we need in order to accomplish our mission (Shemoneh Esrei).

And we do this with joy and faith even though we do not know whether we will merit to see it all to fruition or not!

Importantly, the Malbim says that this chapter really refers to our body—also a mini Beis Hamikdash—a physical thing that we fill with kedushah and use to fulfill our mission. And, like the real Beis Hamikdash, it must be treated with respect and sanctity!

פסוקי דזמרה

Some find Pesukei D’Zimrah “annoying”—all this praising of Hashem strikes them as strange. “What does He need that for?” Of course, Hashem doesn’t need our praises—we need to praise Him! For an explanation of this crucial idea, see the Introduction to Birkas Ha’mazon on page 119.

Much of Pesukei D’Zimrah is made up of Tehillim, which is poetry. The nuances and beauty of the various paragraphs are too easily lost, which is why some people have the unfortunate “custom” of saying just Baruch She’amar, Ashrei, and Yishtabach. Here, we will try to convey the point of each part, but this can never do justice to the depth, beauty, and lofty spiritual ideas David HaMelech wove into every sentence. Still, any improvement counts!

Introduction to Pesukei D’Zimrah

מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית

מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית—

A song composed by David HaMelech to be used in the eventual dedication of the Beis Hamikdash. Hashem—I praise You because You have raised me up from the depths of all my difficulties—and You did not let my enemies (*real or imagined*) triumph over me. I called out to You and You healed me; You brought me back up when I was down. We should always be singing Your praises because Your “anger” is only for a moment—and its purpose is really to improve our lives! Though בָּעֶרֶב—in “dark times” (*when we are in pain*) we do not understand the purpose of our pain, we are

מזמור שיר חנוכת הבית
לְדוֹד: אֲרוּמָמָה יְהוָה כִּי
דָלִיתָנִי, וְלֹא שִׁמַּחַת אִיבִי
לִי: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי, שְׁוַעֲתִי
אֵלֶיךָ וַתִּרְפְּאֵנִי: יְהוָה
הָעֲלִיתָ מִן שְׂאוֹל נַפְשִׁי,
חַיִּיתָנִי מִיָּרֵדִי בּוֹר: זָמְרוּ
לִיהוָה חֲסִידָיו, וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכֹּר
קִדְשׁוֹ: כִּי רָגַע בְּאִפּוֹ, חַיִּים
בְּרָצוֹנִי, בָּעֶרֶב יִלֵּן בְּכִי
וּלְבַקֵּר רִנָּה: וְאֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי
בְּשִׁלּוֹי, בֶּל אֲמוֹט לְעוֹלָם:
יְהוָה בְּרָצוֹנִי הָעֲמִדְתָּהּ
לְהִרְרֵי עֵז, הַסִּתְרָתָּ פָנֶיךָ
הַיִּיתִי נִבְהָל: אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה
אֶקְרָא, וְאֵל אֲדֹנִי אֶתְחַנֵּן:
מֶה בָּצַע בְּדַמִּי, בְּרִדְתִּי
אֶל שַׁחַת הַיּוֹדֶךָ עֶפֶר,
הִיגִיד אֲמַתְךָ: שְׁמַע יְהוָה
וְחַנּוּנִי, יְהוָה הֵיחָא עֵזֶר לִי:

confident that לבקר —“in the morning” (*when all is clear*), we will be joyful.

When all is calm and my body healthy, I think בל אמוט

—that state is natural and will last forever. But I know that it is You, Hashem, Who keeps me strong. If You would chas v’shalom “turn away from me”—all would fall apart.

Therefore, I turn to You for help; it is to You I call out and proclaim: “My goal is to accomplish the mission You gave me.” Therefore, I need Your (*material and emotional*) support to allow me to do that! —So many times You turn my difficulties into growth opportunities (*even though I do not always realize that at the moment*)—all in order for me to accomplish my mission. Hashem Who takes care of me—in all circumstances I will praise You!

הַפֶּכֶת מִסְפְּדֵי לְמַחֹל לִי,
פִּתְחַת שְׁקִי וְתֹאזְרֵנִי שְׂמִיחָה:
לְמַעַן יִזְמְרְךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יָדָם,
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אוֹדְךָ:

Instant Insight:

The first letters of the first four words of this chapter, שיר מזמור (which discusses all of David HaMelech’s difficulties) spell out שמחה. True, deep simchah is based on rock-solid belief that in the end all is for the best and a Beis Hamikdash will result! (Even though we cannot always see the sense of Hashem’s plan, hinted to by the fact that the letters are not in order.)

קדיש יתום

—(The person saying Kaddish proclaims our hope that) soon, in our lifetime, the entire world, which Hashem created precisely according to His Will, will recognize Hashem as the Source of all and will see the sanctity, perfection, and purpose of all He has done.

אמן. יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי
—(We all enthusiastically respond:) Absolutely correct! May everyone (*including me!*), everywhere, and forever, see that all His actions are great and deserving of praise!

—(The person saying Kaddish then points out that) in reality, the true greatness and power of Hashem far exceeds any praises that we mere humans could say. And to that we respond: אמן—Absolutely correct!

—(The person saying Kaddish requests:) May there be abundant peace, that comes from Heaven, and life, upon us and upon all of Bnei Yisrael. And to that we respond: אמן—Absolutely, we agree!

—(The person saying Kaddish requests:) May He Who makes peace in the Heavens bring about peace upon us and upon all of Bnei Yisrael! And to that we respond: אמן—Absolutely, we agree!

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא, בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא
כְּרַעוּתֵיהּ וְיִמְלִיד מַלְכוּתֵיהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיָמֵיכוּן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעָגְלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהִיא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעֵלְמֵי עֲלְמֵיָא.
יִתְבָּרַךְ, וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר, וְיִתְרוֹמֵם, וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא,
וְיִתְהַדָּר, וְיִתְעַלֶּה, וְיִתְהַלָּל, שְׁמֵהּ דְּקַדְשָׁא
בְּרִיךְ הוּא.

לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא (בעשיית לעלא ולעלא
מכל ברכתא) וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמָתָא,
דְּאָמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
יְהִיא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם (בעשיית השלום) בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא
יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: