

Why Do We Use Jewish Liturgy in our Services?

Introduction

1. One of the things people notice about the manner of our services is the fact that we use Jewish Liturgy for a large part of our services.
2. Due to this fact, many who were not raised in a Jewish home are somewhat hesitant to join in.
3. Many in Christianity are raised to believe that Jesus turned his back on the Jewish people because they rejected him as Messiah
4. They say that the Jews have been cut out of the Olive Tree, at least for a season.
5. That they have been blinded for a season.
6. I, myself, was accused of being a God-killer and told that “the law of the land required those who would do business with my kind should be burned alive.”
7. Antisemitism is running rampant in our world today. Sadly, it lies underneath the surface of many professing a faith in Messiah.
8. The war with Hamas has done much to fan these flames.
9. With all this being said, WHY would we want to use “Jewish” liturgy as the backbone of our worship of The Almighty? After all, we follow Yehoshua don’t we?

Main Discussion

I. USE OF THE LITURGY IN OUR SERVICE BRINGS US IN UNITY WITH OUR JEWISH BRETHREN

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 - A. In a way, we are joining in with Ruth when she told Naomi, “Your God will be my God and your people will be my people.
 - B. Many today are willing to say, “Your God will be my God.”
 - C. But they are not willing to say, “Your people will be my people.”
 - D. Many want to proclaim themselves as the NEW Israel.
 - E. Many say:
 - 1. The Jews did not accept Yehoshua as the Messiah, they will say.
 - 2. WE have replaced Israel as the chosen people, they will say.
 - 3. They forget that The Almighty said He would not forsake the Jewish people
 - F. Some will even say that the Jews in The Land today are not real Jews.
 - G. Some will even call the Jews in The Land today “the synagogue of Satan.”
 - H. Oh how that must grieve Messiah as well as The Almighty!

- I. Saying, “Your God will be my God, and your people will be my people,” does not mean we agree with or accept everything taught in Judaism.

II. THERE IS SUCH BEAUTY IN THE LITURGY WHEN DONE RIGHT.

- A. One may ask, “When is it done right?” (illustration of the bagpipes)
- B. The simple recitation of the Baracha in our service is not enough. We must recite them with purpose and understanding.
- C. Nearly all of the liturgy found in the daily, Shabbath, and Holy Days siddurim comes directly from the Torah, or at least the TaNaKh. If not directly from, the thought of the baracha/blessing is so.
- D. The order of the three daily prayers; weekday, Holy Day, and Shabbath, are meant to remind us of the sacrifices offered daily in the Tabernacle/Temple in their absence.
 1. The morning prayers are timed and meant to remind us of the first of the two daily lambs that were part of the continual burnt offerings
 2. The afternoon prayers are timed and meant to remind us of the second of the two daily lambs that were part of the continual burnt offerings.
 3. The evening prayers were timed and meant to remind us of the fat of these two lambs that burned on the altar through the night.

III. THERE IS POWER IN THE BARACHA WE RECITE

- A. Rabbi Benjamin Yudin, in his Introduction to the Artscroll Transliterated Linear Siddur: Sabbath and Festivals, The Seif Edition says on page xv:

“Rabbi Avraham Yizchok Kook comments on the daily prayer *Baruch She’amar*, which speaks of God as having uttered the words that brought the universe into being, that words most often are descriptive; they *describe* events or things, but words do not create God’s words were of a different order; the very words themselves were the medium of Creation. God “spoke and the world came into being.” What is true regarding Hashem is equally true regarding man’s prayer. When he prays he is not only praising God, presenting his needs, and expressing thanksgiving, but he is creating the means, text, and opportunity to have a dialogue with Hashem.”

- B. Words are very powerful
 1. The power of life and death is in the tongue (Proverbs 18:21)
 2. We MUST remember that our words have the ability to harm and destroy or heal and lift up one another. We must use them wisely.

3. What better way of using the proper power than by quoting scripture in love and in context.
4. Let us look at some of the Baracha we recite each week, plus a few we don't, to see what beauty they hold for us.

IV. Ayn Kaylohaynu

- A. We open our service by declaring that we believe our Elohim is the ONLY elohim.
- B. We declare His kingdom is everlasting and that his rule is never ending
- C. We declare that He is our strength and that all we have comes by Him
- D. We quote or summarize several passges
 1. Psalm 145:13
 2. Exodus 8:10
 3. I Kings 8:10

V. Vayehi Ben So'a

- A. We declare that The Almighty has the power to scatter His enemies by the presence of His word.
- B. We declare that the word of The Almighty goes out into the world from its starting place; the Temple on the mount in Jerusalem
- C. We quote Numbers 10:35

VI. Shema & V'ahavta

- A. We are declaring that our Mighty One is indeed one/echad
- B. We again affirm our belief that His kingdom is eternal
- C. In this version of the Shema, we declare that Messiah is our master
- D. We recognize that we are to love The Almighty with all of our being.
- E. We recognize the need to meditate on His Torah
- F. We recognize the need to put on the Torah as if it were a special garment and to surround our dwellings with it.
- G. We recognize that doing these things will bring blessings and not doing so will bring curses.
- H. We recognize our obligation to teach our children the Torah at every opportunity.

- I. We affirm our obligation to place fringes on the four edges of our outer garments and place a thread of techeilet above/upon them as a way of reminding us of the Torah.
- J. We assert our belief that it was The Almighty who brought us out of Egypt and that He is our authority
- K. Again, we quote Scripture
 - 1. Deut. 6:4-9
 - 2. Deut. 11:13-17
 - 3. Deut. 5:6
 - 4. Num. 10:38, 39

VII. Bar'khu before Torah Reading

- A. We honor/bless The Almighty for giving us His Torah
- B. Yet again we use scripture to do this.
 - 1. Dt. 7:6
 - 2. Dt. 14:2

VIII. Bar'khu after Reading the Torah

- A. We once again honor/bless The Almighty for giving us His Torah
- B. This time we expand the idea by recognizing that eternal life comes by Him.
- C. You guessed it, we use some more scripture
 - 1. Ps. 40:8
 - 2. Dt. 11:18
 - 3. Ps. 119:11

IX. V'zot HaTorah

- A. We lift up the open Torah Scroll and affirm that we believe the words written upon the scroll are the words of The Almighty given to his people through Moshe by The Almighty.
- B. This is a recognition of several verses in the TaNaKh
 - 1. Dt. 4:44
 - 2. Num. 9:23

3. Num. 4:37
4. Josh. 22:9

X. Uvenuhoh Yomar

- A. This is the concluding portion of the *Vayehi Ben So'a*
- B. We are asking The Almighty to return and reside among us
- C. We are also asking that His priests would be clothed in righteousness and that His children would have joy, and that they might proclaim it abroad.
- D. This blessing is based upon two scriptures in particular

1. Num 10:36
2. Ps. 32:11

XI. Ba'avor David

- A. We are asking The Almighty to bring forth Moshiach on the merit of King David to whom was promised would be the lineage of Moshiach.
- B. We are also acknowledging our belief that we have received good instructions that we should not forsake.
- C. Scripture that forms the basis for this blessing is Ps. 132:10

XII. Etz Chayim

- A. We are proclaiming, with Solomon, that the Torah is a Tree of Life and we are blessed when we grasp it.
- B. When we do so it makes our life more pleasant and peaceful.
- C. We then go directly into the Hashiveinu and the Natan Lanu haDavar haChai.
- D. In our congregation, we acknowledge that we were given the words of life through Yehoshua.
- E. The basis for these three conjoined blessings are:

1. Pro. 3:17, 18
2. Lam. 5:21

XIII. Shabbath Amidah

- A. We close out our liturgy service with three portions of this blessing which is usually recited while standing.
- B. It is usually recited quietly
- C. However, our Rabbi has chosen that we should all say it together out loud with an opportunity to take our private prayers to The Almighty in quietness.
- D. There are three specific parts of this prayer that we recite:

- 1. *Eloheinu...R'tzay Vimnuchataynu,*
- 2. *Kedusha De'Amidah, and*
- 3. *Yih'yu L'Ratzon*

- E. In these three sections of the Shabbath Amidah we:

- 1. Acknowledge that The Almighty has been The Almighty to our people for many generations.
- 2. Ask The Almighty to do several things for us including that he accept our rest and make His Shabbath a blessing to us and our children.
- 3. We bless/honor him for giving us His Shabbath
- 4. We set apart His name as holy and join with the heavenly choir in doing so.
- 5. We ask that we may be honored to be the generation that sees the establishment of His kingdom.
- 6. We acknowledge that Messiah will sit on the throne in His kingdom and reign throughout our generations
- 7. We conclude with a request that the words we have said and the thoughts in our hearts we have had would be acceptable to him.

- F. Some of the passages drawn upon in this section of liturgy are:

- 1. Isa. 6:3
- 2. Eze. 3:12
- 3. Psa. 146:10

Conclusion

I pray I have given you some clarity on why the leadership of this congregation has set forth the practice of using this “Jewish” liturgy in our worship of The Almighty.

I pray I have helped you see the power that is within these blessings we say each Shabbath.

I hope I have given you reason to reflect on why YOU should see these blessings as an integral part of your worship of the Almighty. Not only on a weekly basis. But also on a daily basis.

I hope that I have shown you that you should NOT call these blessings “vain babblings.”

They are taken directly out of scripture

If they are vain babblings, it is because we are not reciting them with their intended purposes.

This could be just because we did not know different.