

מה טוב

Root – ט – ו – ב

Meaning – Good

Words in the prayer with the same root טוב

מה טוב is found in the very beginning section of the Reform service. It is used as a way of welcoming everyone to the worship service and it is meant to signal the formal beginning of the service. When we say this prayer we are claiming to be ready to pray.

The first part of מה טוב comes from the Book of Numbers in the Torah. It is the story of Baalam, a prophet of the king Balak, who was an enemy of Israel. Balak sent Baalam to curse the Jewish people, but he was unable to utter a curse against them and blessed them instead. This prayer is that blessing.

The remainder of the prayer comes from different verses in Psalms.

Vocabulary and Translation

What, how – מה

Good – טוב

Place – ומקום

I bow down – אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה

Past Roots

Bless - ב - ר - כ

ב - ח - ר - Choose -

ל - א - Roots of the names of God -

- HOW good are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel. I, through Your great love, enter Your house; I bow down in awe at Your holy temple. Adonai, I love Your temple, the dwelling-place of Your glory. I will humbly bow down low before Adonai, my Maker. As for me, may my prayer come to You, Adonai, at a favorable time. O God, in Your abundant faithfulness, answer me with Your sure deliverance.