

w/Carol

מה טוב
Mah Tovv

בְּהֵ-טִבּוֹ אֹהֲלֶיךָ, יַעֲקֹב,
מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ, יִשְׂרָאֵל!

נֶאֱנִי בְּרֵב חֲסִדֶּךָ
אֲבֵא בִיתְךָ,
אֲשַׁפְחֹנָה אֶל-הֵיכַל קֹדֶשְׁךָ
בִּירְאָתְךָ.

יְיָ, אֶקְבְּצִי מֵעוֹן בִּיתְךָ
וּמִקּוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ.

נֶאֱנִי אֲשַׁפְחֹנָה וְאֶכְרַעָה,
אֶבְרַכְּךָ לִפְנֵי-יְיָ עֹשֵׂי

נֶאֱנִי תַפְלָתִי לָךְ, יְיָ,
עַתָּה רְצוֹן.

אֱלֹהִים, בְּרֵב-חֲסִדֶּךָ,
עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמֶּת יִשְׁעֶךָ.

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HOW FAIR are your tents, O Jacob,
your dwellings, O Israel.

I, through Your abundant love, enter Your house;
I bow down in awe at Your holy Temple.

Adonai, I love Your temple abode,
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 moment;
O God, in Your abundant faithfulness, answer me with Your sure deliverance.

מה־טִבּוֹ *Mah tov...* *How fair...* Numbers 24:5; Psalms 5:8, 26:8, 95:6, 69:14. Numbers 24:5 is part of the gentile prophet Balaam's blessing of Israel. Summoned to curse the invading Israelites, he is compelled by God to bless them. The "tents" and "dwellings" in Balaam's blessing are identified by the Rabbis with Israel's synagogues and houses of study (*Sanhedrin* 105b); for this reason, *Seder Rav Amram*, the earliest prayerbook (9th c. Babylonia), mandates the recitation of this verse upon entering a synagogue. In the following psalm verses, the House of God (originally, the Jerusalem Temple) is also identified with the synagogue. The reference to a "time of favor" when it is appropriate to offer up one's personal prayer is identified in *B'rachot* 8a as the time of public worship when the congregation offers up its prayers; thus each of us in our own