

Blessings, Torah Readings and More ...

To begin the Torah Service the Torah is taken out of the Ark and is carried in procession around the synagogue. Congregants can approach the Torah and show their love and affection by kissing it, or by touching it with their Tallit (Prayer Shawl), with their Siddur (Prayer Book) or with their hand and then kissing that item.

The Torah is then placed on the reading table and the covering is removed. Individual worshippers are called up to the Torah in turn to say a special blessing before and after each Torah reading.

Many of our congregants have learned how to read from the Torah. In order to do this, they prepare in advance with our Torah tutor. Beth David encourages anyone who wants to read Torah to do so, especially our younger members, who after their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, are invited to read Torah and lead services on a regular basis.

The two people who stand on either side of the reading table are called *Gabayim*. They read along in printed books to make sure that every word read from the Torah is read correctly, correcting the reader if necessary.

People who are observing *Yartzheit* (the anniversary of a family member's death) are called up for the "*Acharon*" (last) *Aliyah* (reading).

After the Torah reading people are invited to come up to give the names of people they know who are ill so that a special healing blessing can be recited on their behalf.

Following this, two other congregants are called up to lift and "dress" the Torah. It is then held by someone while the Haftorah is read. The Haftorah is a selected reading from Prophets and complements the Torah reading. At the conclusion of the Haftorah reading, the Rabbi teaches a lesson and then the Torah is once again carried in a procession around the synagogue before it is returned to the Ark.

All About Praying

The Hebrew word for prayer is "tefilah" and it is derived from the word "l'hitpalel", meaning to judge oneself. This surprising word origin provides insight into the meaning of Jewish Prayer. The Yiddish word for pray is "daven" which comes from the same Latin root as the English word "divine" and emphasizes the One to whom prayer is directed.

There is no right or wrong when it comes to praying—this is your time for communicating with God. Praying is a very personal means of communication and everybody does, and should do, what is comfortable for them. In synagogue, we have structured prayers and we follow along in the *Siddur* (Prayer Book). If you feel like it, you can silently read the English, say your own personal prayers, or join in with the community prayers - all of this is appropriate and exactly what you should be doing .

The Service and You

We hope that you have enjoyed our service and that you will come and join us again. We try to make our service inclusive and would like to help you feel comfortable praying with us. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the Rabbi, or any of our members. If they do not know the answers, they can direct you to someone who can help you more.

Please join us for a community meal called "*Kiddush*" at the end of our services!

Shabbat Shalom

Sabbath Peace to you



Welcome

To

Shabbat

Morning

Services

A Guide
to
Understanding!



All who enter are welcome.

ברוכים הבאים

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What is Judaism?

Judaism is the ancient tradition of people originally called Hebrews, or Israelites. The word "Jew" (*Yehudi*) is taken from the name Judah (*Yehudah*), who was one of Jacob's twelve sons.

Judaism is a 3000-year old religion based on a civilization which emphasizes the oneness of God, love of fellow man, the observance of commandments, the study of Torah and the importance of community and family.

There are different branches of Judaism depending on where a person came from, or their belief. The main types of Judaism in America are Orthodoxy, Conservative and Reform.

Our Synagogue

Our synagogue is affiliated with the Conservative Movement of Judaism. Men and women sit together and participate equally. We are an open and inclusive community and all are welcome.

Synagogue can also be called "Shul" from the Yiddish, meaning school. We come to synagogue for many different reasons—to pray, to learn and to be part of a community. We all come for our own personal reasons and these reasons can change from week to week.

Hebrew

Our services are conducted mainly in Hebrew. Hebrew is an ancient language. The Torah and our prayer books are written in classical Hebrew. Modern Hebrew is the spoken language in Israel. Our *siddur* (prayer book), Sim Shalom is written in biblical Hebrew and has some transliteration. All the prayers are translated, so feel free to read along in English.

On entering the synagogue, it may appear that most people know Hebrew. Many of our members do not speak Hebrew, but they do know at least some, if not all of the prayers, and many can read Hebrew well enough to follow along. All are invited to join in, as they feel comfortable.

Beth David offers regular Hebrew classes, as well as many other classes, during the year.

What is Shabbat?

Shabbat (the Sabbath) is the seventh day of the Jewish week and a day of rest in Judaism. *Shabbat* is observed from sundown Friday until it gets dark on Saturday night.

Shabbat is the only one ritual observance instituted in the Ten Commandments. It is primarily a day of rest and spiritual enrichment. The word "Shabbat" comes from the root meaning to cease, to end, or to rest.

About the Service

The Shabbat Morning Service is divided into four smaller sections. Different members of our community—adults or teens, men or women, lead our service.

P'seukei D'Zimra (P.83-P.106): Psalms and Songs

This is the "warm-up" to the main service and is followed by:

Shacharit (P.107-P.138): Morning Prayer Service

We thank God for creating our world, for giving us the Torah, and for past and future redemption.

We then get to the main section of the *Shabbat* service which is the:

Torah Service (P.139-P.154):

The Torah is taken out of the Ark, a section is read and then the Torah is returned. Many worshippers participate. See further explanations in this handout.

Musaf (P.155-P.187): Additional Service

This is the final section of the morning and is only said once a week on Shabbat.

Bimah

This is the raised section in the front of the synagogue with the two podiums and seats on either side. During the Torah Service, there are people who sit on the Bimah and there are many people going up and down. The people sitting on the left hand side are usually the Rabbi and board members. On the right hand side are the bimah guide and the participants. We also have a floor "gabbai" or guide who may ask people to perform specific tasks. Some of these tasks were given out before the service on order for the participants to prepare. Those tasks requiring no preparation are often given out at the service, except when there is a special function.

In the center of the Bimah, behind the curtains, is the Aron Hakodesh (Holy Ark) which houses the Torah Scrolls. "Know before you stand" is what is written in Hebrew on top of the Ark.

Above it is the Ner Tamid (Eternal Light) which is never extinguished. Our sages interpreted the Ner Tamid as a symbol of God's eternal and imminent Presence in our communities and in our lives.

What is the Torah?

The Torah consists of the Five Books of Moses, handwritten by a scribe on animal parchment using a specialized writing instrument - a quill. A Torah can take many years to write and has over 300,000 letters in it. In order for a Torah to be fit for public reading, it has to be perfectly written without any mistake.

We show our respect and affection for the Torah, by its beautiful cover and "crown". We do not touch the actual parchment with our hands when the Torah is being read. The reader follows with an ornate "yad" (pointer) made of wood, ceramic or metal.

We read the whole Torah from beginning to end each year with set readings every week. The same portion is read each week in Jewish Houses of Prayer all over the world.

The Torah is written without vowels and punctuation, so readers must learn their portions well in advance.