

What do I do when given an honor in the Conservative Service*?

What do I do when I am given the honor of opening the ark?

It is an honor to open the ark and the mitzvah should be fulfilled with appropriate dignity.

- Those who will be on the bima should wear a head covering.
- When given this honor, please take a seat closer to the *bima* a few pages ahead of your honor.
- Then when the page is announced or your name (or your honor) is called or the leader signals, approach the ark via the shortest route.
 - If you are opening the ark at the end of the Torah service, please proceed to the *bima* once the processional is in progress. (You might not be called up.) Do not open the ark until the *sefer Torah* has arrived on the *bima* and is ready to be placed in the ark.
- If you are honored along with others, please divide into two groups on each side of the ark.
- Sometimes the ark is not to be opened until partway through a prayer; this is typically printed on the page in the *Siddur* or *Machzor* (prayer book) or the leader announces that we rise as the ark is opened. If not, look to the Rabbi or the service leader who will signal you to open the ark.
- When the *Siddur* page or service leader indicates the ark is to be closed, do so and proceed back to your seat.

As you return to your seat (*not* by the shortest route), folks may tell you "*yasher koach*" (good wishes (blessings) told to someone who did a good job); an appropriate reply is "*baruch tihye*" ("you should be blessed [too]") or just "thanks".

What do I do if I am given an *Aliyah* to the Torah?

It is a honor to be given an *aliyah* when the Torah is read in the synagogue, and it is important to fulfill this *mitzvah* with dignity, both out of respect for God and for the Torah. Please keep in mind that there are variations in custom in different congregations, and it is appropriate to follow *minhag ha-makom* (the custom of the place in which you are). It is customary to wear a *tallit* and a *kippah* (yarmulke) when called to the Torah.

1. Being called to the Torah

- Typically you will be given a card during services (or a letter in advance) that indicates *aliyah* number.
- There are generally three, five or seven *aliyot* depending on whether it is a weekday, *Shabbat* or a holiday.
- When given an honor, please take a seat closer to the *bima* a few pages ahead of your honor.
- Come forward to the *shtender* (Torah reading table) as soon as you are called (by your honor number or name), using the shortest route.
- Stand to the right of the *Torah* reader (by the *Gabbai* who called you up)
- The *Gabbai* (assistant) will ask you your Hebrew name (unless s/he already has it), which may be given in the form: [Your name] *ben/bat* [your father's name] and [your mother's name]. You may use the name of only one parent if prefer.

2. I'm standing at the Torah; now what?

- The *Gabbai* or the reader will open the scroll and show you where the reading will begin. Take your *tzitzit* (corner fringes of the *tallit*) and touch them to the word the reader points out and then kiss the *tzitzit*. (Each person called to the Torah with you may do this.)
- When reciting the blessing before the *Torah*, it is customary (and your privilege) to hold the bottom ends of the *eitzim* (wooden rollers), one in each hand.

- Recite the first blessing. (On the *shtender* you'll find a large card with the blessings printed both in Hebrew and in transliteration; the blessings are also found in *Siddur Sim Shalom*, page 142 and in *Mahzor Lev Shalem* on pages 99 and 277).
 - Please note that you will **repeat the congregation's response**. (The blessing is below)

Each congregant receiving an aliyah recites these b'rakhot.

Before the Reading:

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ.

Congregation responds:

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Congregant repeats above response, then continues:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־תּוֹרָתוֹ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Each congregant receiving an aliyah recites these b'rakhot.

Before the Reading:

Bar'khu et Adonai ha-m'vorakh.

Congregation responds:

Barukh Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed.

Congregant repeats above response, then continues:

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam,
asher bahar banu mi-kol ha-amim, v'natan lanu et torato.
Barukh atah Adonai, noten ha-Torah.

3. What do I do while the reader is reading?

- While the reader reads from the Torah, you might be asked to hold one of the wooden rollers, to keep the scroll open.
- You are welcome to look into the scroll while the reader reads. That is your privilege.

4. What do I do when the reader is finished reading?

- When the reader finishes reading, s/he (or the *gabbai*) will point out the last word with the *yad* (pointer). Take your *tzitzit*, touch them to this word, and kiss them. Then recite this blessing:

After the Reading:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטַע בְּתוֹכָנוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

After the Reading:

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam,
asher natan lanu torat emet, v'hayei olam nata b'tokhenu.
Barukh atah Adonai, noten ha-Torah.

5. I've done my *aliyah*; where do I go, what do I do?

- Upon completing the second blessing, move to the other side of the reader to the left of the assisting gabbai, and remain there until the next *aliyah* is completed.
- While the reader reads, you might be asked to hold one of the wooden rollers, to keep the scroll open.
- When the next *aliyah* is completed, you should return to your seat. It is customary to take a longer route back to your seat than that which you took to ascend to the *bima*, signifying your reluctance at leaving the Torah.

As you return to your seat (*not* by the shortest route), folks may tell you "*yasher koach*" (good wishes (blessings) told to someone who did a good job); an appropriate reply is "*baruch tihye*" ("you should be blessed [too]") or just "thanks".

What do I do when I am given the honor of lifting or dressing the Torah?

- Those who will be on the *bima* should wear a head covering.
- When given an honor, please take a seat closer to the *bima* a few pages ahead of your honor.
- Come forward to the *shtender* (Torah reading table) as soon as you are called ("Would those lifting and dressing the Torah please come to the bima."), using the shortest route.
- The **lifter** will open the *sefer Torah*, take hold of the bottom ends of the *eitzim* (wooden rollers), one in each hand, raise them slightly to clear the parchment from the table lip.
 - Then glide the scroll along the table lip until about halfway up the scroll, to get sufficient leverage to tip up and lift the scroll (with your hands about face height, if able).
 - If able, hold the scroll open (about three columns) with your back to the congregation.
 - You may then proceed to the seat indicated and begin to close the *sefer Torah*, balancing the wooden rollers on your lap. The roller in your right hand should be the one on top.
 - Remain seated until the leader announces the service for returning the *sefer Torah* to the ark. Then stand by the leader for the first lines of the recessional prayer. Proceed when signaled to do so.
 - If there is more than one *sefer Torah* in use, the person holding the first *sefer Torah* remains seated when the second *sefer Torah* is lifted (and at other times, unless told otherwise), until it is time for the Torah recessional.
 - Once the Torah recessional begins head in the direction indicated by the leader. (Usually to your left or counterclockwise; this might vary during the High Holidays)
 - As you walk around the chapel, allow congregants the opportunity to kiss the Torah.
 - When returning to the *bima*, stand with the leader (facing the same direction as the leader). When indicated put the *sefer Torah* into the ark (or hand it to the leader to do so).
 - Remain on the *bima* for the balance of the prayer and then return to your seat.
- The **dresser** should quickly follow the lifter.
 - Facing the now-seated lift, take the top ends of the *eitzim* (wooden rollers) one in each hand and roll the scroll closed. (The roller in your left hand will be on top).
 - The *gabbai* (assistant) will hand you the *gartel* (belt) which you will wrap around the scroll and fasten with the front on the side facing the Torah lifter.
 - The *gabbai* will then hand you the mantel (cover) which you will place over the *sefer Torah* with the front on the side facing the Torah lifter.
 - You'll then add the silver Torah crowns on the top of the *eitzim*. (If there is a breastplate and *yad* (pointer); add those on the front of the *sefer Torah*.)
 - You may assist the Torah holder in turning the *sefer Torah* around to face front.
 - Then return to your seat

As you return to your seat (*not* by the shortest route), folks may tell you "*yasher koach*" (good wishes (blessings) told to someone who did a good job); an appropriate reply is "*baruch tihye*" (you should be blessed [too]) or just "thanks".

What do I do when I am given the honor of leading an English reading?

- Those who will be on the bima should wear a head covering.
- When given an honor, please take a seat closer to the *bima* a few pages ahead of your honor.
- Come forward to the *shtender* (Torah reading table) as soon as the prayer or page is announced.
- You may invite the congregation to read with you.
- When done please return to your seat.

As you return to your seat, folks may tell you "*yasher koach*" (good wishes (blessings) told to someone who did a good job); an appropriate reply is "*baruch tihye*" ("you should be blessed [too]) or just "thanks".

*With the exception of a couple of English readings, honors in the Conservative service are conferred only to someone who is Jewish. All those in the chapel during a Conservative service should wear a head covering; only Jews need to wear a *tallit* in the chapel.

When given an honor it is customary to make a donation to the synagogue. A list of funds is found on the website [insert link here.]