

Am HaYam

Guide to Shabbat

Worship Service

Cape Cod, MA  
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# Introduction to the Guide

We hope that this guide will be helpful to guests and newcomers to our Havurah, potential service leaders, and anyone who wants to more fully understand the components of our Shabbat service.

There are two parts to this guide. The first is a description and explanation of a Shabbat worship service. The second provides the basic format for a worship service in outline form.

We are a Havurah that welcomes all who wish to worship with us, including interfaith families and *gerei tzedik*. A *ger tzedik* (righteous stranger) is an honored person, one who casts her/his lot with the Jewish people and community. All members of the Havurah have the opportunity to lead services.

The major traditions of the Jewish Shabbat service were established over many years and reached the form as we know it around the 9<sup>th</sup> century, CE (Common Era). After the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple in 70 CE, new prayers were developed by the rabbis as a substitute for the sacrificial rites of the Temple that they were no longer able to perform.

While the service is complete as it is, we are also encouraged to let our thoughts move to personal prayers or meditations. The service is intended to move us out of the concerns of our everyday lives and into the special atmosphere of worship.

## ***Shabbat Worship Service***

### **I. Introduction to the Service**

The opening of the Friday night service consists of the lighting of candles which, though traditionally done by a woman, may be done by a man, followed by the singing of songs, and/or the reading of poems or psalms to set the mood for the prayer service that follows.

Traditional songs may include *L'Cha Dodi* or *Shalom Aleichem*. Other songs may be substituted. Wordless melodies (*nigunim*, singular, *nigun*) may be sung. Readings may be taken from a prayer book or from any other source. They may be read by the leader, by individuals in the congregation, by the congregation as a whole or in any way the leader decides.

The signal that this part of the service is concluding is the recitation of the *Hatzi Kaddish* (Reader's Kaddish). This prayer may have originated during Second Temple times, i.e., before 70 CE. It serves to separate sections of the service.

### **II. The *Sh'ma* and Its Surrounding Blessings**

This section of the service begins with the *Bar'chu*, an ancient call to worship. Dating from around 421 BCE, Ezra and Nehemiah called the Jewish people together to hear the Torah and to pledge to uphold it. In the *Bar'chu* the emphasis is on calling the congregation together for prayer. Jewish tradition emphasizes praying with a community.

The *Bar'chu* is followed by prayers of creation and revelation of God's love. (In a traditional Friday night service, this would be *Ma'ariv Aravim* and *Ahavat Olam*. In a traditional Shabbat morning service, it would be *Yotzer Or* and *Ahavah Rabbah*).

Since the beginning of Jewish tradition, the *Sh'ma* had been considered the most important statement of a Jew's belief in God. It was spoken daily in prayers at the Temple, and the rabbis included it in morning and evening service of the synagogue. The *Sh'ma* is taken from Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear O Israel: The Eternal One is our God!"

and its response is: "Blessed is God's glorious majesty forever and ever!"

The next reading or chanting is the *V'ahavta*, ("You shall love the Lord your God...") recited in unison by the congregation in Hebrew and/or in English. This may be followed by *Mi Chamocho* (prayers of Redemption) and *Hashkiveinu* (God's Care). This section of the service is often concluded on Friday night by the singing of *V'shamru*, which are the words of the commandment to keep the Sabbath.

### **III. The Amidah**

The *Amidah* is considered the heart of Jewish worship. Jewish prayer makes room for both our personal meditations and the prayers we recite as a community. The word *Amidah* means "standing" and it describes the way in which its prayers are recited. Another name for this portion of the service is *T'filah*, or prayer.

The prayers begin with *Avot v'imahot* (Fathers and Mothers or Ancestors) and *G'vurot* (God's Power) and continue with *K'dushah* (Holiness, including the holiness of Shabbat). *Avodah* (Service, or being of Service), *Modim* (Thanks), and conclude with a song of peace, e.g. *Shalom Rav* or *Sim Shalom*.

It is important to provide a time for personal private prayer. This concept dates to the Talmud where it is understood that one's obligation to pray is not fulfilled without personal prayer. This section usually concludes with the singing of *Oseh Shalom* or *Yih'yu l'ratson*. The *Mi Shebeirach*, a prayer of healing, is recited here, unless there is a Torah service, when it is moved to that section of the service.

### **IV: Torah Service**

*Meaning and Significance of Torah Service Rituals:*

For Jews, the Torah, the Five Books of Moses, is the holiest of all sacred objects. It is handwritten with no vowels, punctuation or notes by a highly skilled scribe on kosher animal skin and sewn together on a scroll many yards long whose ends are wound on two wooden staves. We call the Torah a "Tree of Life". It is the story of the Jewish people and also contains laws by which Jews have been guided for millennia.

The Torah teaches us the values of truth, justice and peace, and has served as a touchstone for Jews throughout the ages. For this reason it holds a central place in the Jewish tradition.

The Torah is divided into 54 weekly sections (*parashot*) so that, in a year, the entire Torah is read from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy. Each week a *parasha* or a portion of a *parasha* is read.

#### *Taking the Torah from the Ark:*

The Torah service starts with the ritual of opening the ark and removing the Torah. This may be followed by a procession around the sanctuary where congregants greet the Torah joyfully with song and kiss the books or prayer shawls with which they have touched it. The procession is called *Hakafah*, "going around the room", where the Torah is being accepted into the community just the way it might have been received when it first came down from Sinai.

#### *Aliyah:*

An individual or a group of people who are honored by being called to say the blessings (usually in Hebrew) before and after one of the readings from the torah are said to receive an *aliyah*. It literally means "one who ascends", referring both to the physical act of walking up to the *bimah* (raised platform) where the Torah will be read and to Moses' ascent to Mount Sinai where he received the Torah.

It is just as much an honor to witness the blessings by standing with the person or group of people doing the reciting as it is to say them.

Our community is committed to support interfaith families raising their children as Jews. At the Bat/Bar Mitzvah service, and at other opportunities throughout the year, an intermarried non-Jew who has participated in raising his/her child as a Jew could say, with complete integrity and authenticity, that his/her family is included among the "us" to whom the Torah was given. Participating on the *bimah* in services, including being called for an *Aliyah* to the Torah with the family is a choice our community leaves up to the individual, who is welcome to seek guidance from the Ritual Committee or Rabbi Douglas.

### *The Reading of Torah:*

A member of the *havurah*, one becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a rabbi, or service leader may do the reading. It may be read or chanted in Hebrew, English, or both.

### *Passing the Torah from One Generation to Another:*

At a Torah service during which a child is becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, some families choose to do a ritual that symbolizes the continuance of the Jewish tradition from one generation to another. The Torah is passed from grandparents to parents to child.

Many of our Bar and Bat Mitzvah children are in intermarried families. If the non-Jewish parents or grandparents have contributed to this child becoming a Jew and are supportive of the child's Jewish education, they too may be a link in the chain of generations.

### *Hagbah and G'ililah:*

At the conclusion of the Torah service someone is given the honor of raising the Torah. It is held high, open to the portion just read, to let the congregation see the writing within it. That person is called *Hagbahah* or *Hagbah*, meaning the person who raises the Torah.

Someone is also invited to tie up the scroll and cover it. That person is called *G'ililah*, meaning the person who binds the Torah. The Torah is wrapped and dressed and held until after the Haftarah and D'var Torah.

### *Reading of the Haftarah ("Conclusion", i.e. of the Biblical lesson):*

We usually read a selection from the Books of Prophets that is related in theme to the Torah portion. Blessings are recited before and after the reading of the Haftarah.

### *D'var Torah:*

A service leader, rabbi, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or a member of the Havurah gives a commentary often based upon the Torah portion.

*Returning the Torah to the Ark:*

Prayers are recited as the Torah is returned to the ark and the ark is closed.

## **IV. Concluding Prayers**

The congregation recites the Adoration or *Aleinu*, which concludes with *Bayom Hahu*. The Mourner's *Kaddish*, *Kiddush* (blessing over the wine) and a concluding hymn close the service.

On Friday nights, we begin our *Oneg Shabbat* with *HaMotzi* over the *challah*. On Saturday mornings we recite the *Kiddush* and *Ha Motzi* following the service.

# Worship Service

## Recommended Format for a Sabbath Service

1. **Introduction to the service.** A warm-up to prepare us for prayer:

- a. Candlelighting.
- b. *L'Cha Dodi*.
- c. Poetry readings.
- d. Psalms.
- e. Songs, *nigunim* (may include *Shalom Aleichem*, *Mah Tov*, *Mah Yafeh Hayom*, *Shiru L'Adonai*, etc.).
- f. This section ends with the *Hatzi Kaddish* (Reader's *Kaddish*).

2. **The *Sh'ma* and its blessings:**

- a. *Bar'chu* – the Call to Worship.
- b. Prayers of Creation (*Ma'ariv Aravim* – You Bring on the Evening).
- c. Prayers of Revelation (*Ahavat Olam* – Your Love is Eternal).
- d. The *Sh'ma* (Hear, O Israel...) followed by the *V'ahavta* (You shall love the Lord your God...).
- e. Prayers of Redemption (usually includes *Mi Chamocha* – Who is like unto You...).
- f. Prayers of Providence (*Hashkiveinu* – Lay us down in peace).
- g. *V'Shamru* or *Yismechu* (recalling the covenant of Shabbat).



3. **The Amidah** ( "standing prayer", or *T'filah* – "prayer", also known as *Sh'moneh Esray*).

- a. *Avot* – the Ancestors.
- b. *G'vurot* – God's power.
- c. *Kedushat Hashem* – God's holy name.
- d. *Kedushat Hayom* – Holiness of the day.
- e. *Avodah* – Service.
- f. *Modim* – Giving thanks.
- g. Prayer of Peace (*Shalom Rav* (evenings) or *Sim Shalom* (mornings)).
- h. May conclude with singing *Oseh Shalom* or *Yih'yu l'ratson*
- i. *Mi Shebeirach* – Prayers for healing. They can be followed by the prayer for celebrating wonderful moments of the week/month: *Sh'hecheyanu*. If there is a Torah reading the *Mi Shebeirach* is usually said then.

**NOTE:** This is the place in a Friday evening service where a *D'var Torah* or discussion would be held when there is no Torah service.

#### **4. Torah Service:**

- a. Removing the Torah from the Ark.
- b. Procession with the Torah.
- c. Blessings before and after reading from the Torah.
- d. Reading from the Torah. (After reading from the Torah, before the last *Aliyah*, *Mi Shebeirach* may be said here.)
- e. Lifting up the Torah
- f. Dressing the Torah
- g. Blessings before reading of the Haftarah.
- h. Reading of the Haftarah.
- i. Blessings after reading the Haftarah.
- j. *D'var Torah* or discussion

k. Returning the Torah to the Ark.

**5. Concluding Prayers:**

- a. *Aleinu* – Prayer of Obligation, concluding with *Bayom Hahu* (On that day the Lord shall be One...) or Adoration.
- b. *Mourner's Kaddish* – In Memory.
- c. *Kiddush* – Blessing over wine (on Friday nights).\*
- d. Concluding song.

\* On Friday nights we begin the Oneg Shabbat with Ha Motzi. On Saturday mornings the Kiddush and Ha Motzi follow the service.