

## Returning the Torah

Returning the Torah to the ark may be a bittersweet moment. On the one hand, we may feel satisfaction that we have been instructed through the Torah service, that we have read its teaching and engaged with it; on the other hand, we may feel that we have not had enough, that a friend is leaving us, as if returning home after having spent just an hour with us. Perhaps that is why so many of the verses chosen for this moment are those of longing—longing for redemption, longing for a time gone by. Equally, there is the knowledge that the Torah is a scroll, that there are chapters now hidden that have yet to be unrolled. What we have glimpsed is only a partial view of the Teaching; more is yet to be revealed.

*The Torah scroll is placed in the ark. Personal meditations, such as those found on page 169, may also be recited here.*

Whenever the ark was set down, Moses would say:

ADONAI, may You dwell among the myriad families of the people Israel.

Return, ADONAI, to Your sanctuary, You and Your glorious ark.

Let Your priests be robed in righteousness,

and Your faithful sing for joy.

For the sake of David, Your servant,

do not turn away from Your anointed.

► I have given you a precious inheritance:  
do not forsake My teaching.

It is a tree of life for those who grasp it,  
and all who hold onto it are blessed.

Its ways are pleasant, and all its paths are peace.

Turn us toward You, ADONAI, and we will return to You;

make our days seem fresh, as they once were.

► *Ki lekah tov natati lakhem, torati al ta-azovu.*

*Etz hayim hi la-mahazikim bah, v'tom'kheha me'ushar.*

*D'rakheha darkhei no-am, v'khol n'tivoteha shalom.*

*Hashiveinu Adonai eilekha v'nashuvah, hadesh yameinu k'kedem.*

*The ark is closed.*

## Hatzi Kaddish

*Leader:*

May God's great name be exalted and hallowed throughout the created world, as is God's wish. May God's sovereignty soon be established, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the days of all the house of Israel. And we say: *Amen*.

*Congregation and Leader:*

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!

*Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almaya.*

*Leader:*

May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, *b'rikh hu*, is truly [on *Shabbat Shuvah* we add: far] beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world.

And we say: *Amen*.

*The Torah scroll is placed in the ark. Personal meditations, such as those found on page 169, may also be recited here.*

ובנחה יאמר: שובה יהוה רבבות אלפי ישראל.

קומה יהוה למנוחתך, אתה וארון עזך.

בהניך ילפשו צדק, וחסידיך ירננו.

בעבור דוד עבדך, אל תשב פני משיחך.

◀ כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם, תורתי אל תעזבו.

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה, ותמכיה מאשר.

דרכיה דרכי נעם, וכל נתיבותיה שלום.

השיבנו יהוה אליך ונשובה, חדש ימינו בקדם.

*The ark is closed.*

## חצי קדיש

*Leader:*

יתגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא, בעלמא די ברא, פרעיותה,

וימליך מלכותה בחייכון וביומיכון ובחיי דכל בית

ישראל, בעגלא ובזמן קריב, ואמרו אמן.

*Congregation and Leader:*

יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא.

*Leader:*

יתברך וישתבח ויתפאר ויתרומם ויתנשא

ויתהדר ויתעלה ויתהלל שמה דקדשא, בריך הוא,

לעלא מן כל- [לעלא לעלא מכל- [on *Shabbat Shuvah* we substitute:

ברכתא ושירתא תשפחתא ונחמתא דאמירן בעלמא,

ואמרו אמן.

**WHENEVER THE ARK WAS SET DOWN** יאמר ובנחה Numbers 10:36. As the Torah completes its circuit through the synagogue, we recall Moses' words when the people finished a stage in their journey through the wilderness and came to rest in a new camp. This verse and the ones that follow (Psalm 132:8–10 and Proverbs 4:2) can also serve to refer to our own inner journey: we are accompanied now by Torah.

Only the first and last verse are recited in all rites; the others were added in many communities in the late Middle Ages.

**IT IS A TREE OF LIFE FOR THOSE WHO GRASP IT** עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה Proverbs 3:18. The Torah handles are called *atzei hayim*, "trees of life," and this verse is the source of the custom of holding on to them as we recite the *b'rakhot* over the Torah. Thus, by studying Torah and by physically holding on to it, we both figuratively and literally "grasp" the tree of life.

**ITS WAYS ARE PLEASANT, AND ALL ITS PATHS ARE PEACE** דרכיה דרכי נעם וכל נתיבותיה שלום Proverbs 3:17. In their context, these

two verses from Proverbs refer to wisdom, *hokhmah*. The ancient rabbis associated wisdom with Torah. As we put away the Torah, we pray that our study of Torah should provide us with the wisdom to promote a life characterized by pleasantness and the pursuit of peace.

**TURN US TOWARD YOU, ADONAI** יהוה אליך. Significantly, this final verse is taken from Lamentations (5:21), the book of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem. We end the Torah service with a prayer for the reconciliation of God and Israel.