

# Temple Israel of Natick

## A Guide to the Shabbat Morning Service

### Introduction

Shabbat shalom and welcome to Temple Israel of Natick! We are delighted that you have chosen to join us this morning. We have prepared this guide to our Shabbat morning service to enhance your worship experience. We invite your comments about our service and this guide.

### Temple Israel of Natick

Temple Israel of Natick is a vibrant Conservative synagogue founded in 1944. Our synagogue is not only a place of worship, but also an active center for Jewish education and religious and social activity. Our Shabbat service is informal but traditional, with most prayers recited in Hebrew. We are an egalitarian congregation, that is, both men and women participate actively in the service, and are counted toward the *minyan*, a quorum of ten Jewish adults (over age 13) needed for communal prayer. Jewish and non-Jewish males of all ages should wear a *kippah* (head covering) when in the sanctuary. Jewish adults also wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl). Many women as well as men fulfill this *mitzvah* (religious commandment). Head coverings and prayer shawls are available near the entrance to the main sanctuary.

### General Comments About Jewish Worship

Public worship draws upon the energy of a congregation singing and praying, but not always together. At times, the *Hazzan* (cantor) will lead us in singing congregational prayers; at other times he will set the pace, while we chant, meditate or read, on our own. If you are new to or are unfamiliar with Jewish prayer, relax, and allow yourself to hum, tap, or pray using the English text, or your own words. Allow yourself to be carried by the prayers of others. May your heart be opened and your spirit renewed through your presence with us!

Our Rabbi is an ordained religious leader who is appointed to his position on the basis of knowledge and training. He conducts the service and comments on the Torah portion. Our *Hazzan* (cantor), is trained in liturgy and music, leads the congregation in prayer using some melodies that are unique to Temple Israel and others that are used by many congregations around the world. Hebrew, the ancient and sacred language of the Jewish people, is used throughout the service. At certain points during the service, the entire congregation rises, usually because the ark is open, the Torah is being carried, or the prayer being recited is especially solemn.

### Shabbat Morning Service Organization

The Shabbat (and Festival) morning service consists of five sections: a) *Pesukay Di-Zimra* or Verses of Song; b) *Shacharit* or Morning Service; c) Torah Service; d) *Musaf*, or Additional Service; and e) concluding prayers.

#### A) *P'sukay D'Zimra* or Verses of Song - Pages 83-106

This opening section consists of selections from the Bible, primarily the psalms, and is intended as a "warm up" or prelude to the succeeding sections. Just as a person prepares for extensive physical activity, so too one prepares for spiritual activity. A central theme of this section is the sense of gratitude we feel for being alive and the awe and wonder that can be discovered in the every-day. It culminates with the "Song of the Red Sea," for which we stand up, reminding us that our ancestors' passage from slavery to freedom mirrors our own daily transformation.

#### B) *Shacharit* or Morning Service - Pages 107-122 (Shabbat; 107-130 on Festivals)

**Pages 107-111:** These passages present two themes: creation and revelation. The first blessing suggests the majesty of God's creation, and the idea that we are God's partner in an ongoing process of creating and improving the world. The second blessing suggests that Torah, through which God reveals moral and ethical guidelines for living, is an expression of God's love for the Jewish people, and by extension, for humanity.

**Pages 112-113:** The previous two blessings are a preparation for the most famous of Jewish prayers, *Sh'ma Yisrael*. The *Sh'ma* consists of 3 Biblical paragraphs that affirm the unity of God, thereby affirming a universal moral order. It affirms the covenant between God and the Jewish people and the Jewish people's unique commitment to living a life of *mitzvot*. The melody to which these paragraphs are sung is that which is usually reserved for chanting from the **Torah**. During the final/third paragraph (*Vayomer*), men and women wearing a *tallit* kiss the four *tzitzit* (fringes) when the word is "*tzitit*" is recited.

**Pages 113-114:** The blessing that follows the *Sh'ma* focuses on the theme of redemption. It expresses the conviction that God can be experienced as a redeeming force in the world today, just as God redeemed the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt.

**Pages 115-122 (Shabbat: 123-130 Festivals).** The *Amidah* (literally, "standing prayer") is first said individually. This "silent" *Amidah* provides an opportunity for personal prayer, reflection or meditation. Following the private rendition of the *Amidah*, the Chazzan repeats the entire *Amidah* aloud, with the congregation joining in the singing of selected passages. The

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prayer on **page 116** (124 on Festivals) is the *Kedushah*, a vision of angels singing to God, declaring God's holiness. The passages on **page 117** contain blessings about the Sabbath and the relationship between God and the Jewish People. The *Amidah* ends with the prayer *Sim Shalom*, a prayer for peace.

### C) Torah Service - Pages 139-154

The Torah Service begins with a processional in which the Torah scroll is carried around the sanctuary, demonstrating our respect and love for the Torah. Seven people are then called up for an *aliyah* (meaning "to go up"). Each honoree is called by their Hebrew name, and then says a blessing thanking God for giving the Torah to the Jewish People. Between the two parts of the blessing, a section of the Torah portion is read. Two *gabbaim* (guardians) stand on either side of the reading table; one calls out the names of those receiving honors and the other announces the beginning page/verse. During the Torah Service, prayers are also offered for the sick, as well as on behalf of those who are celebrating milestone events. These milestone events may include an upcoming wedding or anniversary, or a baby receiving a Hebrew name, or a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At the beginning of the Torah Service, the Rabbi or offers a brief commentary on the portion being read that morning.

At the end of the Torah reading, a concluding passage called the *maftir* is recited. A special honoree, such as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, is called for the *maftir aliyah*. The Torah is then raised and covered (robed), following which the *haftarah* is chanted. The *haftarah* is taken from the Biblical writings of the prophets and often echoes the theme of the Torah portion. Following the *haftarah*, the Rabbi often leads a more extensive discussion or commentary. The Torah scrolls are then carried around the sanctuary a second time and returned to the Ark.

Each of the five books of the Torah is divided into weekly portions (*parashot*). There are a total of 54 portions in the Torah. Each Shabbat morning, the next *parsha* in the cycle is read, so that the entire Torah is read in the course of one year. Customarily, all synagogues are reading from the same portion each week. The cycle of Torah portions is interrupted only when a festival/holiday falls on Shabbat. When this occurs, a passage related to the holiday is substituted in place of the regular reading. While one Torah scroll is read for most Shabbat mornings, two scrolls are used on special occasions when we read from two different sections of the Torah.

The Torah is handwritten by a scribe (*Sofer*), who writes the Hebrew letters with a quill using special ink. The scroll is written without vowels or punctuation marks. The reader prepares the reading in advance by memorizing special cantillation markings. These indicate how the ancient melody of the Torah readings should be chanted.

The Torah scroll is not an object of worship, though it is the holiest thing in Judaism. As a sign of love and respect, it is covered with a special mantle, adorned with silver ornaments, and kept inside the Ark when not being used.

### D) Musaf or Additional Service- Pages 155-163 (Shabbat; 166-180 on Festivals/Rosh Hodesh)

In ancient times, sacrifices were offered at the Temple in Jerusalem, with an extra, Biblically ordained sacrifice, called the *Musaf* (or "additional"), offered on Shabbat. As a remembrance of this practice, the Rabbis added the *Musaf* liturgy.

The *Musaf* service consists almost entirely of the *Amidah* (standing prayer). The beginning and endings sections of the *Musaf Amidah* are the same as the *Shaharit Amidah*. The middle section recalls the practice of Temple sacrifice.

Conservative Jews often interpret the *Musaf Amidah* as a prayer expressing the hope that we attain devotion and loyalty to Jewish living as our ancestors did, and that Jerusalem be restored to the center of our religious life.

**Pages 156-157** (166-167 on Festivals and Shabbat Rosh Hodesh): The opening blessings of the *Amidah*, followed by another version of the *Kedusha*, the prayer of God's holiness as envisioned by angels.

**Pages 158-161** (168-178 on Festivals and Rosh Hodesh): The remaining blessings of the *Musaf Amidah* are said individually by the congregation. This is another opportunity for personal prayer. (Sometimes the entire *Musaf Amidah* is said silently first and then followed by the *Chazzan's* repetition with the congregation joining in the singing of selected passages).

### E) Concluding Prayers - Pages 181-187

**Page 182:** *Ein Keloheinu* - A liturgical poem that celebrates the incomparable nature of God, is sung by the congregation.

Page 183: *Aleinu* - This prayer, which comes at the end of all Jewish worship services, says that we hope for the day when the inhabitants of the world will recognize God's majesty and help to foster peace and justice.

**Page 184:** *Mourner's Kaddish* - The *Kaddish* prayer is the mourner's symbolic statement of faith that the world can still be a good place even in the face of death. The prayer praises God and contains no references to death.

**Page 187:** *Adon Olam* - This liturgical poem, which outlines classical philosophical statements about God, is the final prayer of the service, and sung as a congregational hymn. Children are invited to join the Rabbi on the *bima* for this. The service ends with a benediction offered by the rabbi, followed by a blessing over wine and *challah* (bread).