

HOW TO MAKE ALIYAH TO THE TORAH

It is a great honour to be given an aliyah when the Torah is read in the synagogue, and it is important to fulfil this *mitzvah* (commandment) with dignity, both out of respect for God and Torah, and out of respect for the congregation, on whose behalf you will be blessing the Torah. Hence it is important to be familiar with the ritual of the aliyah and practice reciting the blessing aloud prior to the occasion, if the blessing is not familiar to you. Here you will find a description to help you. 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). In most congregations, it is customary to wear a *tallit* when called to the Torah.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- After your name has been called, go up to the Torah, to the left side of the reader. After the *Baal Koreh* (Torah reader) has shown you the place about to be read, touch it with the *tzitzit* (fringes) of your *tallit* (or with the spine of your siddur). The scroll will next be rolled together. Stand behind the Torah scroll and say the Blessing Before the Reading of the Torah. Then move to the left of the *Baal Koreh* so the Torah can be read.
- After the reading, recite the Blessing After the Reading of the Torah. Then move to the right side of the reader for the next aliyah.
- Following the next aliyah, you may go back to your seat. People will say to you *Yasher koach*, “May you be strengthened.” You should respond with *Baruch tihyeh*, “May it be blessed.”

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

In order to be called to the Torah, the *Baal Koreh* (Torah Reader) will want to know your Hebrew name (_____ son/daughter of _____ and _____).

Some people descend the *bimah* backwards so as not to turn their back on the Ark – like exiting from an audience with the king.

Some people hold the *etz chaim* while reciting the blessing and actually raise the scroll slightly on the word *Torahto*.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

<i>Aliyah</i>	going up to the Torah, a Torah honour (also means emigrating to Israel).
<i>Baal koreh</i>	Torah reader
<i>Etz chaim</i>	Torah roller
<i>Gabbai</i>	The person in a synagogue who makes things run smoothly during the services by assigning <i>aliyot</i> (plural of aliyah) and corrects the mistakes of the person reading the Torah.

Sourced from:

Code of Jewish Law (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 139–141); Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 31b–32a