



GUIDE ON RECEIVING A MITZVAH AT HAMPSTEAD SYNAGOGUE

Whether you are an old hand looking for a reminder - or are new to the whole experience - this guide should let you know what you need to do to perform your mitzvah. If you are in doubt however, the HO's will be on hand to give advice.

Those given a mitzvah should wear a tallith and spares can be found at the back of the shul if required.

Page references are to the Sacks (dark green) siddur.

Peticha (Opening and Closing the Ark)

There are three main reasons for opening and closing the Ark and you need to be clear which **one** you will be performing. Take your prayer book with you.

1. PETICHA FOR READING OF THE LAW

When the Reader starts "Ein Kemocha" (p.404), make your way to the gate doors of the Ark. Stand on one side and your counterpart will take the other.

Once "Vayehi binso'a" (p.406) starts, open the gate doors.

If you are standing on the left side as you face the Ark:

1. Pull the cord to open the curtain.
2. When the Reader approaches the Ark, hand him the Sefer. For Shabbat, this is usually the Haringman sefer – it has the "Haringman" name on it! (The HO's will advise on other occasions)
3. The Reader will turn and bow to the Ark and then start back to the Bimah. At this point, close the curtain.

Both men performing Peticha should close the gate doors and follow the procession behind the rabbi. Once the procession reaches the Bimah, make your way back to your seat. Don't disappear! You have to help put the Sefer back into the Ark after the Reading of the Law.

Once "Ashrei" (p.426) starts, make your way back to the Ark once again.

As the Reader starts "Yehalelu" (p.428), open the gate doors and curtain as before. The Reader will bring the Sefer back to the Ark and hand it to the person on the left so he can place it back in the Ark.

Remain standing by the Ark until the Reader finishes "Uvnucho Yomar" (p. 432) when you then close the curtain and gate doors. Proceed back to your seat via the HO's box.

2. PETICHAH FOR “ANIM ZEMIROT”

When “Aleinu” (p.454-456) finishes, make your way to the Ark and stand at one side or the other in front of the gate doors.

Once the Mourner’s “Kaddish” (p.456) is finished, open the gate doors. If you are standing on the left side as you face the Ark, you will see a pull cord; pull this to open the curtain.

Once the Reader finishes “Anim Zemirot”, close the curtain and gate doors. Remain standing by the Ark until the Mourner’s “Kaddish” is completed. Then go back to your seat via the HO’s box.

3. PETICHA FOR OTHER INSTANCES

When the Reader comes to the end of the prayer prior to the one set out on your mitzvah card, make your way to stand at one side of the Ark - your counterpart will take the other side.

(i) If the gates are closed:

Once the Reader finishes the previous prayer, and before he commences the relevant prayer:

Open the gates.

If you are standing on the left side as you face the Ark, pull the cord to open the curtain.

Close the curtain when the prayer is complete. Close the gates and return to your seat via the HO’s box.

(ii) If the gates are open:

Once the Reader finishes the previous prayer, and before he commences the relevant prayer:

If you are standing on the left side as you face the Ark, pull the cord to open the curtain.

Close the curtain when the prayer is complete. Return to your seat via the HO’s box.

(iii) If the curtain is open:

Be in place at the gates of the Ark as the Reader finishes the previous prayer. Once ‘your’ prayer ends, simply return to your seat via the HO’s box.

Second Sefer Torah for Festivals and Shabbat Rosh Chodesh

When the Reader starts “Ein Kemocha” (p.404), make your way to the stairs directly in front of the Ark. Once joined by the Reader, follow him when he walks up to the doors of the Ark to receive the first Sefer Torah. You will be handed the second Sefer Torah, after which turn to face the congregation and wait for the Reader to start back to the Bimah. The Reader will bow to the Ark before he moves back – you should do the same.

Follow behind the Reader. When you reach the Bimah sit down with the Sefer on the row immediately behind the Bimah on the left hand side, facing the Ark. When the portion before Maftir is finished, take the Sefer up to the Bimah, place it there and return to the seat on the left hand side.

After the Haftarah, the Reader will ask for one of the Sifrei Torah and you will take the other one. It is usual to take the one you did not originally carry. Stand with the Sefer, and then follow the Reader as he proceeds to the Ark. After the Reader hands back the Sefer, do the same with the one you are holding. Remain standing at the foot of the Ark until the gate doors are shut, when you may then proceed back to your seat via the HO's box.

Receiving an Aliya ("Call Up")

Once your name (in Hebrew followed by your English surname) is called, go up to the right side of the Bimah as you face the Ark. The Leyner will open the Sefer and show you where he will start reading; touch the word he points at with the tzitzit of your tallith and then kiss your tzitzit.

You should then close the Sefer and hold both scroll handles as you then read the blessing (this can be found to the side in Hebrew and transliterated versions). Remain holding the Sefer with your right hand and remain standing by the Leyner while he reads the portion. Once finished, touch the last word as indicated with your tzitzit and kiss your tzitzit as before. Read the final blessing and then move to the left hand side of the Bimah. You should remain there until the person called up after you has read the final blessing after their portion has been read. At this point leave the Bimah and go and shake hands with the HO's in the box before returning to your seat.

Hagbah (Raising the Sefer Torah)

When the Leyner reaches the end of the maftir portion, head up to the Bimah and wait until prayers for sick members and missing Israeli soldiers are read. The cover will be taken off the Sefer Torah, and which point take hold of the Sefer Torah and open it up (try to show at least three columns). Lift up and show the Sefer Torah to all sides of the shul. Walk (carefully!) backwards off the Bimah to your right (left if doing the second Sefer Torah) as you face the Ark and sit down on the seat provided. The person doing Gellilah will scroll the Sefer closed when you are seated.

Where there are two Sifrei Torah, those doing Hagbah should be aware of the following timing changes:

If doing the first Sefer Torah, approach the Bimah when the Leyner finishes the portion immediately before Maftir and lift the Sefer Torah after Kaddish is read.

If doing the second Sefer Torah, approach the Bimah after Maftir as normal.

Hold on to the Sefer Torah while it is being dressed, and remain seated holding the Sefer Torah while the Haftarah is being read. When the Rabbi begins the Prayer for the Royal Family (P.420), stand up with the Sefer Torah and take it to the Bimah. Stand there holding the Sefer Torah until the Reader asks for it following the memorial prayers. Hand it to him and stand back from the Bimah, but don't go back to your seat!

Where there are two Sifrei Torah, if you have the smaller Sefer, hand it to the Reader. If you are holding the larger Sefer, give it to the congregant performing "Second Sefer"

Join the procession behind the person who read the Haftarah and follow it to the Ark. Once the Ark is closed, walk back to your seat via the HO's box.

Gelilah (Dressing the Sefer Torah)

When the Leyner reaches the end of the maftir portion, head to the seats on the right of the Bimah as you face the Ark - you will see the mantle, breastplate and finials (bells) on the correct seats. Stand and wait for the person doing Hagbah to sit down.

Help to roll the scrolls shut and put the binder on. Then put the mantle on, then the breastplate, the Yad (pointer) and finally the finials/bells.

Where there are two Sefers, those doing Gelilah should be aware of the following timing changes.

If doing the first Sefer, approach the Bimah when the Leyner finishes the portion immediately before Maftir.

If doing the second Sefer, approach the Bimah after Maftir as normal.

Sit next to the person holding the Sefer and remain there until the Reader walks back to the Ark. Join the procession behind the person who has done Hagbah. Follow the procession back to the Ark. Once the Ark is closed, walk back to your seat via the warden's box.

Glossary

Aliya

lit. Call-Up

Bimah

central platform in the synagogue

Gelilah

person who dresses the Sefer Torah

Haftarah

reading from the sayings of the Prophets

Hagbah

person who raises the Sefer Torah

Kaddish

special prayer sanctifying the name of the Almighty

Leyner

person who reads from the Sefer Torah

Maftir

last portion of the Reading of the Law before the Haftarah

Mitzvah

lit. Good deed. In this context, honour.

Peticha

person who opens the Ark

Sefer, Sefer Torah

scroll, Scroll of the Law

Shabbat

sabbath

Siddur

prayer book

tallith

prayer shawl

tzitzit

fringes on the prayer shawl

How-to Videos can be found at: www.hampsteadshul.org.uk/knowledge/videos