

The background of the page is a textured, light brown surface, possibly a scroll or parchment, with faint, repeating Hebrew text in a dark brown color. The text is arranged in horizontal lines and is slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth and historical context. The text appears to be a common Jewish prayer or blessing, such as "שמע ישראל יהוה אחד" (Hear, O Israel: The Lord is one).

WELCOMING SHABBAT

*Your Shabbat guide to
Congregation B'nai Tikvah - Beth Israel*

2016

When we enter the Synagogue building on Shabbat, we refrain from smoking and from using cameras, cellphones, beepers, or pagers within the Synagogue or outside on the Synagogue grounds. We focus instead on creating connections with the Eternal and with each other.

JACOB AWOKE FROM HIS SLEEP
AND SAID, “SURELY THE LORD
IS PRESENT IN THIS PLACE,
AND I DID NOT KNOW IT! HOW
AWESOME IS THIS PLACE! THIS
IS NONE OTHER THAN THE
ABODE OF GOD, AND THAT IS
THE GATEWAY TO HEAVEN.”

GENESIS 28:16

WELCOME TO CONGREGATION B'NAI TIKVAH BETH ISRAEL

CONGREGATION B'NAI TIKVAH-BETH ISRAEL is an active and vibrant non-denominational congregation. We are the result of the merger of two congregations. *B'nai Tikvah* means *Sons of Hope* and *Beth Israel* means *House of Israel*. Our name reflects our commitment to creating a welcoming place that fosters a connection with Judaism as well as mutual support and continued learning. CBTBI is a place for many to engage with Judaism. Our members participate in many ways, including praying at our inspirational services, connecting with other congregants through social activities, volunteering to help children learn about Judaism and Hebrew, and engaging in many other activities.

This guide will focus on the Shabbat synagogue service at CBTBI. Please contact the office for more information on Hebrew school, social action, and our many social activities.

Kabbalat Shabbat, welcoming Shabbat, starts at 7:00 p.m. every Friday and lasts 1 hour. The *Shabbat Minyan* is held every Shabbat morning from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Congregants are encouraged to lead services, read *Torah* (Five books of Moses), chant the *Haftarah* (reading from Prophets), or deliver a *d'var Torah* (sermon) or a commentary on the weekly Torah portion at both

services.

Our services are egalitarian — women and men participate as equals. All men and boys and many women wear a *kippah* (head covering) at all times while in the synagogue as a sign of respect for God. All Jewish men and many women wear a *tallit* with *tzitzit*, a prayer shawl with fringes, during morning services to remind us of our obligations to God. Both head coverings and prayer shawls are available near the main entrance to the sanctuary.

Our services are open and accessible to everyone. Our *siddur, Eit Ratzon*, contains transliteration (Hebrew words written with English letters,) translation, and commentary that can be used for an enhanced prayer experience as well as deeper reflection. It is not required that you follow the prayer leader word for word. If a prayer speaks to you, linger there for a few moments, then rejoin the congregation when you are ready.

Upon entering the sanctuary, you will be greeted with the words, *Shabbat Shalom*, which means, *Have a peaceful Sabbath*. It is also said at the end of the service.

If you are a guest, we are eager to meet you. Please stay after services to join us at the *Kiddush*, where we can talk and answer any questions you might have. We love to answer questions. The only foolish question is the one you

don't ask. The *Kiddush* immediately after the morning service is a festive meal where our congregation gathers informally to continue to celebrate Shabbat together.

OUR SANCTUARY

AS YOU ENTER THE SANCTUARY, the *bimah* is directly in front of you. On the left side, you can see the podium where the rabbi leads services. The podium on the right is where we read the Torah during morning services. When we read from the Torah, the hope is for us to encounter it and make it our own.

The *Aron Hakodesh* (Ark) contains our most sacred possessions, the Torah scrolls. It is located on the eastern side of the sanctuary, towards Jerusalem. Above the ark, you will see an inscription in Hebrew that reads, “Shiviti Adonai l’negdi tamid.” This is from Psalm 16, attributed to David, and it means, “I have set God before me always.”

Above the ark is the *ner tamid* — the “eternal light,” a fixture in Jewish places of worship since the time of the wilderness Tabernacle following our Exodus from Egypt.

On the back walls of the Sanctuary are *yahrtzeit* (memorial) plaques, symbols that our loved ones are never forgotten and are always with us.

On Shabbat we find ourselves simultaneously in two different sanctuaries — a sanctuary in space as described above, and a sanctuary in time. The sanctuary in time is Shabbat. In his classic, *The Sabbath*, Abraham Joshua Heschel observed:

The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things in space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

Our rabbi leads CBTBI's services. Our clergy is committed to making CBTBI a vibrant center of Jewish living and to helping congregants and visitors deepen and renew their connections to God, inspiring us with beautiful melodies to open our hearts to our prayers. The Hebrew word *rabbi* means “my teacher,” and it conveys a rabbi's principal role: to teach *Torah*. Our tradition tells us that more than 2,000 years ago, the prophet Malachi was the last prophet to receive an oracle from God. Since that time, God no longer speaks openly to human beings. Rather, God's word is received through ancient Hebrew sacred texts. Rabbis are not holier than other people, but they are specially educated in the study, interpretation, and teaching of Hebrew sacred texts.

THE SEVEN GATES INTO CBTBI

• *The Gate of Torah* • *The Gate of Prayer* • *The Gate of Israel* • *The Gate of Shabbat* • *The Gate of Redeeming the World* • *The Gate of Building Community* • *The Gate of Teaching Jewish Values to Our Children*

RABBI YOSSI, THE SON OF RABBI Hanina, taught that when God gave the Torah to the Israelites at Sinai, each person heard something different. Every man, woman, and child received a message that reflected his or her unique humanity.

There are Seven Gates into CBTBI — symbolic gates that are connected to the Seven Gates in the ancient wall that surrounds the Old City of Jerusalem. The Seven Gates into CBT-BI symbolize our community's commitment to ensuring that every member has a place in our Synagogue. Whatever your passion, whatever inspires you, it is here. All you have to do is enter. The concept of the Seven Gates honors the diversity within our community. This guide will focus only on the first two as they relate directly to Shabbat.

Through the *Gate of Prayer*, one will find a variety of services all year round. We have Friday night *Kabbalat Shabbat* every week beginning at 7:00 p.m, including a musical shabbat featuring guitar music on the first Friday of each month. This creative and inspiring service enables us to welcome Shabbat,

in the words of Psalm 150, “with drum and dance, with flute and strings.” The music underscores our traditional prayers, yet in the midst of the music and song, there is also quiet time to pause and reflect on the beauty and serenity of our entry into Shabbat. We also have Saturday morning *minyan* every week, including a family friendly service co-led by the rabbi and the Hebrew school, approximately once/month during the school year.

Community members can walk through the *Gate of Israel* by joining the Israel Action Committee or visiting Israel with other congregants or on their own. *The Gate of Redeeming the World* begins with a simple act of grace, whether it be visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, or consoling the bereft. This gate also includes our thriving social-action programs.

Our teachers and parents walk through the *Gate of Teaching Jewish Values to our Children* every day in the classroom, at the Shabbat dinner table, and by modeling meaningful Jewish living. The *Gate of Building Community* leads to Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Book club, card games, music, or connecting with friends at a Shabbat, at the *Shabbat Kiddush* (the festive luncheon after services), and at other social events.

Our rabbis taught that we recite one hundred blessings each day. We begin our service with blessings of gratitude and psalms of praise, and then continue

by engaging the themes of creation, revelation, and redemption through the *Shacharit* (morning prayer) service.

✿ PRAYER: MOVING OURSELVES BEFORE WE CAN APPROACH

I will praise the Lord all my life, sing hymns to my God while I exist.

-Psalm 146:2

OUR PRAYER SERVICE IS A MEANS FOR REACHING OUT to God, drawing closer to one another, and finding a place and a space for reflection on how to lead lives infused with wisdom, compassion, meaning, and purpose. Prayer is a viable path to such self-awareness, communal connection, and closeness to God.

Prayer is the language of eternity. The words we pray today are the words our ancestors prayed thousands of years ago, and we hope they will be the words our descendants will pray thousands of years from now. While so much else in our high-tech, fast-paced world quickly becomes obsolete, our prayers do not.

The traditional language of Jewish prayer is Hebrew, the language of the Bible, of many of our rabbinic sources, and of our people's spiritual yearnings over the millennia. By praying in Hebrew, we connect ourselves with Torah and

with the spiritual vocabulary of our ancestors. Praying in Hebrew gives us vertical connection, linking us to Jews past and present. Praying in Hebrew also gives us horizontal connection, linking us to Jews today all over the world.

Our central prayer, known as the *Amidah*, or the standing prayer, is the same prayer that was recited by Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi (the Land of Israel, early third century), by Rashi (Northern France, eleventh century), by Maimonides (Spain and Egypt, twelfth century), by Rabbi Joseph Karo (Safed, Israel, sixteenth century), and by Nehama Leibowitz (The State of Israel, twentieth century). It is the *Amidah* that our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents prayed. There are two instances of the *Amidah* featured in the Shabbat morning service. The *Amidah* is first recited before the Torah service. If a festival day falls on Shabbat, then Hallel — prayers of praise and thanksgiving culled from the Psalms — follows the *Amidah*. The second, or *Musaf, Amidah* is recited after the Torah is returned to the ark and the sermon has been delivered.

Although Jews in France speak French, Jews in Italy speak Italian, and Jews in North America typically speak English, when we pray we all speak the same language. What if we don't understand Hebrew? The Hebrew for "to pray" is *l'hitpallel*, which means *to judge one's self*. Prayer is about self-reflection as a prerequisite to approaching God. Our prayers must move us before we can

approach God. But before our prayers can move us, we have to understand them.

We invite you to make use of *Siddur Eit Ratzon*, that contains transliterated prayers, found in the pews. You can also enrich your understanding of the prayers in our Shabbat service by consulting the commentaries featured under the line. While learning Hebrew well enough to understand the prayers in the original Hebrew is a worthwhile goal, if your Hebrew is rudimentary or if you are a visitor who is unfamiliar with Jewish liturgy, it is perfectly appropriate to pray in transliteration or follow the English. The rabbis of the Talmud — a collection of Jewish laws and traditions — supported this notion by asserting that the central reading in Judaism, the *Shema*, is acceptable to God in seventy languages.

Rabbi Debra Reed Blank, a professor of liturgy at the Jewish Theological Seminary, has observed that there is a distinction between “prayer” and “liturgy.” Prayer is the spontaneous outpouring of the human heart to God, when our words and feelings break out to our Creator. Liturgy is the structured order of sacred words, which we utter at set times, ideally in a communal setting. Our service offers opportunities for both prayer and liturgy. An example of “liturgy” is the *Ein Keilohenu*, during which the entire congregation can

experience a sense of community by singing the simple, familiar tune together. At the end of the *Amidah* [page 174 or 73], we have an opportunity for “prayer.” Individually, we can share with God our unique hopes, fears, and dreams.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AMEN

IN CONJUNCTION WITH PRAYER, our Sages teach that there is nothing greater before God than the “Amen” that we utter in response to someone’s blessing. “Amen” comes from the Hebrew word *emunah* — faith. It is a concise proclamation of our faith in what has just been expressed through word and deed. When we respond to someone’s chanting of a prayer with the word Amen, it is as if we personally have just said the prayer. Like faith itself, saying Amen conveys our respect, our belief, and our commitment.

OUTLINE OF OUR SERVICES

KABBALAT SHABBAT, “WELCOMING SHABBAT,” refers to the preliminary service for Friday evening created by the Jewish mystics of Safed in the sixteenth century. It appears to be derived from an early rabbinic legend (Talmud, Shabbat 119a): “Rabbi Hanina robed himself in a tallit at sunset on Erev Shabbat

and cried out, 'Come and let us go out to welcome Queen Shabbat.' Rabbi Yannai put on his finest Shabbat attire and exclaimed, 'Come O bride! Come O bride!'"

This tradition is reflected in the most famous hymn of this service, *Lekhab Dodi*. Composed by Shlomo Alkabetz in 1529, *Lekhab Dodi* portrays Shabbat as a celebration of the mystical love relationship between God and Israel. Alkabetz weaves together various biblical verses, stressing the mystical oneness of Shabbat, the prophetic vision of Jerusalem, and God's redeeming love, which is the promise of Shabbat.

In the traditional *Kabbalat Shabbat* service, *Lekhab Dodi* itself comes as the climax to six psalms, Psalms 95-99 [pages 146-140] and 29 [page 151], representing the six days of the week. The themes of these psalms alternate between the imagery of God enthroned as Sovereign over all of Creation and God as Sovereign over all peoples and nations. Following *Lekhab Dodi* [pages 152-153] comes Psalm 92 [pages 154-155], "a psalm of the Sabbath day." Shabbat itself sings out, as it were, its praise of God's lovingkindness and righteousness. In this psalm we find the messianic vision of Shabbat: a world of perfect justice in which "the righteous will flourish like palm trees... fruitful even in old age."

Kabbalat Shabbat concludes with Psalm 93 [page 155], which recapitulates

the ancient tale of Creation and reassures us that Divine calm and security will triumph over the powers of chaos.

Over the years, *Kabbalat Shabbat* has been enriched by the addition of poetry that elaborates on the folklore of Shabbat. Here we include the modern Israeli folk song, *Yaredah Ha-Shabbat*, an idyllic portrayal of the Shabbat spirit entering over the Sea of Galilee, and *Shabbat Ha-Malkah*, a classical modern expression of the Kabbalat Shabbat themes. Finally, there is *Yedid Nefesh*, the sublime mystical love song. In *Yedid Nefesh*, the soul is aching for love, a divine love which will heal all human longings for peace and fulfillment.

✿ EVENING SERVICE FOR SHABBAT AND FESTIVALS

'ARVIT, MORE COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS *MA'ARIV*, the Evening Service, begins with the *Barekhu*, [page 157] a formal call to worship, followed by the two major components of every evening and morning service: the *Shema* and its blessings, and the *Amidah*.

The *Shema* [page 159-161] refers to the Jewish credo of monotheism: “Hear O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal One alone!” In addition to this well-known affirmation of Jewish faith, the *Shema* consists of three paragraphs from

the Torah, the Five Books of Moses, which instruct us: 1) to commit ourselves to our sacred tradition and teach it to our children; 2) to know the global implications of Torah; and 3) to remember to do the *mitzvot* [lit. *precepts*], those tangible expressions of the values in this divine teaching.

In the Evening Service, the *Shema* is bracketed by four blessings. The first blessing [page 157] preceding the *Shema*, *Ha-Ma'ariv 'Aravim* “who brings on twilight,” portrays God as that Power in the cosmos which alters time and varies seasons, “rolling light away from darkness and darkness from light.” From this orderly rhythm of day and night, the poet intuitively perceives a Source of wisdom and understanding.

In the second blessing [page 158] preceding the *Shema*, God's wisdom is translated into the life-giving laws of Torah. Our Torah has given us a path that yields “length of days,” a rich and meaningful way of life. In this second blessing, *Ahavat 'Olam*, “with everlasting love,” we express our gratitude for the divine gift of life, experienced as a token of God's love. Only after we have experienced this divine gift of love can we be commanded in the *Shema* to love God in return, “with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our might.”

Following the *Shema* are two blessings expressing the fulfillment of God's love: *Ga'al Yisrael* and *Hashkivenu*. In *Ga'al Yisrael*, “who redeemed Israel,”

[page 162-163] we recall the redemption from Egypt in the biblical song of deliverance uttered at the Sea of Reeds: “Who among the mighty compares with you, Eternal One!” In the biblical saga of Israel’s redemption from Egyptian slavery we affirm our experience of the God of liberation who from generation to generation “saves us from the power of despots and redeems us from the grasp of tyrants.” In the second blessing following the *Shema*, [page 163] which is unique to the Evening Service, we invoke God’s sheltering and protecting presence: *Hashkivenu*, “Cause us to lie down in peace, and raise us up to life.”

On Shabbat, the *Shema* and its blessings are followed by *Veshameru*, [page 165] “Let all of Israel keep the Shabbat,” a biblical passage which declares Shabbat observance to be an eternal sign of the covenant between God and Israel. On Festivals, the special day is announced by the biblical verse *Vayedabber Moshe*, “Moses proclaimed the set times of the Eternal to the Israelites.”

The *Hatzi Kaddish*, [page 165] marking the conclusion of each unit of prayer within a service, affirms that Godly values abide in the world.

The *Amidah*, “the standing prayer,” [pages 166-174] was composed by the early rabbis as “the Prayer,” par excellence, integral to every service. On Shabbat and Festivals, the *Amidah* comprises seven blessings in which: 1) we link our

own search for holiness with that of our ancestors; 2) we acknowledge God's sustaining powers; 3) we express the holiness of God; 4) we give praise for the holiness of the day; 5) we express our hope for fulfillment; 6) we thank God for the miracles that are daily with us; and 7) we pray for peace. A Talmudic dispute over whether the evening *Amidah* was actually required was resolved by having this prayer recited silently only, without the customary repetition aloud. For the evening service of Shabbat, an abbreviated form of the seven blessings, *Magen Avot*, "Shield of our ancestors," is recited after the silent *Amidah* [pages 175-176].

Following *Magen Avot*, the *Kiddush*, [page 118] a prayer over wine inaugurating the sanctity of the day, is recited on Shabbat and Festivals. *Ma'ariv*, like all services, formally concludes with *Aleinu*, and the *Mourner's Kaddish*.

The *Mourner's Kaddish*, [page 182] like every *Kaddish*, makes no reference to death. It is rather an affirmation that God's name and Godly attributes abide in the world. The primary attribute invoked is that of shalom — "wholeness," "peace," "well-being." When a human being, "created in God's image," dies, then God's image is also diminished. Our re-affirmation of God's presence and shalom is therefore as much for God's sake, as it were, as for our own.

TORAH SERVICE

THE TORAH SERVICE IS THE FOCAL POINT of the Shabbat morning liturgy. We come together to read the Torah as a community. Just as our ancestors did, we read a portion of the Torah from a scroll that has been painstakingly handwritten by a scribe, or *sofer*, on parchment. Each week we read a different Torah portion, thus making our way through the Five Books of Moses over the course of the calendar year.

The Torah is removed from the ark and carried down the center aisle of the Sanctuary. It is then laid out on the podium to be “undressed” and unrolled to the section that we will read. When the Torah is on the podium and not being read, it is covered as a gesture of respect and reverence for this most sacred of Jewish symbols.

Time with and proximity to the Torah is sacred. During the Torah service, we acknowledge special moments and life cycle events, such as naming our children, calling our son or daughter to the Torah as a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, blessing a couple about to be married, and marking a special anniversary or birthday. At this time, we also welcome those who have survived an illness or crisis, or prevailed during a difficult transition to come up to the Torah for a

special blessing.

There are seven *aliyot* in the Shabbat morning service. *Aliyot* is the plural of *aliyah*, which literally means “going up” or ascent. The *aliyot* provide seven opportunities to bless the Torah before a particular section of the Torah portion is chanted. After the fifth *aliyah*, it is our custom to invite individuals from the congregation to offer a *mi shebeirach*, a special prayer on behalf of family and friends who are seriously ill.

At most Shabbat morning services, our rabbis offer spiritual insights and teach Torah at two points during the service. The first instance is called a *d’var Torah*, a series of comments and interpretations between Torah readings. The rabbi’s comments illuminate an aspect of the biblical reading and often integrate the pertinent ideas of ancient, medieval and modern scholars. The second is the sermon.

You will find copies of the *Humash* in the pews so you can follow along in Hebrew or in English as the Torah portion is chanted. *Humash*, derived from the Hebrew word for “five,” refers to the Five Books of Moses, which make up the Torah. Often the rabbi, while explicating a particular text, will invite the congregation to open the *Humash* to a particular chapter and verse, so that we can consider the text together. If you wish to delve further into Torah study on

your own during the service, you will find a number of engaging and lively commentaries throughout the *Humash* in the pews.

Following the Torah service, we lift the Torah scroll before rolling and dressing it. We then read a *Haftarah* portion that comes from the Prophets. The *Haftarah* reading is paired with the weekly Torah portion for thematic or calendared connections to the Torah reading. The *Haftarah* is often chanted by a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. This public reading signifies that a young adult who has turned thirteen is ready to take his or her place in the Jewish community.

After the chanting of the *Haftarah*, we recite prayers for our country and Israel, followed by Psalm 29. The Torah is then carried throughout the Sanctuary so that the entire congregation may touch the sacred scroll before it is returned to the *aron hakodesh*. This is similar to the procession when the Torah is initially removed from the ark. Very often, you will see people touch the Torah with the fringes of a *tallit* or a *siddur* and then kiss those objects. This is a gesture of reverence and love for the Torah.

After the Torah is returned to the *aron hakodesh*, one of our rabbis delivers a sermon, taking a sacred text and drawing from it a lesson germane to our time or examining a current event in a spiritual context. The rabbi's sermon reflects the energy and spirit of inquiry and prayer.

❁ CONCLUSION OF THE SERVICE

WE CONCLUDE OUR SERVICE WITH *Ein Keilohenu* (a classic hymn extolling the power and might of God), *Aleinu* (a prayer which begins with an affirmation of our responsibility to acknowledge God's presence and concludes with a vision of a world united in God's praise), and the Mourner's Kaddish (recited by those who have lost a close relative within the past year, or are observing the anniversary of the death of a loved one), followed by *Adon Olam* (a traditional hymn focusing on our relationship with God which concludes our service).

Children are invited onto the *bimah* to lead *Adon Olam* with the Rabbi and receive candy so that they leave services with the sweetness of Jewish observance on their lips. We then recite prayers over wine and challah — the *Kiddush* and the *Motzi* — just before we enjoy an *Oneg Shabbat*, also called *Kiddush*.

We are delighted that you have walked through the *Gates of Shabbat, Prayer, Torah, and Community* with us this morning. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, The beginning of prayer is praise. The power of worship is song. To worship is to join the cosmos in praising God. Let us join together in praise as we walk through each of the Seven Gates together.





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