

WHAT TO PRAY

WHAT TO PRAY: FOR WHAT TO PRAY

Ask for Ultimate Goal

During personal prayers, ask for the ultimate goal of what you seek, not for the means of getting there.

EXAMPLES

- Ask to find an appropriate spouse very soon (rather than praying to marry a specific person).
- Ask to get a good job (rather than praying to get a specific job for which you will interview).

Praying for a Miracle

You may not pray for a miracle or any occurrence that would require a large deviation from nature.

WHAT TO PRAY: PERSONAL REQUESTS

WHAT TO PRAY: PERSONAL REQUESTS: AMIDA

Where To Add Personal Requests in Amida

You may add personal requests to the amida on weekdays (not Shabbat or Jewish festivals) in these prayers:

- For livelihood:
 - In the amida's 9th paragraph (bareich aleinu), between mi'tuvecha and u'vareich shnateinu.
- For a general request:
 - In the amida's 16th paragraph (shema koleinu), before ki ata shomei'a.
 - Even better, just before saying yihyu l'ratzon.

WHAT TO PRAY: PRAYING FOR SICK PERSON

Yehi Ratzon of Refa'einu for a Sick Person

To pray for a sick person, say the yehi ratzon inserted into the refa'einu (8th) paragraph of the amida on weekdays (but not on Shabbat or Jewish festivals) either:

- When saying the amida (add your request after "makoteinu"), or
- After reciting Tehilim (Psalms) for the sick person (see [Concluding Tehilim with Yehi Ratzon of Refa'einu](#)).

Praying for a Very Sick Person

When you have been praying for a sick person who might have died: assume he or she is still alive until you know otherwise.

Praying for a Sick Non-Jew

You may pray for a sick non-Jew to be healed.

NOTE Use his or her normal (first and last) names in any language he or she uses. It is customary to use the sick person's mother's name.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: SHEMA

SHEMA: MENTAL PREPARATION

Shema: Mental Preparation

When saying the shema, focus on the idea that God is:

- Everywhere,
- Infinite,
- Unique,
- Present now and always.

Witness to God's Uniqueness

We are witnesses to the fact that God is unique, as alluded to in the word "eid"--made up of the "ayin" of shema and the "dalet" of echad.

Love God

We are required to love God with our:

- **Hearts** (Good Inclination--yetzer ha'tov--and Evil Inclination--yetzer ha'ra),
- **Souls** (regardless of whether we are happy with Hashem's decrees or not), and
- **"Much-ness"** (interpreted to mean with all of our material belongings).

SHEMA: WHAT TO WEAR

What To Wear for Shema in Shacharit

Men should wear a talit katan (for married men, also wear a talit gadol) and tefilin in order to say shema in shacharit. However, if none are available, say the shema without them.

SHEMA: WHAT TO SAY

Men and Shema in Shacharit

Men must say shema in shacharit and the blessings before and after.

Women and Shema in Shacharit

Women are not required to say the full shema or the blessings before it. Even if women do not say the whole shema, it is proper for them to say the first line of the shema and baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed.

NOTE If women say entire shema, even though they are not required to do so, it is a mitzva.

Amen before Shema

Some say the pre-shema blessing in shacharit or ma'ariv with the leader. Best is to finish the blessing before the leader does and then reply amen when he finishes saying the blessing.

Baruch Hu before Shema

Don't say baruch hu u'varuch shemo in response to a prayer leader saying the two pre-shema blessings.

Starting Shema before Prayer Leader Says

If you are late to shacharit or ma'ariv minyan and start the shema before the prayer leader has finished saying "emet" at the end of the shema, do not say El melech ne'eman.

SHEMA: HOW TO SAY

Covering Eyes for First Line of Shema

Cover your eyes with either hand when saying the first line of shema. This is to help prevent distraction. There is no need to remove your glasses first.

NOTE Covering your eyes for the shema is a widespread custom, not a halacha.

"Stretching Out" Echad in Shema

Stretch out the first line of the shema by pausing after saying “*echad*” and before saying Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed.

NOTE

- It is incorrect to stretch out the “*chet*” + vowel sound (*chaaaaaad*).
- It is incorrect (and much worse) to say a vowel sound after the “*dalet*” (*echadihhh!*), since that changes the word and by doing so, you are not saying the shema.
- The “*dalet*” stops the sound and should not be pronounced as a syllable.

Kissing Tzitziyot in Shema

Kiss all four tzitziyot in a talit gadol when saying the shema. Just kiss the front two tzitziyot if you only wear a talit katan. Doing either one is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

GA'AL YISRAEL/ HAMELECH BI'CHVODO

Saying Ga'al Yisrael with Leader or Amen

The prayer leader should say out loud the blessing preceding the amida (ga'al yisrael for shacharit; ha'melech bi'chvodo for ma'ariv). If you:

- Are up to where he is in the prayers, say the last blessing with him (and don't say amen but do say amen in ma'ariv).
- Pray slowly and will not be able to join the minyan for saying the amida, you should start earlier than the minyan and catch up at ga'al yisrael.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: PRE-PRAYER

Amida: Bathroom Needs

If you need to use the toilet, you may not say the amida.

NOTE If you could refrain—even with difficulty—from using the bathroom for 72 minutes after you finish the amida, it is OK b'di'avad.

Amida: Intention/Concentration (Kavana)

When saying any amida, concentrate (at least for the first blessing) on the idea that you are standing in front of God (but if you did not concentrate, don't repeat the blessing or the amida).

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: WITH WHOM TO PRAY

Amida: With Whom To Pray

Say *shemoneh esrei* (*amida*) with a *minyan*—ideally starting together. The key is to begin with the other people, even if you will not finish at the same time. You should not begin before the congregation begins saying any *amida*.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: LOCATION

AMIDA: LOCATION: CHANGING

Amida: Location: Moving Away

You may not move from where you began saying the *amida* until you finish the *amida*.

EXAMPLE

You may not get on or off a bus in the middle of saying the *amida*.

NOTE

It is better to say the abridged version of the *amida* (this appears in some *siddurs*) if you do not have time to say it without interruption (but you may say the abridged version only during the summer, since you must say *mashiv ha'ruach* and other additions during the winter).

EXCEPTIONS Walking To Avoid Being Disturbed

You may walk to another place, even in the middle of the *amida*, if you are disturbed or distracted where you are, such as to move away from:

- An immodestly dressed woman or other visual distraction,
- Bad smell,
- Animal, or
- Noise (such as people talking).

Walking To Correct a Mistake

You may walk across the room--even in the middle of the *amida*--in order to look in a book of *halacha* to see how to correct a mistake or omission you made while saying the *amida*.

AMIDA: LOCATION: WHERE TO FACE

When To Face Jerusalem

Face toward Jerusalem when saying the *amida*.

NOTE You may not stand with your back to an ark containing a *Torah* scroll, so you might need to modify the direction in which you are facing.

How To Face Jerusalem

To face Jerusalem, turn toward the “great circle”--the shortest route over the surface of a sphere or the globe (not necessarily eastward). If you don't know which is the correct direction, or if facing toward Jerusalem would make you face improperly dressed people, feces, or other distracting or disgusting items, then focus your thoughts on Jerusalem and face any direction.

Where To Face for Wisdom or Wealth

When praying:

- To gain wisdom, face slightly south.
- To gain wealth, face slightly north.

This is a non-binding suggestion, not a *halacha*.

AMIDA: LOCATION: NEAR SOMEONE PRAYING

Amida: Someone Praying

Don't cross within 7 feet (4 amot, or 2.1 m) in front of someone who is saying the amida, even if there is an intervening chair or other furniture in front of the person who is praying. If you finish before someone who is directly behind you, you must wait for the person to finish his or her amida before you step directly back. However, you may step back on an angle so that you do not end up in front of the person who was behind you.

Amida: Someone Blocking the Way while Praying

You may walk in front of someone who is praying in a doorway or otherwise blocking the way, since they are not allowed to block other people from entering.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: VOLUME

How Loud To Say the Amida

Whisper the individual amida so that you can just hear yourself but people standing near you cannot hear you, whether you are praying as an individual or as a prayer leader (during your private amida).

Amida Phrases That Are Never Said Aloud

These phrases are never said aloud, not in the personal amida and not in the reader's repetition:

- Ki shem adonai ekra
- Adonai sifatai
- Elohai netzur
- Yihiyu l'ratzon imrei phi.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: ACTIONS

AMIDA: ACTIONS: STANDING

Amida: Standing Up

Stand up when saying the amida. Unless you are not able to stand unaided, you may not lean on something if you would fall over if that item were removed.

Amida: Standing with Feet Together

Stand with your feet together to resemble the angels, who only have one leg, during the private amida and for kedusha.

AMIDA: ACTIONS: SITTING

Amida: Sitting for Concentration

You may sit during the amida (and other standing prayers) to avoid distraction, such as when you might be jolted in a moving vehicle or disturbed by people passing in the airplane aisle.

AMIDA: ACTIONS: STEPPING

Amida Actions: Steps Before and After

Stepping To Begin the Amida

After saying ga'al Yisrael, take three steps forward (any size of steps is fine):

- Step forward with your right foot,
- Step forward with your left foot, then

- Step forward with your right foot so that both feet are touching at the heels and at the balls (so that you are standing as if you had one leg, like the angels!).

NOTE Taking three steps backward immediately before taking three steps forward, as instructed in some *siddurs*, defeats the purpose of taking the three steps forward. The purpose of stepping forward is to symbolically approach Hashem. If you step backward and then take your three steps forward, you are back to where you began and have not approached Hashem at all!

If you do not have enough room in front of yourself to take three steps forward when beginning your amida, step back somewhat (at least a few seconds) before you say ga'al Yisrael. There is no need to take three steps back; a single large step that will give you room to take three steps forward is all that is needed.

By making a practice of taking three steps back, people have made the stepping backward part of the entire procedure, and it should not be.

Similarly, once you have finished saying the amida and walked three steps backward, wait at least three seconds before walking forward so as not to defeat the purpose of having stepped backward. Take as many steps as you need to get back to your seat--one step should suffice.

Amida Actions: Stepping Before Kedusha

You do not need to take three steps forward (or any steps at all!) before saying kedusha.

AMIDA: ACTIONS: HITTING YOUR CHEST

When To Hit Your Chest during Prayers

Hit your chest near your heart with your fist at:

- *Chatanu...* and ...*fashanu...* in slach lanu,
- First line of Avinu malkeinu (except on Rosh Hashana),
- Ve'al cheit and ve'al chataim in the al cheit for Yom Kippur, and
- *Ashamnu* on
 - Rosh Hashana,
 - 10 Days of Repentance,
 - Fast days, and
 - Selichot.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: INTERRUPTIONS

Responding to Prayer Leader before Elohai Netzur

SITUATION You have finished saying the final amida blessing “...*ha'mevareich et amo Yisrael ba'shalom*,” but you have not yet said Elohai neztur.... You now need to respond to the prayer leader when he says kaddish, kedusha, blessings, or modim.

WHAT TO DO Quickly say the line “Yihiyu l'ratzon imrei phi...” and then you may reply to all parts of the public prayer, except that you may not say “Baruch hu u'varuch shemo.” Then you may say Elohai netzur.

NOTE If you need to say the mourner's kaddish, say the entire line of Yihiyu l'ratzon imrei phi and then say mourner's kaddish. You may step back at Oseh shalom in kaddish and then, after completing saying kaddish, you may say Elohai netzur.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: ERRORS

AMIDA: ERRORS: TASHLUMIN

Introduction to Amida: Errors: Tashlumin

Introduction to Missed Amida/Tashlumin

If you accidentally miss any amida, you may make up for it (tashlumin)--unless you intentionally missed it.

Amida: Errors: Missed Amida/Tashlumin: Regular Days

Missed Ma'ariv Amida

If you accidentally did not say the amida for ma'ariv:

- Say the normal shacharit amida the next morning with the other men in the minyan.
- Say ashrei.
- When the leader begins his repetition of the amida, say the amida along with him, word for word, including kedusha.
- After saying ha'el ha'kadosh, finish your amida at your own pace.
- If you are not with a minyan, say ashrei and then repeat the shacharit amida.

Missed Shacharit Amida

If you accidentally did not say the amida for shacharit:

- Say the normal mincha amida with the other men in the minyan.
- Say ashrei.
- When the leader begins his repetition of the amida, say the amida along with him, word for word, including kedusha.
- After saying ha'el ha'kadosh, finish your amida at your own pace.
- If you are not with a minyan, say ashrei and then say the mincha amida a second time.

Missed Mincha Amida

If you accidentally did not say the amida for mincha:

- Say the normal ma'ariv amida with the other men in the minyan.
- Say ashrei.
- Say the ma'ariv amida a second time. Skip modim.
- If you are not with a minyan, say ashrei a second time and repeat the ma'ariv amida.

NOTE At the next prayer service, say whatever is the correct amida for that later prayer service, even if it is not the same amida that you missed.

If you miss mincha on Friday, say the ma'ariv service for Shabbat and repeat that amida again.

NOTE Once the time for the next amida has passed, you may not make up the missed amida.

EXAMPLE

If you missed mincha on Thursday, you may only say tashlumin for mincha as long as you may still say ma'ariv, which is daybreak of Friday morning.

Amida: Errors: Missed Amida/Tashlumin: Shabbat/Jewish Festivals

Even if you forgot to say a prayer service on Shabbat and Jewish festivals, say the next prayer service amida and repeat THAT amida to make up (tashlumin) for the one you missed--even if it is no longer Shabbat or the Jewish festival.

EXCEPTION

There is no tashlumin for musaf. However, you may say musaf until sunset, even if you already said mincha.

NOTE If the time for mincha has arrived (½ hour after halachic midday), you must say mincha before saying musaf (but if you could join a mincha minyan later, you may say musaf now).

SITUATION

You miss Shabbat mincha.

WHAT TO DO

Say ata chonantanu in ma'ariv, but only for the first time you say the amida, not the second time (which is tashlumin).

SITUATION

You forget to say ma'ariv on Saturday night.

WHAT TO DO

Say ata chonantanu on Sunday morning in the second amida (which is tashlumin).

If Doubt about Whether You Said Amida

If you are not certain whether you said an amida:

- On a weekday, assume that you did not say the amida and say it anyway. Intend that:
 - If you forgot the previous amida, this makes up for it, and
 - If you did say the previous amida, the second one is a nedava (free-will “offering”).
- On Shabbat and Jewish festivals, do not say the amida twice as tashlumin.

REASON You may not say a voluntary prayer service (nedava) on these days.

Men who intentionally delayed saying shacharit past the fourth halachic hour of the day still say that amida until midday but if they did not say it by midday, they may not say tashlumin. See Minyan: Keeping Pace: Shacharit Minyan.

AMIDA: ERRORS: AMIDA ADDITIONS

INTRODUCTION: AMIDA: ERRORS: AMIDA ADDITIONS

Introduction: Amida: Errors: Amida Additions

If you forgot to say, or incorrectly said, a phrase in the amida, you must correct your errors in:

- Mashiv ha'ruach
- Ha'el ha'kadosh
- Tein bracha/Tein tal u'matar l'vracha
- Ya'ale v'yavo (except Rosh Chodesh night).

Do not correct errors in other additions/changes if you have already said the blessing for that paragraph, such as:

- Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Ten Days of Repentance changes (except ha'melech ha'kadosh)
- Al ha'nisim
- Aneinu
- Ya'ale v'yavo (if Rosh Chodesh night).

NOTE You may correct any prayer error within 2.5 seconds of making it.

NOTE If you omitted part of the amida that would normally require you to repeat the amida, you do not need to repeat the amida if you intend (have kavana/concentrate from the beginning of the reader's repetition until the end of the repetition) to have your amida covered by the reader's repetition.

AMIDA ERRORS: MASHIV HARUACH

Introduction to Amida Errors: Mashiv HaRuach

Saying the seasonal addition to the amida of mashiv ha'ruach... begins at musaf of Shmini Atzeret. The last time it is said is on the first day of Passover in musaf.

Amida Errors: Mashiv HaRuach

What: Mashiv HaRuach

Where: Amida 2nd paragraph

Error: Omitted or said in wrong season

SITUATION Did Not Finish Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must return to beginning of paragraph (Ata gibor...).

SITUATION Already Finished that Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must stop saying the amida and repeat the amida from the beginning.

EXCEPTION If you erroneously said Mashiv HaRuach in a country that needs rain after Passover, don't repeat the blessing and don't return to the beginning of the amida.

AMIDA ERRORS: HAEI HAKADOSH

Amida Errors: HaEl HaKadosh

What: Ha'el ha'kadosh

Where: Amida 3rd paragraph

Error: Said ha'el ha'kadosh instead of ha'melech ha'kadosh on days between/including Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur

SITUATION Already Finished Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must stop saying the amida and start the amida from the beginning.

AMIDA ERRORS: CHONEIN HADAAT/YISMACH MOSHE/TIKANTA SHABBAT/ATA ECHAD/RASHEI CHODASHIM/ATA VICHARTANU

Amida Errors: Chonein HaDaat/Yismach Moshe/Tikanta Shabbat/Ata Echad/Rashei Chodashim/Ata Vichartanu

What: Chonein HaDaat/Yismach Moshe/Tikanta Shabbat/Ata Echad/Rashei Chodashim/Ata Vichartanu

Where: Amida 4th paragraph

Error #1: You Said the Wrong Paragraph on Shabbat or Jewish Festival

EXAMPLES

- You said the weekday version on Shabbat or Jewish festival--or the reverse.
- You began to say the version for a different Shabbat service (say, it is Shabbat mincha and you said the version for Shabbat shacharit).

WHAT TO DO

1) If you erroneously began the fourth paragraph for weekday on Shabbat or Jewish festival ma'ariv, shacharit, or mincha:

Finish the erroneous blessing and then begin the correct version.

2) If you erroneously began the fourth paragraph for weekday at musaf:

Stop wherever you are and say correct fourth paragraph.

3) If you began to say the fourth paragraph from the wrong Shabbat service:

It is OK, b'di'avad.

Error #2 You Said the Wrong Paragraph on a Weekday or at any Musaf:

EXAMPLE

You said the weekday fourth paragraph at musaf for Rosh Chodesh.

WHAT TO DO

Stop wherever you are and say correct fourth paragraph.

AMIDA ERRORS: TEIN BRACHA/TEIN TAL U'MATAR L'VRACHA

Amida Errors: Tein Bracha/Tein Tal U'Matar L'Vracha

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, begin saying Tein tal u'matar l'vracha at ma'ariv of Dec. 4. In a secular leap year, begin saying it at ma'ariv of Dec. 5 (but there might be rare exceptions!).

Where: Amida 9th paragraph

Error: Said tein bracha or tein tal u'matar l'vracha in the incorrect season

SITUATION Did Not Finish Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must return to beginning of paragraph (bareich aleinu).

SITUATION Already Finished that Paragraph

WHAT TO DO

- If you said tein bracha in the wrong season, you may add tein tal u'matar l'vracha in shema koleinu, just before ki ata shomei'a...
- If you said tein tal u'matar l'vracha in the wrong season, you must return to the top of the paragraph.

SITUATION Already Finished Shema Koleinu

WHAT TO DO If you did not correct your mistake in shema koleinu, you must return to the beginning of bareich aleinu.

SITUATION Already Finished Amida (such as you are ready to take 3 steps backward when you realize your error.)

WHAT TO DO You must repeat the entire amida.

NOTE If you said tein tal u'matar l'vracha in the wrong season but you are in a place that needs rain, you do not need to correct yourself or repeat that blessing.

AMIDA ERRORS: YA'ALEH V'YAVO

Amida Errors: Ya'aleh V'Yavo

SITUATION You forgot to say ya'aleh v'yavo in the 15th amida paragraph (retzei) when required on Rosh Chodesh day or chol ha'moed.

STATUS Not Yet Ready To Take 3 Steps Back

WHAT TO DO As soon as you realize that you forgot, return to the beginning of retzei and continue.

STATUS Ready To Take 3 Steps Back

WHAT TO DO You must repeat the entire amida from the beginning.

NOTE If you forgot to add ya'aleh v'yavo on Rosh Chodesh night, even if you just finished retzei when you realized that you had omitted ya'aleh v'yavo, do not repeat the amida.

AMIDA ERRORS: SIM SHALOM

Amida Errors: Sim Shalom

SITUATION It is mincha for a fast day and you said *shalom rav* instead of *sim shalom*.

WHAT TO DO If you realize that you erred before you finish saying that blessing, go back and say *sim shalom*. If you have already finished the final blessing, don't repeat.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: AMBIGUITIES

Tein Bracha If in Eretz Yisrael Cheshvan 7/Dec. 4

If you are in Eretz Yisrael between Cheshvan 7 (when people in Eretz Yisrael begin saying tein tal u'matar l'vracha) and December 4 (when people outside Eretz Yisrael begin saying the phrase):

- Follow your home custom (say tein bracha in the 9th amida paragraph, bareich aleinu).
- Then, add tein tal u'matar l'vracha in the 16th amida paragraph (shema koleinu) between al teshiveinu and ki ata shomei'a.

REASON To cover both situations.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: BEGINNING

Standing for Reader's Repetition of Amida

Ashkenazim commonly stand for the entire reader's repetition of the amida, but it is not the universal custom.

Adonai Sifatai by Prayer Leader

The prayer leader should say Adonai sifatai... quietly before saying the reader's repetition of the amida out loud.

Ki Shem by Prayer Leader

The prayer leader should not say ki shem... at all since some people have the custom of not ever saying ki shem...

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: REPLYING

Replying during Your Private Amida

If you have finished the amida's yihiyu l'ratzon (but have not yet finished the segment from Elohai netzur through u'chshanim kadmoniyot), you may reply to:

- Bar'chu,
- Kedusha,
- Amen to ha'el ha'kadosh,
- Amen to shomei'a tefila,
- Modim anachnu lach (just those 3 words),
- Birkat cohanim, and
- Kaddish.

However, you may not say anything else (such as other *amens*) until you have completed the entire amida (including the last word, *kadmoniot*).

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: KEDUSHA

Say Minyan's Version of Kedusha

At a minyan with a custom different from yours, say their version of kedusha.

Bowing for Kara Zeh El Zeh

Some people bow from side to side for kara zeh el zeh ... but it is not required.

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: PRIESTLY BLESSING (BIRKAT COHANIM)

Birkat Cohanim: Pausing in Private Amida

When the priests/cohanim begin the Priestly Blessing (birkat cohanim), you must pause when saying your private amida and wait until they finish before continuing your praying.

Birkat Cohanim: Seeing Each Other

A cohen/priest does not need to see the congregants and they do not need to see him during birkat cohanim. Birkat cohanim is effective even if you are outside the synagogue when you hear it. But if you are at the front of the synagogue such that you would be behind the cohanim when they turn to face the congregation and say the blessing, you should move far enough so the cohanim will be facing you during the blessing.

Birkat Cohanim: Looking at Priests'/Cohanim's Hands

No one should look at the priests'/cohanim's hands while the cohanim say the Priestly Blessing (birkat cohanim).

Birkat Cohanim: Talit over Child's Head

It is a custom for fathers to cover their sons' heads with their talit while the priests/cohanim bless the congregation.

REASON So the boys do not to look at the Divine Presence (shechina) present at the priests'/cohanim's fingertips at that time.

NOTE The priests'/cohanim's hands should be covered by a talit anyway.

NOTE This custom applies to ANYTIME the priests/cohanim say birkat cohanim, whether on:

- Jewish festivals (the only time the priests/cohanim say this blessing outside of Eretz Yisrael), or
- Daily (as is done in Eretz Yisrael).

Birkat Cohanim: Priest/Cohen in the Room

If a priest/cohen is in the room during the Priestly Blessing (birkat cohanim), he must bless the non-cohanim. If he will not say the blessing, he must leave the room immediately after modim.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AVINU MALKEINU TO PSALMS

INTRODUCTION TO AVINU MALKEINU TO PSALMS

Introduction to Avinu Malkeinu to Psalms

It was not traditional for women or girls to say any of shacharit after the amida, other than saying alenu.

AVINU MALKEINU

When To Say Avinu Malkeinu

Say avinu malkeinu, even if you are praying by yourself, after amida of shacharit and mincha on:

- Public fast days, and
- Between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Avinu Malkeinu on Tzom Gedalia

On Tzom Gedalia, in avinu malkein, say katveinu (not zachreinu).

TORAH READING

TORAH READING: OFFERING/DECLINING ALIYA

Consecutive Aliyot for Family Members

Consecutive aliyot (going up to the Torah during Torah reading) should not be given to brothers or to a father and son unless the aliyot are from different Torah scrolls. This is a custom.

Declining an Aliya

You should not decline an aliya, if one is offered to you.

TORAH READING: THE BIMA

Shortest Route to Bima

When you go up to the Torah, take the shortest route to the bima. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

Stand on Bima after Aliya

After getting an aliya to the Torah, stand on the bima until the next aliya has ended. This is to show respect for the Torah and not appear to be running away.

Returning to your Seat after Aliya

When you go back to your seat after an aliya to the Torah, take the longer way around the bima--even if it is inconvenient or you want to avoid someone who is along the way back to your seat.

TORAH READING: SAYING TORAH BLESSINGS

When Saying Torah Blessing

When called to the Torah, either:

- Say the blessing while looking to the side of the Torah, or
- Roll the Torah together before you say the blessing.

How Loud To Say Torah Blessings

Say the blessings over the Torah loudly enough for everyone to hear and respond “amen.”

TORAH READING: WHAT TO DO WHILE ON BIMA

Torah Reading: What To Do While on Bima

The oleh (person who gets the aliya) should lightly hold on to the handle of the Torah.

The oleh should read the Torah quietly along with the reader (ba'al koreh).

TORAH READING: ALIYA DONATION

Donation after Aliya

If you receive an aliya to the Torah on Shabbat and Jewish festival mornings, it is customary give a donation to the synagogue, but you are not required to do so by halacha (and you may not give the donation ON Shabbat!).

NOTE A synagogue may request a donation on Shabbat or Jewish festivals from someone who has received an aliya on Shabbat and may give that person a card to mail in after Shabbat has ended.

NOTE

There is no expectation of giving a donation for aliyot on weekdays or at mincha on Shabbat.

MOURNER'S KADDISH

Responding to Mourner's Kaddish

When answering mourner's kaddish, respond after the person who you hear first.

Late in Joining Mourner's Kaddish

SITUATION All mourners should say kaddish in unison. You are a mourner. When you go to minyan, the other mourners are already saying mourner's kaddish.

WHAT TO DO You may join in as long as the other mourners have not yet said Yihei shmei. But you should join the other mourners wherever they are in the kaddish and not start from the beginning on your own.

More on Mourner's Kaddish

See Mourner's Kaddish.

U'VA L'TZION

Kadosh in U'Va L'Tzion with the Minyan

Say kadosh three times in u'va l'tzion together with the minyan in order to mimic the angels who say kadosh together with other angels.

NOTE You should interrupt what you are saying as long as it is permissible to do so, such as before baruch she'amar or after you have finished your anida.

HALLEL

Saying Hallel with a Minyan

When saying half- and full Hallel:

- It is preferable to say half-hallel with a minyan.
- You do not need to say full hallel with a minyan.

Order of Prayers with Hallel

To say hallel on Shabbat and Jewish festivals:

- You do not need to say full hallel immediately after shacharit.
- You may say musaf and/or hallel after mincha.
- Once it is time for mincha, you must say mincha before saying musaf or hallel (if you have not said musaf or hallel yet).

Timing of Hallel and Musaf

You may say hallel and musaf until sunset.

Hodu in Hallel

In hallel, the congregation repeats the line “*Hodu...*” after each of the four lines that the prayer leader says. Then the congregation says the next line before the prayer leader says it.

NOTE The congregation does not say the line “*Hodu...*” before the leader first says it.

BIRKAT HACHODESH

Announcing the New Month

Each month (except before Rosh Hashana), we say the blessing over the new month (birkat ha'chodesh). On Shabbat morning preceding the new moon, at the end of Torah reading, we announce the coming of the new month (Rosh Chodesh), including:

- The name of the month.
- The day and time the new moon will appear in Jerusalem.
- The day of the week that begins the new month (and sometimes the last day of the previous month).

We say some prayers that ask for good health, prosperity, and other good things.

Announcing Two-Day Rosh Chodesh Starting Shabbat

If Rosh Chodesh will be two days starting next Shabbat, say “Yihiyeh b'yom Shabbat kodesh ul'macharato b'yom rishon.”

TACHANUN

Shacharit: Tachanun: How To Say

See the Tachanun Section in How To Pray in Synagogue.

Shacharit: Tachanun: When Not To Say

Tachanun is related to judgment. Tachanun is NOT said at times of *din*/judgment:

- At night,
- On Tish'a B'Av,
- In a house of mourning, and
- Yom Kippur.

Tachanun is also NOT said at times of *simcha*/happiness:

At mincha before (and certainly not on):

- Shabbat,
- Jewish festivals,
- Rosh Hashana, and
- Rosh Chodesh.

At any prayer service on:

- Isru chag (the day after each of the Jewish festivals),
- Entire month of Nisan.

REASON Nisan has more than 15 days that we omit tachanun, and once we omit it for most of the month, we don't say it at all.

- All of Chanuka, Purim, Shushan Purim, Tu B'Shvat, Rosh Chodesh, and from Rosh Chodesh Sivan until the day after Shavuot.
- Tishrei from shacharit before Yom Kippur until after Simchat Torah (Shmini Atzeret in Eretz Yisrael). Resume saying tachanun:
 - Second day of Cheshvan, or
 - Day after isru chag of Simchat Torah (this is the more prevalent custom among Ashkenazim). Each person should follow his or her family or community custom.

Any time these people are present in your minyan (or in any other minyan in the building) either before a circumcision or while still involved in the brit or meal:

- Mohel,
- Sandak, or
- Father of a boy having his circumcision.

NOTE This even applies to mincha if the brit will take place after mincha.

Any time a groom is present during the first week after marriage.

PSALM OF THE DAY/SHIR SHEL YOM

Shacharit: Psalm of the Day/Shir Shel Yom: Daytime

You may fulfill your requirement of saying Psalm of the Day (shir shel yom) only during the daytime.

PSALM 27/L'DAVID ADONAI ORI V'YISH'I

When To Say Psalm 27/L'David Adonai Ori V'Yish'i

Begin saying L'David Adonai ori v'yish'i (Psalm 27) on the first day (at night) of Elul, not the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul (the 30th of Av). The last day to say this Psalm is 22nd of Tishrei (Shmini Atzeret). This Psalm is recited twice daily, in shacharit after shir shel yom and in ma'ariv after alenu, including on Shabbat and Jewish festivals.

ALENU

Who Should Say Alenu

Any Jew who happens to be in a synagogue should say alenu with the minyan, even if he is not joining the minyan for that prayer service.

When To Say Alenu

There is no time limit on when alenu may be said. Alenu should be said after each prayer service.

PSALMS/TEHILIM

Value of Saying Tehilim

The main value of saying tehilim is not in saying the tehilim themselves, but in the prayer said AFTER saying the tehilim (for someone to get well, for employment, etc.). The saying of tehilim strengthens the prayer enormously.

Concluding Tehilim with Yehi Ratzon of Refa'einu

If you say Psalms/tehilim for a sick person, you should conclude with the yehi ratzon that is sometimes added in shemoneh esrei in refa'einu.

Tehilim Additions to Regular Prayers

Rabbis may have their congregations add Psalms/tehilim or other prayers to standard services.

When To Say Tehilim

Both genders may say tehilim at night without restriction on which tehilim may be said; they may be said all night (or day).

SET PRAYERS: MINCHA

Mincha: Tzidkatecha

Girls and women never need to say tzidkatecha on Saturday mincha.

Mincha: Tachanun

If the minyan gets to tachanun after sunset, say tachanun until up to 8 minutes after sunset but do not put down your head for the first section.

SET PRAYERS: MA'ARIV

Shir HaMa'alot Hinei Bar'chu

Saying *shir ha'ma'alot hinei bar'chu*... before *ma'ariv* is a custom of some people, but it is not necessary.

Bar'chu at End of Ma'ariv

In *Eretz Yisrael*, it is customary to say *bar'chu* again at the end of *ma'ariv*.

NOTE This is not the custom outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, but if someone does say *bar'chu* again, the other people may respond.

When To Respond to Bar'chu

Wait until the leader has finished saying the line, “*Bar'chu et Adonai ha'mevorach*” before responding with “*Baruch Adonai ha'mevorach l'olam va'ed*.”

Saying HaMelech BiChvodo with Prayer Leader

As with the blessing *ga'al yisrael* in *shacharit*, the prayer leader should say out loud the blessing preceding the *ma'ariv amida*: *ha'melech bi'chvodo*. If you:

- Are up to where he is in the prayers, you may say the last blessing with him.
- Pray slowly and will not be able to join the *minyan* for saying the *amida*, you should start earlier than the *minyan* and catch up at *ha'melech bi'chvodo*.

Halachot of Ma'ariv Amida

See [What To Pray: Set Prayers: Amida](#).

When To Say Ma'ariv Psalm 27

Say Psalm 27 after *alenu* during *Elul* and most of *Tishrei*. For more about Psalm 27, see [When To Say Psalm 27/L'David Adonai Ori V'Yish'i](#).

BEDTIME SHEMA

HAMAPIL

HaMapil and Shema: Halacha, Not Custom

Saying “*ha'mapil*” and *shema* before going to sleep is *halacha*, not custom.

When To Say HaMapil

Ha'mapil may only be said at night, even if you normally stay awake all night (such as if you work a night shift).

NOTE The latest time you may say the *ha'mapil* prayer is daybreak (*alot ha'shachar*).

HaMapil When You May Not Fall Asleep

Do not say the *ha'mapil* prayer if you are flying through the night but are not certain that you will be able to sleep.

NOTE This also applies to anytime when you might not fall asleep at night.

If You Cannot Fall Asleep after HaMapil

If you cannot fall asleep after having said *ha'mapil* at night, you may talk, eat, say blessings, etc., but do not say the *ha'mapil* prayer again when you go back to bed.

SELICHOT

Selichot

You may say *selichot* by yourself.

NOTE You may only say the paragraph with God's 13 Attributes/Midot (beginning with *El melech...*) if you are praying with a minyan.