In Judaism, the Torah is often called the *Tree of Life.* The tree, a metaphor for life, holds many lessons that serve as a blueprint for us to live by.

G-d gave Moses the Torah on Mt Sinai. Moses passed it on to the Jewish people, but the Torah is meant for all people. According to the Bible, the prophet Moses received the Torah from G-d on Mt. Sinai, staying on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights.

The Torah is so important to us that we call it a present, a gift from G-d. It’s interesting to note that this special gift was given to Moses, letting us know the Torah is not owned by anyone, but embraced by everyone. The Torah is there to be interpreted any way your heart tells you; there’s no wrong or right way of understanding the sacred writings of the Judaism. There are many ways into G-d.

**The Wise Wizard Says:**
By reading passages from its sacred wisdom, you will discover lessons in its pages that will be helpful. It will act as your blueprint for your life.
Torah Blessings

There are special blessings chanted before and after the reading from the sacred Torah scroll. There are typically 8 Torah readings each Shabbat. The last Torah reading is called the Maftir, meaning in conclusion. Each week of the Jewish lunar calendar, another Torah portion is read. All over the world, the same Torah portions are read linking the Jewish people together like one big Jewish family.

Aliyah: “Going Up”

The honor of chanting these special blessings is called an aliyah, meaning ‘ascending to the Torah.’ Aliyah also refers to Jews who decide to leave their native land and permanently move to the land of their people Israel.

Torah Readings and Blessings

Each Saturday morning, a weekly portion from the Torah, called a parashah, is chanted in front of the congregation using an ancient tune that dramatizes the Torah’s text. The parashah itself is broken down into sections called “aliyot”. Synagogue Members are often honored by being called to the Torah to recite these Torah blessings, before and after each of the aliyot.

Who Gets the First Honor?

Recalling the important role of the high priests who led the ancient Temple service in Jerusalem, it is customary today to offer the first aliyah to a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest. This is called a “Kohein aliya”.

The second honor is given to descendants of the assistants to the priestly class, the Levites* called the Levi Aliyah. All remaining honors are distributed to members of the general Israelite population, called the Levi Aliyah.

DID YOU KNOW?

לְלָה

LITERALLY MEANS "GOING UP" - WHICH CAN MEAN BEING CALLED UP TO SING THESE BLESSINGS, READING THE TORAH, OR MOVING TO ISRAEL!
The Wise Wizard Says:
If you visit any synagogue in the world on Shabbat morning, you’ll find that Jews read from the same Biblical book and Parashat found in the Torah. This shared spiritual experience reminds us that we are all connected to each other as Jews, one long chain of tradition – L'dorVador!!!

Importance of the Torah Blessings
We thank G-d for the special gift of the Torah that we were blessed to receive on Mt. Sinai thousands of years ago. It’s our hope to be able to transfer its sacred wisdom to future generations of our people forever, keeping our cherished faith alive.

ברכחות התורה

How to Perform an Aliyah:

• When your Hebrew and/or English name is announced by the gabbai, or Torah reading assistant, walk directly to the pulpit, taking the shortest route possible.
• Take your fringes (tzitzit) on the corner of your Tallit, touch them to the opening word of the Torah reading in the scroll. Don’t worry, someone will give you a Tallit if you don’t have/own one.
• Then, bring the fringes to your lips, and kiss them as a sign of love and respect for the Torah.
• Stand directly in front of the scroll with both hands on the handles (etz chayim) and chant the blessing before the reading of the Torah.
• Move slightly right to allow the Torah reader (Ba’al Koreh), to chant the portion from the Torah scroll.
• When the reading concludes, touch the scroll with your tzitzit at the final word of the reading, and then kiss the fringes.
• Chant the blessing after the reading of the Torah.
How to Perform an Aliyah:

- When you finish the blessing, remain at the Torah reading table, moving slightly left, while the next honoree performs their aliyah.
- When the honoree has completed the same process, shake hands or kiss them and wish them words of blessing by saying “Y’shar Ko’ach” - “May you be straight and strong” then return to your seat.

**BLESSING BEFORE THE TORAH**

ברוך אתה בַּעֲמָנוּ בָּאֵל שָׁלוֹם וְעֵד דָּוִד בַּעֲמָנוּ בָּאֵל שָׁלוֹם
ברוך אתה בַּעֲמָנוּ בָּאֵל שָׁלוֹם וְעֵד
אַשְּרֵי בָּהֲרֵי בָּנֵי עָם הַעַלֹּם
ונתֶנֶּלָּה הָאָתְתֵיהוּ.
ברוך אתה בַּעֲמָנוּ בָּאֵל שָׁלוֹם וְעֵד.

**Translation of Blessing Before the Torah Reading:**

Blessed are You, O Lord, who is to be praised!
Blessed are You, O Lord, who is to be praised, now and for ever!
Blessed are You, O Lord, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us from all peoples by giving us Your Torah. Blessed are You, O Lord, Giver of the Torah.
Translation of the Blessing After the Torah:

Blessed are you, Adonai, our G-d, King of the universe Who gave us the Torah of truth and implanted eternal life within us. Blessed are You, Adonai, Giver of the Torah.

Salomon Says on YouTube!

If you would like to follow along on the video, then please go to the YouTube and hit the channel HEBWIZ ort Hebrew Wizards. Look for the Torah Blessings and follow along.
Questions:

What do the ideas in this first Torah blessing mean to you...

- “Ruler of the Universe”
- “Giving us Your Torah”
- “Implanting within us eternal life”

Why do you think G-d is viewed as the “Ruler of the Universe”? What other ways would you describe G-d? Explain your answer.

- As a Jew, do you feel that G-d personally gave you the Torah? Explain your answer.
- According to the first Torah blessing, the words of Torah “implant within us Eternal life”...do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer. Do you agree that living according to the commandments, gives us Eternal life? Explain your answer.

- At your B-Mitzvah you will be called to the Torah to recite these Torah blessings, and in that special moment of a lifetime, you will become an adult in the eyes of Judaism, taking on all of the responsibilities of a member of the Jewish community.
- How will you act differently in your new relationship with your community, the Jewish people, and with G-d?

Games & Activities:

- **How Fast Can You Go??!!** Read the Torah Blessings in Hebrew, together as a class. Then, break into study buddy groups and practice reading them with ease and fluency. When you’re ready, read the entire blessing. Try racing under 20 seconds!!
- **Find 10 Hebrew Words You Don't Know!** From the Torah Blessings both before and after find 10 words and scatter them about. Match the Hebrew words with the English ones by creating flashcards; Race against your classmates.
Songs:
- Torah Blessings - prayers
- Eitz Chayim Hi - prayers
- It's a Tree of Life - Debbie Friedman
- Le Dor Va Dor - Josh Nelson
- Ki Mitziyon - prayer
- Hebrew Wizards Family Band - 5 Books of Moses

Wanna Be a Wizard?
Make up your own games, races
And songs to sing. ©hebrewwizards