We rise as the ark is opened.

None compares to you. Psalm 86:8. As etiquette in Europe’s royal courts became more elaborate (12th–14th centuries), the Ashkenazic Torah service incorporated verses emphasizing God’s sovereignty, as if to say that God alone—and no earthly ruler—is the ultimate sovereign. The next verse, “Your sovereignty,” is Psalm 145:13; “Adonai, give strength” is Psalm 29:11.

Adonai is sovereign. This sentence is a compilation of biblical phrases about God’s sovereignty stitched together to form a creed: God has ruled the world since before creation and will continue to rule eternally.

Compassionate creator. This address, followed by a verse that calls for Jerusalem’s reconstruction (Psalm 51:20), is all that remains from prayers for forgiveness that were recited during the Torah service in an earlier era.

As the ark was carried forward. Numbers 10:35 depicts the ark as the seat of divine protection, leading the march and warding off the fledgling nation’s enemies. One interpretation is that upon realizing that it is God whom they are fighting, enemies will flee and warfare will become unnecessary (Abraham ibn Ezra).

Torah shall go forth from Zion. From Isaiah 2:3: “And many peoples shall come and say, ‘Let us go up to the mountain of Adonai, to the House of the God of Jacob, for Adonai shall teach us God’s ways, that we may walk in that path; for Torah shall go forth . . . .” As the ark is opened, we express our belief that Torah contains ideals of ethics, politics, and wisdom that affect all humanity.