The Torah scroll is placed in the ark. Personal meditations, such as those found on page 169, may also be recited here.

Numbers 10:36. As the Torah completes its circuit through the synagogue, we recall Moses’ words when the people finished a stage in their journey through the wilderness and came to rest in a new camp. This verse and the ones that follow (Psalm 132:8-10 and Proverbs 4:2) can also serve to refer to our own inner journey: we are accompanied now by Torah.

Only the first and last verse are recited in all rites; the others were added in many communities in the late Middle Ages.

WHENEVER THE ARK WAS SET DOWN
בְּכוֹנָה עָלָם.

IT IS A TREE OF LIFE FOR THOSE WHO GRASP IT

PROVERBS 3:18. The Torah handles are called atzei hayim, “trees of life,” and this verse is the source of the custom of holding on to them as we recite the brakhot over the Torah. Thus, by studying Torah and by physically holding on to it, we both figuratively and literally “grasp” the tree of life.

ITS WAYS ARE PLEASANT, AND ALL ITS PATHS ARE PEACE

ANDONAI. Significantly, this final verse is taken from Lamentations (5:21), the book of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem. We end the Torah service with a prayer for the reconciliation of God and Israel.