

ערבית: קריאת שמע וברכותיה

We rise as we are called by the leader's words of invitation to prayer. The leader bows when saying the word בָּרְכוּ ("praise") and stands up straight when pronouncing יהוה (Adonai). Similarly, the congregation bows at the word בָּרוּךְ ("praise") and straightens to full height at יהוה (Adonai).

An alternate version of this b'rakhah may be found on the following page.

Leader:

בָּרְכוּ אֶת־יְהוָה הַמְבָרֵךְ.

Congregation, then the leader repeats:

וְ בָרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

We are seated.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבְרוֹ מַעְרִיב עַרְבִים,
בְּחֶכְמָה פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים,
וּבְתַבּוּנָה מְשַׁנֵּה עֵתִים,
וּמַחְלִיף אֶת־הַזְּמַנִּים,
וּמְסַדֵּר אֶת־הַפּוֹכְבִים בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרַקִּיעַ פְּרָצוֹנוֹ.
בוֹרֵא יוֹם וְלַיְלָה,
גּוֹלֵל אוֹר מִפְּנֵי חֹשֶׁךְ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אוֹר.
◀ וּמַעְבִּיר יוֹם וּמַבְיֵא לַיְלָה,
וּמַבְדִּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה,
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ.
אֵל חַי וְקַיִם, תְּמִיד יְמִלֵךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמַּעְרִיב עַרְבִים.

We continue with the Second B'rakhah on page 40.

response is their indication that they are ready to follow the service leader and participate in the service.

WHOSE WISDOM OPENS THE GATES OF DAWN שְׁעָרִים פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים. Some liturgical texts, such as this one, reflect ancient understandings of how the heavenly bodies operate—for instance, this depiction of the sun exiting the sky through gates in the west. Although contemporary science provides us with different understandings, we can still feel an underlying sense of wonder and awe as we too gaze at the setting sun and the star-filled sky. These liturgical images, then, become metaphors for our own understanding of the passage of time, reminding us of the uniqueness of each moment.

THE SH'MA AND ITS BLESSINGS קְרִיאת שְׁמַע וּבְרֻכּוֹתֶיהָ. Every evening service (Arvit) includes two climactic moments: the Sh'ma (page 41) and the Amidah (page 47). The Sh'ma, the affirmation of faith in the one God, has often been called Judaism's essential creed.

Two b'rakhot precede the Sh'ma: the first reflects on God's presence in the passage of time, while the second acknowledges God's love, represented by the gift of Torah, divine instruction as to how we should live. Two b'rakhot also follow the Sh'ma: the first acknowledges the exodus from Egypt, the signal event that has formed us as a people and set us on the path of freedom and responsibility; the second speaks to our concrete concerns for safety in the darkness of night. The Amidah, the silent personal prayer, then follows.

PRAISE בָּרְכוּ. The formal synagogue evening service begins with the leader's call, signalling to the congregation that the moment of communal prayer has arrived. The congregation's