

Raising the Second Torah - Hagbah

“And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people” (Neh 8:5) provides the Biblical precedent for raising a Torah scroll for the entire congregation to view the actual portion of the day. Upon seeing the text everyone can rightfully proclaim “*v’zot ha-Torah*” (this is the Torah [that Moses placed before the Children of Israel]; Deut 4:44). By doing so everyone present is given the opportunity to participate in revelation and link themselves to this tradition begun thousands of years ago.

Some worshipers raise the edges of the *tallit* toward the script and then kiss the *tzitzit*.

While Sephardim (Jews from the Iberian Peninsula) raise the scroll before the Torah is read, this congregation follows the Ashkenazi (eastern European) tradition of doing so after the reading.

What to expect:

1. During the *maftir* (last) reading, please make your way towards the centre of the sanctuary. When the Gabbai calls the honourees for *Hagbah* and *Gelilah*, make your way to the reader side of the Torah.
2. Unroll the Torah so that **at least two columns** of text are visible.
3. Slide the Torah scroll so that almost half hangs off of the table. Push down on the *etzay chaim*, the handles, as you bend your knees and lift the scroll.
4. Hold the scroll open as you turn fully around allowing everyone in the congregation to glimpse the text.
5. Walk up towards the ark, accompanied by the person fulfilling the honour of *gelilah* (dressing the Torah).
6. Sit on the designated chair to the left of the Ark of the Covenant (as you are facing it) and begin to, with the help of the person doing *gelilah*, roll the Torah scroll closed, ensuring that the parchment is taut and safely between the top and bottom disks of the handles.
7. Hold the Torah scroll so that the text is facing you as the person with the honour of *gelilah* fastens the garter, replaces the Torah cover and ornaments before it is then placed on the stand.