

Weekday Maariv Service

I. Basics

The service consists of the following basic elements:

- i. Bar'chu
- ii. Sh'ma
- iii. Amidah
- iv. Aleinu
- v. Mourners Kaddish

In between these components are a few berakhot and kaddishes.

- The service should not be long - generally 15-30 min.
- The leader, when possible, should wear a tallit, but this is not required.
- There are minor variations for a shiva minyan.
- Depending upon the time of day, the mincha service is often led prior to the maariv service. Sometimes a psalm is read in place of the mincha service, followed by a Mourners Kaddish.

II. Chanting vs. Speaking

- The service should be chanted according to the traditional “nusach” or melodies. The quality of the voice is not important, and the words take precedence over the melody.
- The maariv nusach, or melody, is not the same as the mincha nusach or Shabbat nusach, but it is similar to the shacharit nusach.
- The leader need not say every word aloud. Most siddurim identify those verses which the leader, or “shalliach tzibbur” should say aloud.
- Some texts may be read aloud in English, but all berakhot should be chanted aloud in Hebrew.
- One person should lead the entire service, but it is possible for other individuals to read specific prayers or English texts.

III. Maariv Nusach

The melody for the maariv service uses the “ahavah rabbah” mode, which means it generally sounds something like “hava nagila.” However, there are components which have their own, unique melody. Below is a roadmap for the major sections:

Section	Chanting Text	Melody
V'hu rachum	וְהוּא רַחוּם יְכַפֵּר עֵוֹן וְלֹא יִשְׁחִית, וְהַרְבֵּה לְהַשִּׁיב אִפּוֹ וְלֹא יַעִיר כָּל חַמְתּוֹ. יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמְּלִיךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קָרָאנוּ:	Ahava-rabbah
Bar'chu	בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ: בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:	special melody
1st berakha before sh'ma	אֵל חַי וְקַיִם, תְּמִיד וְיָמִיד עֲלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמַּעֲרִיב עַרְבִים:	Ahava-rabbah with special chatima
2nd berakha before sh'ma	וְאַהֲבַתְךָ אֵל תִּסִּיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:	Ahava-rabbah with special chatima
Sh'ma	שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:	special melody; next line silent
V'ahavta	וְאַהֲבַתְךָ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ, וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ....	Torah trope or silent
End of Sh'ma	יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: אֱמֶת	Ahava-rabbah
1st berakha after sh'ma	וּמְלֻכוֹתוֹ בְּרָצוֹן קִבְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם, מִשָּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ עָנוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה, וְאָמְרוּ כָלֶם: מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֱלִים יְיָ, מִי כָמֹכָה נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ, נוֹרָא תְהִילַת, עֲשֵׂה פִלְאָ: מְלָכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בְּנִיךָ, בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לִפְנֵי מִשָּׁה, זֶה אֵלֵינוּ עָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ: יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וְנֹאמַר: כִּי פָדָה יְיָ אֶת יַעֲקֹב, וַיִּגְאֻלוּ מִיַּד חֲזָק מִמֶּנּוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ גֹאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:	Ahava-rabbah with special chatima
2nd berakha after sh'ma (Hashkiveinu)	וְשִׁמּוֹר צִאתָנוּ וּבוֹאָנוּ, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. (וּפְרַשׁ עֲלֵינוּ סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹמְךָ). בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, שׁוֹמֵר עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַד:	Ahava-rabbah with special chatima

Section	Chanting Text	Melody
Additional verses	<p>יִרְאוּ עֵינֵינוּ, וְיִשְׁמַח לִבֵּנוּ, וְתִגַּל נַפְשֵׁנוּ, בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ בְּאַמְתִּי, בְּאַמּוֹר לְצִיּוֹן מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵיךָ. יְיָ מֶלֶךְ, יְיָ מֶלֶךְ, יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שְׁלֶךְ הִיא, וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עֵד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד, כִּי אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּכָבוֹדוֹ, תָּמִיד יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, וְעַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו:</p>	Ahava-rabbah with special chatima
Chatsi Kaddish	וְתִגְדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ...	Ahavah-rabbah
Amidah	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה...	Silent
Kaddish Shaleim	וְתִגְדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ...	Simple minor
Aleinu	עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל...	Special melody
Mourners Kaddish	וְתִגְדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ...	Say it aloud with mourners
Concluding psalm	(choice)	chant ending verse in minor

IV: Resources

The sound file for the maariv service can be downloaded from:

http://www.bethshalomkc.info/hazzan/services/weekday/weekday_maariv.mp3

The text of the maariv service can be downloaded from:

http://www.bethshalomkc.info/hazzan/services/weekday/weekday_maariv.pdf

For commentary on the Weekday Service, see Or Hadash, by Reuven Hammer, Rabbinical Assembly, NY, 2008.