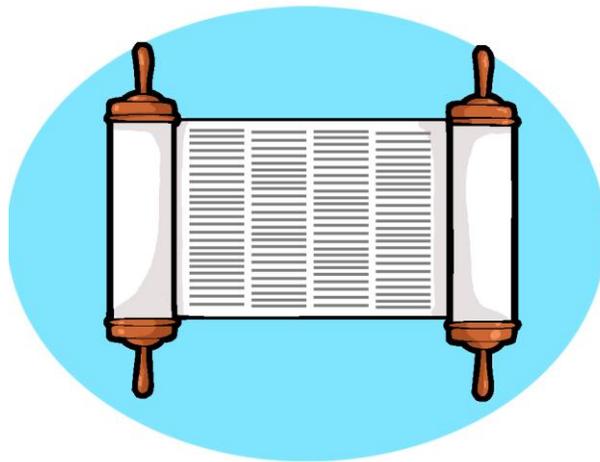


# Celebrating Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Oheb Shalom Congregation



## A Guidebook for Parents

“It’s not about the date...  
it’s about the journey.”



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# **CELEBRATING BAR or BAT MITZVAH AT OHEB SHALOM CONGREGATION**

## **PART ONE: RELIGIOUS and EDUCATIONAL MATTERS**

### **Introduction**

The celebration of Bar or Bat Mitzvah is one of the most meaningful, memorable and joyful parts of being Jewish. It is a time to express hope and confidence in the future as a child marks a transition to a new stage of life. It is a time for family members and friends to gather in celebration. It is a time to take pride in a child's skills and achievements. Most important, celebrating becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a time to honor Jewish values, deepen our ties to the synagogue and the Jewish community and strengthen Jewish identity. We have prepared this manual in the hope that the information and advice offered in it will enrich your Jewish experience as a family and help to make the moments spent in the synagogue on the day of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah meaningful, comfortable, and memorable.

### **What is Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

The term Bar or Bat Mitzvah refers to a Jewish person over the age of 13 who is considered responsible to observe mitzvot and follow a Jewish way of life. Bar or Bat Mitzvah also refers to the ceremony during which a child, through active participation in a religious service, accepts the responsibility to live a Jewish way of life. Because a child formally becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah during a public religious service, it is also a time for the congregation to affirm its acceptance of the child as a Jew with full rights and responsibilities. The celebration after the service is a Seudat Mitzvah, or a meal shared in honor of having performed a sacred religious act.

According to the Mishna (code of Jewish law completed in 200 CE), a child should begin the study of the Bible at age five and the study of Jewish law at age ten, and at age 13 accepts the fulfillment of mitzvot (Pirkei Avot

5:25). This ancient Jewish teaching establishes that by age 13 a child has matured enough to be trusted to follow the commandments of Judaism. While 13 years old was considered the proper age to have the responsibility of living as a Jew, it was not until the medieval period that such privileges were conferred on a child at a public religious service. Today, Bar or Bat Mitzvah is not only the moment when a young teenager becomes eligible to be called to the Torah and count in a minyan, it also marks the time when a child begins to have a serious encounter with Jewish tradition. The teenage years are a time when a young person moves from a perspective of self-interest to considering how he or she can contribute to the community and the world at large. Bar or Bat Mitzvah thus celebrates not a single day in a child's life but the blessing of human growth and potential.

### **Regular Attendance at Shabbat Services**

It is impossible to overstate that regular attendance at Shabbat services is key to making Bar or Bat Mitzvah meaningful. Please consider these points:

- a. Regular attendance at synagogue services will help you to become more familiar with the content and structure of the Shabbat morning service, thus reducing anxiety and nervousness on the day of your celebration.
- b. When parents attend synagogue services with their children, they reinforce the message that preparation for Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a family matter, in which everyone learns and grows.
- c. Attendance at synagogue services will likely lead you and your child to discuss the spiritual aspects of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
- d. Being at synagogue services will connect you to other members of the congregation, including other families celebrating a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Please note that congregants are welcome to attend services every Shabbat of the year – a bar/bat invitation is not required. (Some children are hesitant to attend if they have not been personally invited.)

If you don't attend synagogue services regularly now, please begin to do so. If you aren't able to attend each week, you should develop a regular pattern of synagogue attendance. Oheb Shalom Congregation sponsors Shabbat services for children from birth through sixth grade.

**SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS WHO ARE PREPARING FOR BAR OR BAT MITZVAH SHOULD JOIN THE ADULT SERVICE AT LEAST TWICE A MONTH DURING THE YEAR OF PREPARATION FOR CELEBRATING BAR/BAT MITZVAH.**

We recognize that during the Bar or Bat Mitzvah year, children are frequently invited to attend services at other synagogues. Parents are encouraged to attend services at Oheb Shalom even when the child is invited elsewhere. A lively discussion comparing customs and experiences in different synagogues could take place after the service.

**Jewish Education**

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah requires a commitment to Jewish education. In order to celebrate a Bar or Bat Mitzvah on a Shabbat morning at Oheb Shalom Congregation, a child must be enrolled in and successfully pursue an approved program of Jewish studies each year beginning in the third grade. Enrollment in the Zeman School's kindergarten, first and second grade program is strongly encouraged, as participation in these programs provides an important foundation for future learning, helps get the child accustomed to regular Jewish study, and stimulates family involvement in Jewish learning. The Education Director will inform parents of children enrolled in the religious school if their child's attendance is inadequate. You may need to provide additional tutoring in order to help your child master material required for Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation if s/he misses class too often.

We strongly encourage each Bar/Bat Mitzvah child to continue their Jewish education in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Oheb Shalom's ETGAR program, the Ivry Prozdor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, or JTeen MetroWest (formerly the Central Hebrew High School).

**Tallit and Tefilin**

Every Bar and Bat Mitzvah child should have his/her own tallit. The style of tallit is a personal decision. Tallitot may be ordered through the Miriam Sisterhood Judaica Shop, CBL, the Lubavitch Outreach Center in West Orange, or Chai Judaica in Millburn.

The wearing of a tallit is a meaningful Jewish ritual that should be performed throughout Jewish life beginning on the day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please remind your child after Bar/Bat Mitzvah to bring his/her tallit to synagogue when attending services.

Students learn how to wear tefilin in the sixth grade of the Zeman School. Families will have an opportunity to purchase tefilin at a group rate through the school, or may obtain a pair on their own.

### **Lessons with Cantor Lippitz**

B'nai Mitzvah students learn to chant the Torah and Haftarah, master the blessings for both of these texts, and lead the congregation in prayer. All these skills are learned with Cantor Lippitz, both in the Zeman School and in one-on-one sessions. Cantor Lippitz will contact you to begin individual lessons with your child approximately six months before the Bar or Bat Mitzvah date. She will meet weekly with your child for half an hour at a mutually convenient afternoon time, but never during Zeman School sessions. If your child will be away for the summer, his/her lessons should begin at an earlier point. A motivated child is also more than welcome to request the Haftarah text a year in advance, which will help him/her master the Hebrew at a higher level of proficiency.

The Zeman School tests each student for Hebrew reading proficiency during the fifth grade of the Zeman School. You may be contacted by the Education Director if your child is in need of remedial tutoring. A meeting can be arranged between you, the Education Director and the Cantor to discuss an action plan. We are here to help you make the school and Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience a very successful and positive one for your child.

Please contact the Cantor a year in advance of your child's Bar/Bat mitzvah if you think there are any reasons that your child will require additional time to master the Torah and Haftarah texts. All information shared about your child's learning needs will remain completely confidential.

## **Preparing a D'var Torah with Rabbi Cooper**

Every child prepares a D'var Torah that is offered to the congregation during the Shabbat service. Your child will receive a booklet that will be helpful in preparing for studying the Torah portion and writing the D'var Torah. You should make an appointment to meet with Rabbi Cooper at least three months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, and earlier than that if your child will become Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the fall and will be away at summer camp. The materials should be read prior to the first meeting with Rabbi Cooper. Appointments can be scheduled with the Rabbi's secretary or directly with the Rabbi as well.

The Rabbi will provide guidance on writing the D'var Torah at the first meeting and will work with your child on creating an outline and editing drafts in subsequent meetings. The number of meetings required depends on the needs of the child. A parent must attend the first meeting, and may choose to attend any or all subsequent meetings. The final meeting, usually during the week before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, will be devoted to rehearsing the D'var Torah from the pulpit in the sanctuary with the Rabbi present.

## **The Mitzvah Project**

Bar/Bat Mitzvah students undertake a Mitzvah Project during the year prior to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Such projects can include raising money and/or awareness about an important cause, and giving time and service to an organization. Rabbi Cooper is available to suggest possible Mitzvah Projects.

## **Parents' Meeting with the Rabbi**

Parents should make an appointment to meet with the Rabbi at least two months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This meeting is a good opportunity to ask questions and discuss your simcha in a private and relaxed setting. Attendance at this meeting by your child is optional.

## **Times of Services and When to Arrive**

Friday evening services begin at 6:15 P.M. from September-May, with the exception of our monthly 8:00 P.M. service. All Friday night services in June begin at 8:00 P.M. Check the synagogue website or The Review for the date of the monthly 8:00 P.M. service.

Families celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah may hold a private Shabbat dinner at Oheb Shalom. Oheb Shalom holds a Friday night Shabbat dinner approximately four times a year. If there is a Shabbat dinner on the eve of your family's simcha, a private dinner will not be possible.

Shabbat morning services begin at 9:30 A.M. On the morning of your simcha, please arrive about 15 minutes before the start of the service.

## **Ruach Shabbat (The Spirit of Shabbat)**

Oheb Shalom honors the sanctity of Shabbat for the entire day, in part by refraining from the use of cell phones, photography, and videography anywhere on our grounds. In addition, deliveries to the synagogue may not take place on Shabbat, nor may large items be removed from the synagogue building during Shabbat. Those who wish to have instrumental or vocal music at the Kiddush are encouraged to use any of the musical groups on the list enclosed with this manual. Each of these groups performs Jewish music in a way that is engaging and uplifting. Other suggestions for musical performers are welcome but must be brought to Cantor Lippitz for approval well in advance of your simcha.

## **Providing Kippot for the Congregation**

It is a time-honored custom for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family to provide kippot (head coverings) for the congregation inscribed with the child's name and date of the simcha. The synagogue will provide basic kippot if the family chooses not to provide them. Sufficient clips or bobby pins should also be provided if the family furnishes the kippot. Personalized kippot can be ordered through the Miriam Sisterhood Judaica Shop, CBL, the Lubavitch Outreach Center in West Orange, or Chai Judaica in Millburn.

The choice of kippah can also be an act of tzedakah. “MayaWorks” kippot are crocheted by Mayan women who live in Guatemala. Purchasing these kippot helps sustain their families. For information on MayaWorks, link to [www.mayaworks.org/kippot](http://www.mayaworks.org/kippot).

### **Display Table**

Kippot, brochures and a description of your child’s Mitzvah Project may be placed on a display table outside the sanctuary. Please do not place driving directions to offsite facilities, guest lists or materials pertaining to your reception on the display table (these should be included in your invitation).

### **Your Family’s participation in the Shabbat Service**

Bar/Bat Mitzvah children participate in the Shabbat service to the extent of their ability and motivation to study and prepare. On Friday evening, our B’nai Mitzvah typically lead the reading of the Shema and recite the Kiddush. On Shabbat morning, our B’nai Mitzvah read one or more aliyot from the Torah, chant the Haftarah, prepare and read a D’var Torah and may choose to lead Shacharit or Musaf.

Parents remain on the bima from the beginning of the Torah reading until the end of the service. Please leave the seat next to the ark on the Rabbi’s side open for the Rabbi. We recommend that siblings remain seated in the pews during the service. Siblings will be called up to the bima if they are participating in the service and to join the family for the recitation of Shehecheyanu.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family’s active participation in the service includes:

- a. **Wearing the Tallit for the First Time**- The occasion of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is exciting in part because we watch our children perform meaningful Jewish rituals, such as wearing the Tallit, for the first time. Your child should don his/her Tallit at the beginning of the service, either privately or publicly before the congregation. Performing this mitzvah at the beginning of the service enables the child to wear his/her tallit for the entire morning, especially at the

moment that the four tsitsit (fringes) are held together for the reading of the Shema during the service. Parents or grandparents may assist the child in donning his/her tallit.

- b. **Aliyot to the Torah-** The honor of reciting an aliyah (Hebrew for “going up”) at the reading of the Torah involves chanting a blessing in Hebrew before and after the reading of Torah verses. Those given the honor of reciting an aliyah, or lifting and dressing the Torah scroll, must be Jewish, over the age of 13, and wear a head covering. Males must wear a tallit (prayer shawl); women are encouraged to wear a tallit but are not required to do so.

Two of the aliyot are always reserved for the congregation. The family may designate the recipients of the remaining aliyot. If need be, an additional, eighth aliyah will be added to the Torah service, enabling the family to assign six aliyot. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah child is not counted among aliyot assigned by the family and takes the Maftir (concluding) aliyah.

We prefer that 1-2 people be called for each aliyah, but understand that there are cases in which a family elder may feel more comfortable joining with another couple. If the honorees have young children (pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah), those children are welcome to accompany them for the aliyah.

A copy of the aliyah blessing, including an English transliteration, is included with this manual. Please make sure those members of your family honored with reciting an aliyah at the Torah have a copy of the blessing and review it well in advance of your simcha so they can be prepared for this special honor.

In addition to aliyot to the Torah, you may also designate the person who lifts the Torah (Hagba) and up to two people to dress the Torah (Gelila). On occasions when we read from two scrolls, you may assign the honors of Hagba and Gelila twice. As the Torah scroll is heavy and sometimes unbalanced, skill is required to lift it correctly. People who receive this honor must be comfortable handling the Torah scroll and physically able to lift it in the correct manner. Both

Rabbi Cooper and Cantor Lippitz are available to help your guests learn how to lift the Torah properly in advance of your simcha.

- c. **Guest Torah Readers-** Your relatives and friends may read from the Torah provided they are able to read directly from the scroll and are prepared to do so. Torah readers must be Jewish and wear a tallit when reading. Cantor Lippitz will want to meet with you 3-4 months in advance of your simcha in order to identify guest Torah readers. The Cantor can provide Torah text copies and CDs for readers who require these, but she needs ample time to prepare these materials, and then to verify that all Torah readers are properly prepared.
- d. **Other prayers-** Relatives and friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family may recite the Prayer for our Country and the Prayer for the State of Israel. Siblings, relatives or family friends may recite the Ashrei (Psalm 145) just before the Torah recessional and Ein Keiloheinu at the end of the service.
- e. **Passing the Torah or Holding the Torah-** Many parents choose to pass the Torah scroll to their child as a symbol of passing on the Jewish heritage from one generation to the next. You will be on the bimah at the beginning of the Torah service, and may elect to pass the Torah to your child at that point, so that he or she is holding the Torah before the congregation as the Cantor chants the Shema. The child may then carry the scroll for the Torah processional, or may return the scroll to an officer. Grandparents may also participate in this ceremony.
- f. **Rabbi's Charge and Gifts to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah-** Following the recitation of the Ashrei (Psalm 145), the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child will be called to the Rabbi's pulpit for the charge and presentation of gifts. In order to prevent the service from becoming too lengthy, presentations by representatives of other organizations are not made. Exceptions include presentations by a representative of the Holocaust Council of MetroWest, the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, or heads of major Jewish organizations that are attending the service.

- g. **Reciting “Shehecheyanu”-** Following the Rabbi’s charge and presentation of gifts, the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ascends the bima for the recitation of Shehecheyanu. This blessing is recited when we celebrate important milestones or do something meaningful for the first time. An audio file of the blessing recited in Hebrew, along with a transliteration of the blessing, is on our website under the link to “Resources.” If you and your child do not already know the Shehecheyanu by heart, please learn it together for this special occasion.
- h. **Speeches by Parents and Guests-** Speeches and personal reflections offered by parents to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child by parents are not made from the bima, but should be made during the Kiddush or at your reception.
- i. **Participation of Non-Jewish Parents and Guests-** Our congregation recognizes that both Jewish and non-Jewish parents play a role in raising their children and creating and sustaining a Jewish family. We see Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a time for families to remain together throughout the service. Thus, a non-Jewish parent may sit on the bima and participate in several aspects of the Shabbat service, including walking in the Torah recessional, standing in the center of the bima to view the Torah being passed, helping the child to don his/her tallit, and being present for the clergy’s blessings for the parents and the child. Since the act of reciting an aliyah blessing at the Torah is appropriate only for those who are Jewish, the non-Jewish parent remains in his/her seat on the bima while the Jewish parent is called to the Torah for the parents’ aliyah. After the aliyah blessing, both parents join the clergy in the middle of the bima for the parents’ blessing. A non-Jewish parent or relative may read the Prayer for Our Country, as well.
- j. **Tossing Candy-** It is a long-standing custom to express our wish that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child have a life filled with sweetness and joy by gently tossing candy at him/her. This is done after the chanting of the Haftarah. The congregation will provide the candy.

## **Personalized Information Brochure**

Many families wish to provide an information brochure for the congregation that contains words of welcome from the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family, a list of honorees and a description of your child's mitzvah project.

## **Sexton**

A member of the congregation volunteers each Shabbat to serve as sexton, whose job it is to make sure that honorees know when to ascend the bima for their honor. The sexton will greet you during the first part of the service and will review with you the names of your honorees.

## **Ushers**

The congregation provides an usher who will greet people as they enter the sanctuary. Ushers will hand out announcement sheets, point out the location of the tallit rack, and answer questions about prayer books, decorum and the timing of the service. You will be asked to serve as usher for another Bar or Bat Mitzvah service after your own simcha.

## **Kiddush on the Bima**

At the conclusion of the service, we recite blessings over wine (Kiddush) and bread (Motsi) on the bima prior to adjourning to Murnick Hall for the Kiddush luncheon. Grandparents, parents, relatives and friends may be invited onto the bima for the recitation of the Kiddush blessings.

## **Unaccompanied Children**

Unaccompanied children often find it difficult to sit through a long service. If necessary, our ushers will remind unaccompanied children throughout the service that their behavior must reflect the dignity of the occasion. You may wish to suggest to the parents of your child's guests that they arrive at the synagogue at 10:15 A.M. rather than 9:30 A.M. Suggested wording for an insert in your invitation directed to the parents of unaccompanied children is included with this manual.

Oheb Shalom requires families celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to provide hired supervision of children in the sanctuary and the building and grounds. A hired supervisor will be required as well for all evening celebrations held at the synagogue. The synagogue office will arrange for supervision and bill the family.

### **Buses to offsite receptions**

Only school buses can enter our parking lot in order to provide transportation for children to an offsite location. Coach buses will be required to park on Ralston Avenue.

### **Inviting Other Children**

We've intentionally placed this issue in the section on religious and educational matters, as the feelings of children who are not invited to a simcha are part of a larger discussion about the religious value of creating and sustaining community and the importance of each individual. We require that you invite either ALL the children in your child's Hebrew School class to your simcha, or at least all of the boys or all of the girls.

We often hear stories of children who are seldom invited to parties, and who feel left out of an important social group at a critical time for developing social skills. We also hear about children who feel they ought not attend services on a particular Shabbat morning because they were not invited to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reception or child's party. These problems can be avoided, and our youth community can be strengthened, if all children in a class are invited to every simcha.

### **Shabbat Guests**

Out of town guests who do not ride on Shabbat often require home hospitality. Please contact Rabbi Cooper if you need assistance in arranging hospitality for your Shomer Shabbat guests.

## **Holding Your Simcha at Oheb Shalom**

We strongly encourage your family to celebrate your simcha at Oheb Shalom. Holding your reception at the synagogue is a statement of Jewish values and a way to strengthen your ties to the congregation. You will find our administrative staff eager to help you to plan a memorable gathering. Wherever you hold a reception, we strongly encourage that you engage a kosher caterer. Having a kosher reception, even for those who don't normally follow the Jewish dietary laws, is an honorable expression of Jewish values at a time when commitment to a Jewish way of life is being reinforced and celebrated.

On a Saturday evening when the days are long, guests may gather at the synagogue approximately one hour before the end of Shabbat for a Shabbat-appropriate reception. During this last hour of Shabbat, no electronic media or games may be played, sign boards may not be set up and music must reflect the sanctity of the Sabbath. Entertainers and other service providers (except caterers) who absolutely cannot deliver their equipment before the start of the Sabbath may bring items into the building at a time earlier in the day when no guests are present.

## **PART TWO: ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

### **Meeting with the Executive Director**

Please make an appointment to meet with Linda Griffler six months prior to your simcha to discuss logistical and financial arrangements. Linda will help ensure that your use of the synagogue's facilities is a pleasant and problem free experience in all respects.

### **Sponsoring the Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors the Oneg Shabbat after Friday evening services and the Kiddush after Shabbat morning services, even if you are planning a private reception in the synagogue or at another facility. There are a variety of options for sponsoring the Oneg Shabbat or Kiddush. The details of these arrangements will be discussed at your meeting with the Executive Director.

There is always a congregational Kiddush following Shabbat morning services to which everyone present at the service is welcome, even when the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is planning a private reception in the synagogue or at another facility. If you are planning a private reception, please be sure to spend an appropriate amount of time at the congregational Kiddush before beginning your private reception.

There are approximately 100 congregants present on a Shabbat morning, in addition to your invited guests, who should be included in the final count submitted to the caterer.

### **Bima Flowers**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family provides bima flowers. The Chair of our Flower Fund, Norma Schechner (973-763-9232), ensures that a fresh and beautiful floral arrangement is in place for your simcha. Please call Norma to discuss the choice of flowers with her. You will be billed approximately \$125 for the cost of the flowers.

## **The Possibility of Another Simcha**

From time to time, we receive requests to hold a baby naming or an aufruf (aliyah to the Torah before a wedding) on a Shabbat morning. Whenever possible, we schedule these special aliyot on Shabbatot when there is no Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Since we reserve two aliyot to the Torah for the congregation, a baby naming or aufruf may take place on the Shabbat of your simcha. If there is such an event, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family will always have the privilege of being the sole host of the Kiddush. It may be that those celebrating a baby naming or aufruf provide the bima flowers. Such arrangements are made only after consultation with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family.

## **Reserving Oheb Shalom for Your Simcha**

Murnick Hall and Levy-Zucker are always available to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family for the morning of a simcha and need not be reserved in advance. In order to reserve our facilities for a private reception after the service or in the evening, please contact our Executive Director, Linda Griffler.

## **Photography and Videography**

Since we do not allow photography or videography in the synagogue on Shabbat, many families take photographs and videos of their child on a weekday before the Shabbat of their simcha. Please contact the Executive Director to schedule a photography session. Rabbi Cooper and Cantor Lippitz would be delighted to appear in your photographs. Please contact them directly, at least two weeks in advance, to ensure they will be present.

## **The Oheb Shalom Review**

Please submit a one-paragraph statement about your child (school, hobbies, mitzvah project, etc.) and a high resolution digital copy of a photo of your child to the editor of the Review no later than three months prior to its publication. Please note that the Review is published on a bi-monthly basis: September/October, November/December, January/February, March/April, and May/June. Review submissions are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of

the month prior publication (e.g. July 15<sup>th</sup> for the September/October issue). Submissions to the Review are sent to [thereview@ohebshalom.org](mailto:thereview@ohebshalom.org).

### **Financial Obligations**

All financial obligations to the synagogue must be current, or alternate arrangements made in advance, in order to celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on Shabbat morning. If you are having difficulty satisfying your financial obligations, please contact the Executive Director.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**ADON OLAM**- The final hymn recited at the conclusion of Shabbat and Festival services.

**ALEINU**- A prayer recited near the conclusion of the service.

**ALIYAH** (ah-lee-ya)- This term, meaning "going up," refers to the act of reciting a blessing over a passage read from the Torah (the plural form is aliyot). The term originates from the elevation of the bima in the sanctuary, requiring that the person "go up" a few steps to reach the Torah reading table. Aliyah can also refer to the selection of verses read from the Torah, as well as moving to Israel, or "going up" in a spiritual sense.

**ASHREI**- The first word of Psalm 145, which is recited three times each day (twice in the morning and once in the afternoon). The Ashrei is often recited by siblings of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child.

**BAR/BAT MITZVAH**- Literally, "son" or "daughter" of the commandments; refers to the status of being obligated to observe mitzvot (see glossary). Even though this status is automatic at age 13, regardless of education or observance, a public ceremony was created to acknowledge that a child had attained this new status and privilege. The term "Bar" is not Hebrew, but Aramaic for "son."

**BEN/BAT**- literally, "son of" or "daughter of" This term is used when calling a person to the Torah, which is done by using by their father's and mother's names. Example: Meir ben (son of ) Yitzchak HaKohen and Sheindel.

**BIMA** (bee-mah)- literally "stage" or "platform" The Synagogue service takes place on an elevated platform which is reminiscent of the altar upon which sacrifices were made in the Biblical times.

**BIRKAT HAMAZON**- Literally, "blessing of the food" A prayer made up of four blessings chanted at the end of a meal. The Talmudic sages required that an

official meal include bread and begin with the blessing “Hamotzi.” The Birkat Hamazon can be said in short form.

**D’VAR TORAH-** Literally, a “word of Torah” Refers to an interpretation or explanation of the Torah portion. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah child writes a D’var Torah that is spoken before the congregation.

**EIN KEILOHEINU-** A poetic prayer recited at the conclusion of the Shabbat morning and Festival services.

**GELILA** (ge-lee-la)- This term literally means "rolling," and refers to the act of rolling the Torah closed and dressing it after the reading. The person who rolls and dresses the Torah is called the golel (or goelet in the case of a female).

**HAGBA-** Literally, “lift or raise” Refers to the act of raising the scroll and displaying it to the congregation after the conclusion of the reading from the Torah. The person who lifts the Torah is called the magbia.

**HAFTARAH** (haf-ta-ra)- The selection of verses read in the Synagogue after the Torah reading on Shabbat, Festivals and selected fast days. Literally, it means "end" or "conclusion."

**KIPPA-** The Hebrew word for a head covering. Covering the head during religious services and study is a time honored Jewish custom. All men (Jewish and gentile) are expected to cover their heads during the service; women are encouraged to do so as well. The Yiddish word for kippa is “yarmulke.”

**MITZVOT** (meets-vote)- literally, “commandments” Refers to the laws, rituals and traditions of living as a Jew. Often translated as "good deed" because some mitzvot concern ethical and righteous behavior. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the occasion on which we recognize that a child is prepared to accept the responsibility to do mitzvot.

**MUSAF** (moo-saf)- Additional service recited on Shabbat and holidays. It recalls the additional sacrifice brought to the Temple on those occasions.

**ONEG SHABBAT**- Literally, "joy of Shabbat." Refers to the time after Friday evening services when we enhance our joy of the Shabbat by serving refreshments and spending time with one another.

**PESUKEI DE-ZIMRA** (pe-soo-kay de-zim-ra)- Literally, "verses of song." Refers to the preliminary service, recited each morning, as a warm-up to the main service.

**SEUDAH/SEUDAT MITZVAH**- A festive meal that is served after a special event, usually a bris, babynaming, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, or wedding. Because the seudah is as much an expression of the importance of Jewish tradition and values as the religious service is, it is important that it be kosher and held in the synagogue.

**SHACHARIT** (sha-cha-reet)- Morning service recited each day of the week, with a special version for Shabbat. The term comes from the word shachar, which means morning light.

**SHE-HE-CHE-YANU** (she-he-che-ya-nu)- This term refers to the blessing recited on happy occasions that are being celebrated for the first time ever or for the first time in the year. The text of the blessing is Baruch Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam She'heche-yanu Ve'keeyeh-manu Ve'hee-gee-yanu Laz'man Ha-zeh...Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

**TZEDKAH**- Hebrew word for charity. The word is based on the word for justice, suggesting that enabling every person to have at least the most basic elements of sustenance is the just and right thing to do. Tzedakah is considered an obligation (a mitzvah), not an optional thing to do when we feel inclined to be generous.

**TALIT** (ta-leet)- The prayer shawl worn at morning services each day of the week. On the four corners of the tallit are tsitsit, specially tied fringes, which remind us of our obligations to follow the commandments of Judaism. The tallit is a way of making our prayer more special and distinctive, while also serving as a symbol of our Jewish identity. The plural is talitot. The word talleisim is a slang version of the Hebrew plural.