



BETH EMETH BAIS YEHUDA

*The Bar/Bat Mitzvah
Experience 2011/12 — 5772*



וכל בניך למודי ה'
ורב שלום בניך
--אל תקרי בניך, אלא בוניך.

“When your children shall
be taught of the Lord, great
shall be the peace of your
children. This can be Said
not only of your children,
but all who are taught of the
Lord will help a future
of peace.”

(Talmud Berachot 64a)

Introduction

The requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda are expectations that we feel can be achieved by every candidate.

At Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda we see the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience as part of a continual commitment to the essentials which make up our Jewish heritage and tradition. We would like the experience of Bar/Bat Mitzvah to be expressed within the family unit as well as the synagogue. We hope that the entire family will support, encourage and participate together with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in this significant stage of transition, from childhood to adolescence and maturity.

Family members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate; parents, sisters, brothers, grandparents and others are welcome as co-participants in this important event. During the next years, your son/daughter will need and seek advice, help, support and encouragement from you. The success of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be your success, and the efforts you make on their behalf will culminate in pleasure and pride for the entire family as well as the Jewish community.

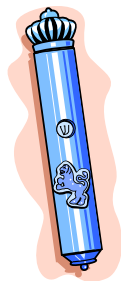
Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah means “one is obligated to fulfill the commandments.” It is both a privilege and a great responsibility. You have heard many people speak about the importance of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is a milestone which requires much hard work and discipline. This booklet will help you on your road to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and a mature participant within the Jewish community.

Twelve, for you as a young lady and thirteen, for you as a young man are important years in your life. It is at this age that Judaism charges you with the responsibilities of the mitzvot. It is at this age that you are asked to live according to the Laws of the Torah. These laws comprise ethical teachings such as, Gemilat Hesed and Zedakah, rituals such as Shabbat and Kashrut and communal observances and responsibilities.

Twelve is a significant number in Jewish Tradition. The ancient Israelite nation was composed of twelve tribes, descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. There are twelve signs of the Zodiac. A normal Jewish year has twelve months. The Jewish day is divided into twelve daylight hours and twelve evening hours.

The experience of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is expressed within the family unit as well as the synagogue.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a religious-legal term which implies a coming of age.



The **Urim Vetumim**, breast plate, worn by the High Priest at the time of the Temple contained twelve precious stones with the name of one of the twelve tribes engraved upon it. Moses commanded the nation to erect twelve stones upon entering the Land of Israel and to inscribe upon them the entire Torah.

Thirteen is an important number in Jewish history. The Midrash tells us that Moses made thirteen copies of the Torah before the Israelites were allowed to pass into the Promised Land. Rabbi Ishmael says Jewish Law is to be interpreted according to thirteen logical rules. Bazalel, the great architect and artist, was only thirteen when he was appointed to oversee construction of the Tabernacle in the desert. In the Torah, God is described by thirteen attributes.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not a mystical ritual confirmation which somehow confers “Jewishness” upon you. This is conferred upon you by your birth and nothing can change your status. As indicated above, **it is a religious-legal term which implies a coming of age**. You, as a young person will become this whether or not you decide to mark the occasion in any formal way. The honour of marking this occasion in our synagogue is a privilege extended only to those Jewish boys and girls who have devoted their time and made the effort to study and perform mitzvot, while participating in the communal life of the Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue and Bar/Bat Mitzvah programme.

Prerequisites and participation standards for Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

תלמידי חכמים מרבין שלום בעולם

“The disciples of the wise increase peace in the world” (Brachot 64a)

Satisfactory and ongoing attendance in Day or Afternoon Hebrew school is an essential precondition. All Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates must attend an approved Day or Afternoon School for a minimum of five years and must be in attendance in an approved school during the entire year of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **Candidates in an afternoon Hebrew School must attend a minimum of five hours per week and have the school approved by the Rabbi.**

One of the most important mitzvot that we are called upon to fulfill as an adult is Talmud Torah. The quality and quantity of Jewish knowledge that you have acquired up until this point is only a small, portion of the vast wealth of Torah knowledge waiting for you to attain. **The most respected title that one can achieve as a Jew is that of Talmid Chacham; a student of the Torah. Reaching the age of Jewish maturity does not absolve one of this significant mitzvah, but enhances its importance as a tool for our future development and understanding.**

All Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are, therefore, encouraged to continue their Jewish education by attending available high schools and high school programmes within our synagogue and the Jewish community. One such programme is the **CONGREGATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL - JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAMME**, housed at Adath Israel and co-sponsored by Adath Israel, Beth David, Beth Emeth, Beth Shalom, and Beth Tikvah Synagogues. The class meets on Monday evenings from 5-7 pm.

** In the Bar/Bat Mitzvah rental agreement which you signed, it says, “Bar/Bat Mitzvah standards in accordance with the attached material are to be considered as part of the contract for Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. Any Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate who does not comply with these standards may be in essence considered as contravening the contract and thereby making it null and void, which would release the Licensor from any obligations with regard thereto.” At BEBY, the following Bar/Bat Mitzvah prerequisites and participation standards are mandatory:

- 1) The meal following the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is construed as a Seudat Mitzvah (a commanded meal) and must be kosher. In addition, no hired or chartered buses are allowed on or near the vicinity of the shul for any reason. Such a public infraction of the Sabbath mars the sanctity of the day.
- 2) Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are expected to attend the Na'are Emet service weekly with at least one parent present.
- 3) Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are expected to attend the bi-monthly Shabbat experience enrichment programmes with at least one parent present.

You must attend an approved Day or Afternoon School for a minimum of five years.



Na'are Emet (Youth of Truth)

An interactive educational service for families

שוכן עד מרום וקדוש שמו (Siddur)

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates with at least one parent present are expected to attend our weekly Na'are Emet family Shabbat and Holy Day Services in the Chapel, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.

This service provides an opportunity to learn by participating in all aspects of the Shabbat/Holy Day morning service.

This service will be held weekly except during school holidays and special occasions.

Our Goal: to bring us all together so that we can create a community of joy and simcha.

Prayer is one of the easiest, yet at the same time, one of the most difficult mitzvot for us to fulfill. It is not difficult to open a Siddur and chant the words found inside. It is not hard to walk into a synagogue and participate in services. What is demanding is to elevate ourselves to a level where we feel at one with God, the Master and loving Father of the universe. It may seem difficult to achieve this ultimate and satisfying goal, but with continued attendance at synagogue services, it is a realistic prospect. Without attendance at public prayer, it is an impossibility. In addition, we promote the meaning and relevance of the prayers we recite.

Public prayer serves as a link in the chain of tradition and history which binds our people together and makes us so uniquely different. Furthermore, prayer is an important civilizing factor in the development of humanity. When we stand in prayer before the ark on Shabbat, we know that all over the world, on every continent and in scores of countries and hundreds of cities, Jewish men, women, boys and girls are repeating the same rituals, chanting the same songs and prayers, and listening to similar words of Torah.

Satisfactory attendance at services are required.



Meeting with the Rabbi

The clergy of the Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda will assist you to make your Bar/Bat Mitzvah a pleasant and meaningful experience. Our philosophy is that each Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate is a unique, distinct individual.

Parents are welcome to call upon the Rabbis anytime before Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **Parents should contact the officiating Rabbis approximately 18 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.** This contact will ensure that the child has been assigned the proper Torah and/or haftarah portions. In addition, the family should meet with the Rabbi one month prior to the Simcha date. Any other concerns regarding your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please feel free to direct any inquiries to the Rabbi's Administrative Assistant.

On the Monday or Thursday closest to the Bar Mitzvah boy's Hebrew 13th birthday, (the ABM —Actual Bar Mitzvah) the candidate will attend morning services with his parents. At this time it is expected that he is able to show that he understands the meaning and significance of the service and the Tefillin that he is putting on. All male members of the family who are over the age of Bar Mitzvah are also expected to put on Tefillin. It is customary for the Bar Mitzvah family to sponsor the congregational breakfast.

ALL SANCTUARY PHOTO SHOOTS AND REHEARSALS MUST BE COORDINATED AND CONFIRMED WITH THE RITUAL DIRECTOR AND BOOKED THROUGH THE SYNAGOGUE OFFICE.

All male members of the family who are over the age of Bar Mitzvah are also expected to put on Tefillin.



Bar/Bat Mitzvah Teacher

עשה לך רב “Provide yourself with a teacher” (Avot 1:6)

Your son/daughter's Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher plays a significant role in enhancing and making for a pleasant Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. Keep in touch with your child's teacher and ask what is transpiring during the lessons.

You must use a Beth Emeth approved teacher. (See below) The teacher should not begin any instruction of the Torah or Haftarah without first consulting and receiving the approval of the Rabbi.

In most cases, eighteen (18) months is sufficient preparation time for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate to master the appropriate texts. Special problems or concerns should of course be addressed to the Rabbi as soon as possible.

Responsibilities of the Teacher.

1. To teach the **ta'amim** or **trop**, (also called notes for chanting and cantilations) for the Torah and Haftarah.
2. To teach the appropriate blessings.
3. To ensure that the chanting is correct
4. To instruct the Bar Mitzvah candidates in the proper way to put on Tefillin and to ensure that they have mastered and understand the meaning of the mitzvah.
5. To give guidance and help where needed in the writing of the various **D'verei Torah** as assigned by the Rabbi.

Bar Mitzvah

The teacher's responsibilities are to teach the Maftir and Haftarah, and to encourage the candidate to prepare additional readings from the Torah portion for that Shabbat.

The teacher will begin instructing the Bar Mitzvah in the proper way of fulfilling the Mitzvah of Tefillin at least one month before the Bar Mitzvah date.

Bat Mitzvah

The teacher will teach the Bat Mitzvah candidate the appropriate prophetic reading and other prayers as determined by the Rabbi, and may be called upon to assist in the preparation of the D'var Torah.

Beth Emeth Approved Teachers

Steve Holland 905.731.7305

Uri Lenga 416.667.0533

Yehuda Rosenberg 416.631.9545

Marcel Cohen 416.636.6470

See below for our approved and recommended teachers.



Tefillin

וקשרתם לאות על ירך והיו לטטפת בין עינך
...and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and they
shall be for a symbol between thine eyes. (Deuteronomy 6:8)

One of the oldest and most meaningful prayers recited twice daily is the *Shma Yisrael*. In the first chapter and repeated again in the second chapter we find the command to place a sign of our devotion to God upon our hand and upon our head between our eyes. The symbolism of the Tefillin is to remind us that our head, which is the source of intellect and decision making, as well as the hand, which is the source of strength and action, should always be devoted to the service of God and humanity. In our daily lives we should strive to act in accordance with the moral and ethical teachings of the Torah.

We should further strive to attain knowledge and understanding of our precious religious heritage.

The Bar Mitzvah boy receives a new pair of Tefillin. These should be purchased at least three months prior to the date of the Bar Mitzvah's Hebrew thirteenth birthday. One that belongs to another member of the family is not acceptable; every adult male must have his own pair. An exception will be made if there is Tefillin from a deceased relative that the family would like the Bar Mitzvah to inherit. In this case the Tefillin must be checked and certified as kosher by a reputable Sofer (ritual scribe). A letter should be given to the Rabbi attesting to this fact.

The reason for certification is to insure that over time the parchment scrolls in the Tefillin have not deteriorated internally due to humidity, cold and heat. Only a certified Sofer can determine this.

There are various traditions as to when a boy starts to put on Tefillin. They vary from six months to one month prior to his Bar Mitzvah. The tradition at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda is that the Bar Mitzvah boy should start putting on Tefillin on a daily basis at least one month prior to his actual *thirteenth hebrew birthday*. We call it the *ABM (Actual Bar Mitzvah date)*.

A list of approved Sofrim and places where new Tefillin may be purchased is available from the synagogue office. Kosher Tefillin and other religious items are also available from our Sisterhood Gift Shop.

The Bar Mitzvah boy
receives a new pair of
Tefillin.



Tallit

A new tallit should be publicly presented to the Bar Mitzvah boy either on the day that he celebrates his Bar Mitzvah ceremony or on the day he receives his first aliyah (*see section on ABM for more information*).

The tallit needs to cover the majority of the body, therefore we recommend full length tallitot. Today a large assortment of tallitot in various colors and designs are available. A beautiful tradition is to buy matching tallitot for the Bar Mitzvah and his father. Tallit clips may also be purchased, which securely hold the tallit in place.



The D'var Torah should be the work of the student demonstrating his or her Jewish knowledge.

D'var Torah

כל האומר דבר בשם אומרו מביא גאולה לעולם
**Whoever repeats Torah in the name of the one who said it,
brings redemption to the world. (Avot 6:6)**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate will be asked to write a D'var Torah on the portion of the Torah and/or the Haftarah that is being read that week. Each candidate will develop a specific topic at their first meeting with the Rabbi. The content and scope of these D'var Torah will be discussed with you during your meeting with the Rabbi.

It is our goal that these D'vei Torah will reflect a mature and conscientious effort on the part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate to understand the significance of this special period in their life. Our candidates are welcome to seek help and guidance from parents, teachers and friends, but, please keep in mind, that the essays should be the work of the student, and a demonstration of their Jewish knowledge.



Bat Mitzvah Service

כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה

“All glorious is the king’s daughter within” (Yevamot 77a)

We encourage families to recognize the religious significance of coming of age for girls and to take advantage of the programmes offered to enhance the Bat Mitzvah experience.

At Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, Bat Mitzvahs are celebrated on Friday evening as an Oneg Shabbat, on Shabbat morning (for members only) (see particulars below**), one hour after the conclusion of Shabbat as a Havdalah ceremony, or a Sunday morning ceremony. In all of these formats, the Bat Mitzvah celebration centres around the chanting of the Haftarah. The candidate will meet with the Rabbi approximately 18 months before the simcha date in order to discuss the service and family participation.

The Bat Mitzvah candidate chants a Prophetic reading appropriate to the Shabbat and time of year. She will also deliver a D’var Torah from the Bima. In addition, she will be asked to participate in various readings and prayers. The ceremony can involve parents, siblings and grandparents in many different ways.

**Since September 2004, member families may schedule a Shabbat morning Bat Mitzvah up to two years in advance. The immediate family of the Bat Mitzvah must be a member of Beth Emeth Synagogue to qualify for this option.



Gemilat Hesed Program

התורה תחלתה גמילות חסדים וסופה גמילות חסדים
The Torah begins and ends with acts of loving kindness. (Sotah 14a)

In *Pirkei Avot*, 1:2 (Ethics of the Fathers) it says:

The world depends on three things; on Torah, on prayer and on deeds of loving-kindness.

Rabbi Eleazar said (Sukkah 49b):

Loving kindness is greater than charity in three ways; Charity is performed with one's wealth, and loving kindness with one's body; charity is given to the poor, and loving-kindness to rich and poor alike...

Rava learned in the *Talmud* (Tractate Yevamot 79a);

All who possess these three traits are without question of the seed of our father Abraham; mercy, modesty and loving-kindness.

Every morning, as we begin our day, we read a section from the *Talmud* which states;

These are the things for which no limit is prescribed;... the first fruits, the pilgrimage offerings, the practice of loving-kindness, and the study of the Torah. These are the things the fruits of which a person enjoys in this world, while the principal remains for him/her in the World to Come, namely; honouring father and mother, practice of loving-kindness (חסדים גמילות) ...



As we see from the Talmudic statements quoted above, Gemilat Hesed is not the same as giving charity, for Tzedaka has a limit according to the wealth of the individual. Charity is giving of one's wealth. Gemilat Hesed is giving unstintingly of one's self. Gemilat Hesed are acts of loving-kindness, performed for someone who is unable to repay you or offer you something in return, and it is the greatest form of the pure Mitzvah. Gemilat Hesed is what separates us from many other cultures and civilizations. The only payment one can expect for doing this mitzvah is the goodness you feel from the smile you see, or the warmth you receive coming from one whose life you have touched; and knowing that you alone have made a difference by making someone's life a little better.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate may, in consultation with the Rabbi, identify an area or program of interest to them, in order to fulfill this mitzvah.

Shabbat Weekend of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Friday Night Service

מזמור שיר ליום השבת (Psalms 92)

Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and it is a twenty-four hour physical and spiritual experience. The Rabbis of Safed would welcome the Sabbath Queen by going outdoors and watching the sun set in the West. They composed the beautiful song, Lechah Dodi (לכה דודי) which is based upon the Talmudic description of the way our sages welcomed the Sabbath. Rabbi Chaninah would wrap himself in his cloak and say, “**Come, let us go and welcome the Sabbath Queen.**” Rabbi Yannai would don his garment and say, “**Enter, O Bride! Enter, O Bride!**”

Our Bar/Bat Mitzvah is encouraged to attend Kabbalat Shabbat Services with his/her family.

Shabbat morning services have always played a significant role in the life-cycle of our people.

ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת
And Israel observed the Sabbath Day. (Siddur)

Saturday Morning Service

Shabbat morning services have always played a significant role in the life cycle of our people. It is here that a new born baby girl is given a name by her parents. The Sabbath before a wedding is the occasion for an **Auf Ruf**, where the bridegroom is called to the Torah and both he and his bride receive a blessing, while their intention to wed is publicly announced to the congregation by the Rabbi. It is at the Shabbat morning services that our Bar Mitzvah receives his Aliyah, and is presented to the congregation and community for their recognition of his new adult status. In addition to the chanting of the Maftir and Haftarah, the Bar Mitzvah candidate may also read appropriate portions from the Torah. He may also take part in the service by chanting some prayers and reciting the Sabbath morning Kiddush. Our Bar Mitzvah will also be given the opportunity, if he wishes, and at the discretion of the Rabbi, to read one of his Divrei Torah from the Bima.



Parent Participation

ושננתם לבנך

“Teach them thoroughly to our children.” (Deuteronomy 6:7)

In the Shema we are obligated to teach our children Torah. The education of our children, both in the secular academic realm and in the Jewish academic and moral sphere has always been one of the parents' prime responsibilities.

The Midrash tells us; that when God was about to give the Torah to the Jewish people, He first asked them for a guarantee that they would keep its commandments. The Israelites first offered God all their silver and gold, but God answered that this was not acceptable. They then offered Him all the land that they were about to inherit and once again God told them that this was not enough. Finally, the Israelites standing at Mt. Sinai, offered the Lord their children as guarantors that they would accept and follow the Torah. Only then did God give Moses the Torah.

Our responsibility, of course, does not end at the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but it does change significantly. Our child is beginning to grow and mature and is starting to think for him/herself. We thank God for helping us reach this milestone. We also pray to God that the Torah foundation that we have built will be a strong one, and that our child will follow our teachings and not rebel against them.

During the Bat Mitzvah ceremony, parents will be asked to read a prayer and bless their daughter. On Shabbat morning the Bar Mitzvah parents will be asked to ascend the Bima, bless their son and recite the significant benedictions for the occasion.

Baruch atah Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha-olam
shehecheyanu, v'ki-manu
v'higi-anu laz'man ha-zeh

ברוך אתה הי אלקינו מלך
העולם שהחיינו וקימנו
והגיענו לזמן הזה:

Praised are you, Lord our God, ruler of the Universe for enabling us to witness our son/daughter become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

It is a beautiful custom to throw candies and chocolates at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, symbolic of a long and sweet life. This takes place after the Haftarah reading for the Bar Mitzvah, and after the Prophetic readings for the Bat Mitzvah and all accompanying blessings have been completed by all participants. Only soft, kosher candies may be thrown. The nominal cost of \$18.00 is added when you book your simcha.

*“Teach them
thoroughly to our
children.”*



ישימך אלקים כשרה רבקה רחל ולאח...
ישימך אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה...

ABM

Actual Bar Mitzvah Date

Each day in our civil calendar corresponds to a Hebrew date in the Jewish calendar. The civil calendar of 365 days, has twelve months made up of thirty and thirty one days except for February which changes from twenty-eight to twenty-nine in a leap year.

The Jewish Calendar is a lunar one based upon the changing phases of the moon. The twelve months of a normal year have either twenty-nine days or thirty. This corresponds to the lunar cycle which takes twenty-nine and a half days to complete. The adjustment between the lunar year of twelve months and the solar year of 365 days is made by adding an extra month to the Jewish calendar. This month comes at the end of the Jewish year and is known as Adar II.

All religious rites are observed according to the Jewish calendar. Yahrzeit, wedding, and Bar/Bat mitzvah dates must correspond to the Jewish calendar for that year, not the civil. Sometimes the Jewish date may precede the civil, sometimes it may come after.

Your ABM (Actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah) date relates the Hebrew date and the date in the civil calendar when you reach the age of twelve or thirteen. Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah must be celebrated after that date.

For a Bar Mitzvah it is celebrated soon after the thirteenth Hebrew birthday. As of the ABM a boy must start wearing tefillin during the weekday morning services and may be counted in a minyan. He should receive an aliyah on the weekday soon after the ABM and a small celebration should follow (i.e., breakfast after services).

For a Bat Mitzvah, her ceremony celebration may be held during this twelfth year and all mitzvot, such as fasting on Yom Kippur are required of her after her twelfth birthday.



• *Etiquette & Decorum*

Attire

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue is a house of God, and this is reflected in our dress and deportment. All men are asked to wear a head covering while in the synagogue building. Kippot (skullcaps) are provided for those who do not have their own. Tallitot (prayer shawls) are available as well and should be worn by all Jewish males above the age of Bar Mitzvah. Those participating in the service must be wearing a tallit and a jacket and tie.

Women should dress modestly, with shoulders and arms covered. Married women traditionally cover their heads when in synagogue. Any women participating in the service are expected to cover their heads and may use one of the provided chapel veils, or wear her own hat.



Deportment

The traditional Shabbat service is approximately three hours. While it may be difficult to refrain from any talking for this length of time, it should be kept to a minimum. Please note your whisper and those of five hundred others, becomes a loud roar. Also, noise from the foyer can carry into the sanctuary.

The doors to the sanctuary are opened for entry or exit at appropriate times during the service. Please cooperate with the ushers if you are asked to wait before entering or leaving the sanctuary.

Part of the celebration of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah includes throwing candy at the celebrant. It should be done in a gentle manner as a sign of blessing and a wish for a sweet life.

The use of cameras, cell phones and other electronic devices, as well as smoking is strictly prohibited on synagogue property on Shabbat and Holy Days (Yom Tov). In case of emergency, the ushers are ready to assist you.

