

## At my Bar Mitzvah—and his



*Dedicated to the memory of a thirteen-year-old hero of the Resistance.*

When I was thirteen, I became Bar Mitzvah.

*When he was thirteen, he became Bar Mitzvah.*

When I was thirteen, my teachers taught me—to put *Tefillin* on my arm.

*When he was thirteen, his teachers taught him—to throw a hand grenade with his arm.*

When I was thirteen, I studied—the pathways of the Bible and roadways of the Talmud.

*When he was thirteen, he studied—the canals of Warsaw and the sewers of the Ghetto.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I took an oath to live as a Jew.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he took an oath to die as a Jew.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I blessed God.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he questioned God.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I lifted my voice and sang.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he lifted his fists and fought.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I read from the Scroll of the Torah.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he wrote a Scroll of Fire.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I wore a new *Tallit* over a new suit.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he wore a rifle and bullets over a suit of rags.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, I started my road of life.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, he began his road to martyrdom.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, family and friends came—to say *l'hayim*.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, Rabbi Akiba and Trumpeldor, Hannah and her seven sons came—to escort him to Heaven.*

At my Bar Mitzvah, they praised my voice, my song, my melody.

*At his Bar Mitzvah, they praised his strength, his courage, his fearlessness.*

When I was thirteen, I was called up to the Torah—I went to the *Bimah*.

*When he was thirteen, his body went up in smoke—his soul rose to God.*

When I was thirteen, I became Bar Mitzvah—and lived.

*When he was thirteen, he became Bar Mitzvah—and lives now within each of us.*

Howard Kahn