

LET'S START PLANNING A—BAR/T MITZVAH



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INTRODUCTION

Is it hard to believe that your child will soon become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah? You might as well brace yourself now. That little boy or girl that just yesterday was strapped into a car seat is today getting all set for adolescence. Our children begin to go through some dramatic changes, physically and emotionally, at the age of thirteen. The rabbis were wise in choosing this age as the proper time for becoming Bar/t Mitzvah.

Midway Jewish Center wants this time in your and your child's life to be one of growth, excitement, and positive learning. In Jewish tradition, we commit ourselves to life-long learning. All Jewish adults, even rabbis, cantors, and educators are obligated to study throughout their lives. It only stands to reason that the occasion of a Bar/t Mitzvah should be a learning experience for the entire family. Becoming a Bar/t Mitzvah is not so much what happens on a single special Shabbat. It is really a process that began as early as your child's *brit* or baby naming.

In the back of this booklet is a glossary. Just about every Hebrew term used in this booklet is there defined. You will find many other terms defined to help you understand Judaism even better. Enjoy the reading and Mazal Tov!

WHAT IS BAR/T MITZVAH ?

In order to understand Bar/t Mitzvah, we have to understand what a mitzvah is. A mitzvah is a deed that connects us. It connects us with the world around us, with the Jewish people, many times with our non-Jewish friends and family, and it connects us with God. We are never closer to God than when we are engaged in a mitzvah. To become Bar/t Mitzvah means to become responsible for fulfilling those mitzvot (that's the plural of mitzvah) each and every day of our lives.

A principal source of the mitzvot we fulfill is the Torah. Over many centuries, our people determined that certain acts brought us closer to God and they recorded these actions in the Torah. But the Torah is not the only source of mitzvot. The rabbis codified many more mitzvot as they pondered the words of Torah and asked themselves what was the right or good way to act. We study their words and thoughts in order to help us make the very best decision in our own lives, decisions that will make the world a better place, our families closer, our selves stronger. As a child becomes 13 years of age, it is imperative that they be surrounded by people who ask the tough questions about what it means to be ethical, kind, and compassionate.

At thirteen years of age, our children become Bar/t Mitzvah. Technically, a girl becomes Bat Mitzvah at the age of twelve, but we nevertheless wait until her 13th birthday for the simhah. The Bar/t Mitzvah status is automatic; it is, as we say, *bidei shamayim*, in the hands of heaven, and so the status of Bar or Bat Mitzvah just happens at the appropriate age. But the ceremony, which may take place months after the actual

thirteenth birthday, is a way of saying that we take nothing for granted. We want our families and our young people to fully understand what a privilege it is to live a full, rich, Jewish life and to become partners with God in everything that we do.

HOW MUCH OF THE SERVICE OUR CHILDREN WILL KNOW

We want each child to develop fully, learning as much as he or she can, in accordance with his or her abilities. We don't want to overwhelm them, but we do want to challenge them. Our studies will include the following core prayers:

FOR A SHABBAT MORNING BAR/T MITZVAH

- *KIDDUSH* Blessing over the wine and Shabbat sanctity
- *SHAḤARIT* A Major Portion of the Morning Service
- *TORAH SERVICE* Taking out and Returning the Torah to the ark
- *BIRKHOT HATORAH* Torah Blessings

ADDITIONAL CHANTING—

- *BIRKHOT HAFTARAH* Haftarah Blessings
- *HAFTARAH* A reading from [The Prophets](#)
- *MAFTIR* The conclusion of the Torah reading

FOR A SHABBAT AFTERNOON (MINḤAH / MA'ARIV) BAR/T MITZVAH

- *KIDDUSH* Blessing over the wine and Shabbat sanctity
- *MINḤAH* A Major Portion of the Afternoon Service
- *TORAH SERVICE* Taking out and Returning the Torah to the ark
- *BIRKHOT HATORAH* Torah Blessings
- *HAVDALAH* The Four Principal Blessings of Havdalah
- *MA'ARIV* The Evening Service

Finally, each child will deliver a brief *Devar Torah* or sermon on the portion of the Torah read that day.

WHY WE TEACH WHAT WE TEACH

There is a reason why we have chosen to teach our young people the above parts of the service:

- ***KIDDUSH*** The blessing over the wine is part of our home celebration of Shabbat. It is a blessing recited in gratitude for rest, for the beauty of the universe, and for the freedoms we enjoy. Shabbat is not a phenomenon reserved for the synagogue. It is sacred time that should fill our homes and our hearts. We encourage you and your child to recite *kiddush* every Friday night, and

thus turn that Friday into a Shabbat. Our B'nei Mitzvah are encouraged to recite *kiddush* at our 6:00 PM service on the Shabbat of their Bar/t Mitzvah.

- **A PORTION OF SHAHARIT / MINHAG / MA'ARIV** Prayer is an integral part of Jewish life. People who know prayer know that there is a source of energy beyond them which they can access to help them through moments of sorrow, trial, pain, and even happiness. We want our young people to lead the congregation in prayer, and they do. In learning these ancient prayers, they will be able to enter synagogues around the world and always find themselves at home.
- **THE TORAH SERVICE** Of course, the Torah service constitutes the very heart of every Shabbat and festival service. We take out and return the Torah to the ark with a bit of pomp and dignity as we pay homage to the central teachings of the Jewish people.
- **BIRKHOT HATORAH** There are two Torah blessings, one recited before and the other after the Torah reading. The first blessing speaks of the Jewish people as chosen, as we feel special in our unique relationship with God. The second blessing notes that by following Torah, we enter the realm of eternity. By following Torah we become one with people who lived before us and one with those who will live well after we have left this physical world.
- **BIRKHOT HAFTARAH (for Shabbat morning only)** The Haftarah blessings are filled with Jewish values and principles. We learn about God's dependability, the importance of hope, our eternal connection to the land of Israel, and the reality that God continues to interact with us. These are important concepts for our young people to know and to integrate into their way of thinking about life.
- **HAFTARAH (for Shabbat morning only)** These words are taken from the second section of the Bible known as *Nevi'im* or Prophets. The recitation of the Haftarah is closely associated with the Torah reading and is typically connected to it thematically or linguistically. *Haftarot* (the plural) may contain some marvelous narratives of our people's history or present us with biblical poetry, both mystifying and evocative.
- **MAFTIR** These are the final words of the Torah portion. Anyone who has peered into the Torah knows that it is without vowels or punctuation. By learning how to chant from the Torah, a human becomes the voice of God and that's why being called to the Torah is known as an honor.

RABBIS' ROLES

Rabbi Levenson will be assigning tutors to the children. Any issues that arise from tutoring should be directed toward him. Both Rabbi Rank and Levenson meet with the children of the Religious School year round, reviewing with them the prayers and challenging them in their thinking about life. Prior to the Bar/t Mitzvah, Rabbi Rank will meet with the entire family to review choreography on the bimah, listen to your child's Devar Torah, and make sure everything is all set for the day of the simhah.

THE TUTORS' ROLES

We are very lucky to have three talented and expert tutors who meet with our children 24 times prior to the Bar/t Mitzvah. They are: Cantor Deborah Zeitlin, Shira Orenstein and Samantha Eller. Six months prior to the Bar/t Mitzvah, children will begin working with the tutors. Appointments are scheduled directly with the tutors and will be at your and their convenience. The tutors work with the kids for the entire six months and bring them to where they need to be in terms of chanting their prayers, Haftarah and Torah portions.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

It probably sounds trite but keeping our kids practicing daily is essential to their success on the bimah. Six months is a handful of months to adults but in the 12-13 year old psyche, it's an eternity! They always have "plenty of time" before the Bar/t Mitzvah, but big people know better. Parents have the right and the responsibility to remind their children that they have a job and it's called homework. The tutors will always assign homework at the end of each private session. When kids show up for their lessons having completed their homework, they can move forward with new material. If they come in unprepared, and it happens week after week, progress is obviously impeded. The cramming and anxiety that sometimes happens in the two weeks prior to the simhah is no fun for anyone. Steady progress is what we encourage and shoot for. Parents play an indispensable role in making that happen.



TIMETABLE FOR THE BAR/T MITZVAH EXPERIENCE

- In the winter of *kitah dalet* (fourth grade), we will assign Bar/t Mitzvah dates.
- Beginning in *kitah vav* (the sixth grade) and continuing through *kitah zayin* (the seventh grade), we devote 30 minutes weekly during Religious School hours to teaching portions of the service.
- About a year before your *simhah*, the rabbi, cantor, principal, ritual chairpeople and administration will discuss Bar/t Mitzvah procedures and answer questions at an annual meeting devoted to that end.
- Six months before the ceremony, the child begins private lessons.
- To become familiar with the procedures of our service, we ask that you attend a minimum of three Shabbat morning services prior to the Bar/t Mitzvah—the more, the better.
- Boys will be learning how to put on *tefillin* and *tallit*, which are to be purchased in advance. As an egalitarian synagogue, we encourage girls to wear *tallit* as well and if they would like, *tefillin* too. Beautiful women's *talliyot* are readily available on the Internet and at local Jewish book stores and gift shops.
- At least three weeks before the *simhah*, the family meets with Synagogue Administrator to discuss the distribution of honors.
- Some time just prior to the *simhah*, the family meets with the Rabbi to review the ceremony in detail.
- The Bar/t Mitzvah may chant Ashrei at the Sunday morning service prior to the Bar/t Mitzvah or Kiddush at the 6:00 PM Shabbat service of the Bar/t Mitzvah. This is the family's choice.

HELPING OUR CHILDREN BECOME RESPONSIBLE JEWS

As the old saying goes—Don't worry that your kids are ignoring you; worry that they are watching you. How you express your Jewishness matters more than a dozen sermons or one hundred lesson plans. There are many ways to help your child become a responsible Jew. For example:

- Light Shabbat candles together
- Recite *kiddush* and *hamotzi* together

- Come to Shabbat services, particularly morning services, together
- Put on **tallit** and **tefillin** at the morning minyan together
- Reminisce about your own childhood Jewish memories
- Visit the graves of some loved ones
- Watch a Jewish movie or see a Jewish play together (Exodus, Fiddler on the Roof, Schindler’s List, Keeping Up with the Steins, etc.)
- “Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah,” by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin

EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance at Solomon Schechter Day School, or in Midway Jewish Center's Religious School, or in some comparable educational alternative for a minimum of six years beginning in the second grade and continuing through the seventh grade
- The family's up-to-date membership in Midway at the time of the Bar/t Mitzvah



- Continued study in the Religious School through the Zayin grade graduation, which all families agree to in order to secure a prime time Bar/t Mitzvah slot. Remember: Bar/t Mitzvah is a milestone, but not a graduation.

• Regular attendance in the Religious School and our family services. Our core family service structure is as follows

GRADE	SHABBAT AM FAMILY SERVICES	SANCTUARY SERVICE	SHABBAT SERVICE ANYWHERE	TOTAL SERVICES PER YEAR
K-1	0	0	0	0
2-5	7	0*	5	12
6	0	7**	5	12
7	0	5**	5	10

*One could count a sanctuary service in place of a family service, but we feel the children may get more out of the family service.

**We ask that parents accompany the child for at least five of these services, beginning at 9:30 AM until the end of the service.

- Please note that services on the *Yamim Nora'im* (High Holidays) do not count toward the satisfaction of our core curriculum.
- Bar/t Mitzvah training does not begin until all academic and service requirements are fulfilled.
- The synagogue reserves the right to postpone the ceremony of students who fail to meet any of our requirements.

THE DIRECTIONS / DECORUM CARD

The synagogue strongly encourages you to include our Directions/Decorum card as part of your invitation. Whether you choose to redo it in order to match the invitations color scheme or send it as is, it is extremely important that your guests be made aware of synagogue protocol, particularly on Shabbat. We have guests from many walks of life enter our sanctuary, and their ignorance of the rules can lead to some embarrassing moments. Please contact the synagogue office to obtain these cards free of charge. Besides directions to the synagogue on one side, the flip side on decorum reads as follows:

DECORUM AT MIDWAY JEWISH CENTER

1. Please keep your attire consistent with the dignity of a religious service.
2. Men wear a kippah whenever in the synagogue. We encourage women to wear head coverings during services and require it while on the bimah.
3. All Jewish males of Bar Mitzvah age wear a *tallit* at morning services.
4. It is inappropriate to bring any gifts into the synagogue on Shabbat.
5. There is no smoking, photography, videography, use of cell phones, or writing, within the synagogue or on the synagogue grounds over Shabbat.
6. Be prepared to pray, study, sing, and celebrate.

BAR/T MITZVAH INVITATION DISPLAY POLICY

Bar/t Mitzvah invitations or any announcement of an off-premise reception may not be on display in the synagogue. Kippah baskets may be distinguished with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child's name and/or some salutation to the congregation consistent with Halakhah (Jewish Law) and the spirit of the day.

HONORS

In addition to the *aliyot* granted to the Bar/t Mitzvah family, honors are offered to synagogue members on the occasion of a *yahrzeit*, *aufruf*, baby naming and for other special occasions as well. As an egalitarian synagogue, honors are given to both men and women. Only an individual or a married couple is called to the Torah for an *aliyah*. Since an *aliyah* is an expression of the *brit* or covenant between God and the Jewish people, these honors are given only to Jews.

KIDDUSH

Following services, the Bar/t Mitzvah family invites the entire congregation to a *kiddush*. Where a luncheon specifically for invited guests only follows the service, the family nevertheless provides a *kiddush* for the entire congregation. Where a family may have an obligation elsewhere following services, it is nevertheless important to be at the Kiddush, if only for ten minutes, so that the Bar/t Mitzvah may be present to help recite the *berakhah* over the wine. Specific arrangements for the *kiddush* may be made through the office.

SE'UDAH SHEL MITZVAH—A MEAL EMANATING FROM A MITZVAH

Sometimes, Jewish people who do not keep kosher during their everyday lives view a kosher Bar/t Mitzvah as hypocritical. Nothing could be further from the truth. As Conservative Jews, we believe in the ancient and holy dietary laws known as *kashrut* and should be particularly inclined to abide by them during sacred times in our lives, e.g., a baby naming, Bar/t Mitzvah, wedding, etc. By planning a kosher affair, we strengthen our identity with our 3,000-year-old Jewish tradition and affirm that the lifecycle observance we are about to observe is something extraordinary and holy.

SYNAGOGUE DECORUM

1. Some people think that when it comes to fashion, anything goes at shul. Not true! Jeans and sneakers, low-cut dresses, exposed mid-riffs, bare backs and shoulders are fashion failings for the smart synagogue-goer. *Tzeniut* or modesty is a mitzvah. Dignity in clothing is a must.
2. All males must wear a *kippah* whenever in the synagogue, a reminder of our humility before God and an outward expression of our Jewish identity.
3. For the same reason, all women, single and married, are strongly encouraged to wear a head covering during services—whether a *kippah*, hat, or doily—and are required to do so if called onto the *bimah*.
4. All Jewish males must wear a *tallit* at morning services. All Jewish women of Bat Mitzvah age and above are encouraged to do the same, as members of the

community equally responsible for the *mitzvot* and worthy of being wrapped in God's embrace.

5. It is inappropriate to bring gifts into the synagogue.
6. Cell phones should not be brought to the synagogue. In case of an emergency, an usher will make phone service available.
7. There is no photography, whether still or video, within the synagogue or on the synagogue grounds over Shabbat. It is suggested that photographs within the Sanctuary and building be taken during the week. The synagogue office will be pleased to permit access to the Sanctuary to the family and photographers.
8. Services begin at 9:00 AM. Ushers will seat latecomers at appropriate times during the service.
9. There is no smoking within the synagogue or on the synagogue grounds over Shabbat. In fact, Midway Jewish Center is a smoke-free facility seven days a week.
10. All obligations to the synagogue which include dues, tuition, building fund, Bar/t Mitzvah fees and all indebtedness must be paid at least 60 days before the event.
11. The tossing of kosher, wrapped, soft sweets at the Bar/t Mitzvah at the conclusion of the Torah reading is customary. These "sweets" may be purchased through our synagogue's Sisterhood.
12. We expect the young guests of the Bar/t Mitzvah to remain within the sanctuary throughout the service. A break for the restroom is fine, but wandering the halls or remaining outside the building is not permitted.
13. Young guests of the Bar/t Mitzvah shall be seated in the first three rows in front of the cantor's lectern.

A TZEDAKAH OPPORTUNITY

For a small fee, family and friends may include brief notes of congratulations that are compiled onto a single sheet and slipped into our Shabbat brochure. It's a very happy way to say Mazal Tov.

SOME TERMS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

(Please note that h is pronounced “ch” as in the term Hanukkah)

Aliyah This Hebrew term means “going up,” and can either refer to making one’s permanent residence in Israel, as in the phrase, “Rachel decided to make *“aliyah,”* or it would also refer to an honor to the Torah, during which one typically must ascend or “go up” onto the *bimah*.

Aliyot The plural of aliyah.

Aron Hakodesh The ark in which the Torah scrolls are kept.

Aufruf An *aliyah* given to a bride and groom just prior to their wedding day.

Ba’al Keriah This is the Hebrew term for Torah Reader. A woman who reads Torah would be referred to as the *Ba’alat Keriah*.

Ba’alei Keriah The plural of Ba’al Keriah.

Berakhah The Hebrew word for blessing. It typically begins, “*Ba-rookh a-tah Adonai...*”

Berakhot The plural of Berakhah.

Besamim The spices associated with the *Havdalah* ceremony, typically cloves and cinnamon stick, symbolizing the wonderful Shabbat aroma we wish to carry with us into the rest of the week.

Bimah The pulpit on which the service is lead and sermons are given.

Birkat Hamazon Literally, “the blessing of the food,” but in reality, a number of blessings recited, and often sung, following a meal.

Committee on Jewish Law and Standards This is a committee of the Rabbinical Assembly that consists of 25 voting rabbis and six non-voting members, who study contemporary problems of Jewish law and resolve these issues in accordance with the dictates of our Tradition and Halakhah, as understood by Conservative Judaism. The committee represents a cross-section of the movement. The Rabbinical Assembly chooses 15 rabbis, the Jewish Theological Seminary chooses five rabbis, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism chooses five rabbis, and it also chooses five non-voting members. A member of the Cantor’s Assembly also sits on the committee as a non-voting member.

Derekh erez Polite, courteous, respectful behavior. This is one of the primary attributes of a Jewish person.

Eliyahu Hanavi Literally, “Elijah the Prophet,” who worked largely in the Northern Kingdom of Israel around 850 BCE. Tradition assigns him the honor of bringing the people good news about the coming of the *Mashiah*.

Erev Shabbat Literally, “Sabbath eve,” which is generally a reference to anytime on Friday before sunset, particularly Friday afternoon.

Gabbai A person knowledgeable in the Torah who follows the reading to assure perfection and stands next to the *Ba'al Keriah*. It is also the person who calls people to the Torah for an *aliyah*.

Gabba'im The plural of *Gabbai*.

Gelilah The honor of dressing the Torah.

Gut Shabbos Literally, “Good Sabbath,” a Yiddish greeting on Shabbat akin to “Good morning” or “Good evening.”

Hadlakat Neiroi Literally, “candle lighting,” which takes place 18 minutes before sunset and marks, at least for the person lighting the candles, the beginning of Shabbat or Yom Tov.

Haftarah That special section from The Prophets chanted on a particular Shabbat or holiday following the Torah reading.

Hagbahah The honor of lifting the Torah.

Halakhah Literally, “the way,” and the term refers to Jewish law, the traditions and customs that invest our communities the world over with a common character.

Hallah This is the name of the special, braided Shabbat bread that is so closely associated with the beginning of Shabbat. For Shabbat dinner and lunch, there should be two, uncut *hallot* (that’s the plural), set on a *hallah* platter and covered with a hallah cover.

Hamotzi This is the name of the prayer recited prior to cutting or breaking the hallah for distribution to all who have come for the Shabbat meal. The term means “who draws out” and is a reference to our gratitude toward God for having “drawn out” this bread from the earth.

Havdalah Literally, “separation,” and the term is the name of the ceremony at the very end of Shabbat which officially brings Shabbat to a close.

Hebrew Birthday The date of birth according to the Hebrew calendar. It is a date that may precede or follow one’s secular birth date, and in rare instances, the two dates may even coincide. Bar/t Mitzvah dates follow the Hebrew calendar.

Hiddur mitzvah Literally, “beautifying a mitzvah.” One can fulfill the mitzvah of tallit through one of the nondescript ***talliyot*** typically available at the entrance to the synagogue sanctuary or one can purchase a tallit of many colors, rich textures, etc. In the latter case, one has most certainly enhanced or beautified the mitzvah.

Humash The Torah or Five Books of Moses, as printed in a book, not a scroll.

Jewish Theological Seminary This is the principal school of the Conservative movement, and responsible for the training of rabbis, cantors, Jewish educators, and academics for Conservative institutions and secular universities. It is located in New York City.

Kabbalat Shabbat Literally, “welcoming Shabbat.” The term is the name of a welcoming ceremony for Shabbat as created by the sixteenth century Jewish mystics of Safed, Israel.

Kashrut The system of Jewish dietary laws which permits certain animals and prohibits others, permits certain fish and prohibits others, and generally keeps dairy and meat meals, dishes, and utensils, separate and apart. The system creates a sense of Jewish distinctiveness throughout the day, linking us with both our ancestors, our contemporaries, and our descendents who have, do, or will keep these laws.

Keriat Hatorah Literally, “reading the Torah.” The term is the name of that section of any service during which the Torah is read or more specifically, chanted.

Kiddush Literally, “sanctification.” The term is the name of a blessing, usually recited over wine, which points to the sanctity of a particular Shabbat or Yom Tov. Both the Shabbat and Yom Tov Kiddush make reference to the Israelite Exodus from Egypt and the Shabbat Kiddush specifically points to the creation of the universe as a special theme of the day.

Kippah A head covering worn by men and women as a sign of humility before God and as an outward expression of Jewish identity.

Lel Shabbat Literally, “Shabbat evening.” The term is a reference to that part of Friday which is Shabbat, as distinguished from *Erev Shabbat*.

Maftir The person responsible for chanting the Haftarah. It has also come to mean the final few words of a Torah reading, since the *maftir* is honored with that reading.

Ma’ariv The evening service which is recited each evening. Its essential element is the recitation of the Shema which must be recited every morning and evening.

Minḥah The afternoon service recited each day.

Minyan The quorum of ten Jews of Bar or Bat Mitzvah age necessary to recite a full service. Various synagogues differ as to whether women are counted in the *minyan* or not, but at Midway, the women count!

Minyanim The plural of minyan.

Mishnah A work of rabbinic law, thought, and argument that was compiled by the year 200 CE and represented the best of rabbinic thinking for a few hundred years.

Mitzvah A sacred act that connects us with the world around us, with the Jewish people, many times with our non-Jewish friends and family, and it connects us with God. We are never closer to God than when we are engaged in a mitzvah.

Mitzvot The plural of mitzvah.

Musaf Literally, “addition.” The term refers to an extra service recited on Shabbat and Yom Tov. A Jew is supposed to pray three times a day but on Shabbat and Yom Tov, four times a day.

Oneg Shabbat Literally, “Sabbath Delight.” In our synagogue this term refers to the gathering of friends for coffee, tea, pastry, fruits, etc., following a Shabbat Ma’ariv service. The term can actually refer to any pleasurable activity that takes place on Shabbat.

Parashat Hashavu’ah Literally, “the portion of the week,” and the term refers to that portion of the Torah that is chanted in the synagogue on a particular Shabbat.

Petihah The honor of opening the ark where the Torah scrolls rest.

- Petihot*** The plural of ***petihah***.
- Se'udah Shelishit*** Literally, "the third meal." The term refers to a meal that takes place between Minhah and Ma'ariv on Saturday evening to fulfill the tradition that a person should eat well on Shabbat, at least three meals.
- Se'udah Shel Mitzvah*** A meal that emanates from a mitzvah as the meal that follows a wedding or Bar and Bat Mitzvah.
- Shabbat*** Literally, "Sabbath." This term is a reference to the great institution that God gave to the Jewish people, and which the Jewish people in turn, gave to the world: a day of rest, learning, and spiritual rejuvenation.
- Shabbat Shalom*** Literally, "Sabbath Peace!" The term is the typical greeting used on Shabbat.
- Shabbos/Shabbes*** This is simply the Yiddish pronunciation of Shabbat.
- Shomer Shabbat*** Literally, "one who observes Shabbat." Generally this term is used to describe someone who observes Shabbat with tremendous concern for all the various laws of Shabbat.
- Shulhan Arukh*** This work literally means "The Set Table," and refers to that code of Jewish law written systematically according to topics by the Sephardic Rabbi Yosef Karo of Spain and Israel, (1488-1575). Although it is a sixteenth century work, it is widely consulted, even today.
- Siddur*** This is the name of the prayer book used daily. If the siddur is accidentally dropped, the tradition is to pick it up and kiss it as it contains God's name and we therefore show the book great reverence.
- Tallit*** The prayer shawl worn during services, particularly morning services.
- Talliyot/Tallitot*** The plural of tallit.
- Talmud*** A 20 volume set of Jewish law, lore and debates, the classic rabbinic interpretation of the Torah between the year one to 600 C.E.
- Tanakh*** This is the Hebrew term for Bible. The term itself is an acronym for the three sections of the Jewish Bible; the Torah, the ***Nevi'im*** or Prophets, and the ***Ketuvim*** or Scriptures.

Te'amim The musical symbols used to determine how to phrase and chant a Torah or Haftarah reading. They are also known as tropes.

Tefillin The black boxes containing sacred scrolls which are wrapped onto the arm and around the head each morning (except on Shabbat and **Yom Tov**) in order to express one's love for God and the degree to which one feels "bound" by the **mitzvot**. They are typically referred to as phylacteries.

Teshuvah Literally, "turning." A term that refers to the practice of repentance which all Jewish people are encouraged to engage in daily. It can also refer to the official written answer of a rabbi to a specific problem in Halakhah.

Tikkun Olam Literally, "repair of the world." It refers to the mitzvah of doing our best to leave this world a better place than we found it.

Torah This is a sacred scroll containing the five books of Moses. Whenever the scroll is lifted, we rise in reverence for the word and spirit of God that the scroll contains.

Trope A musical symbol used to determine how to phrase and chant a Torah or Haftarah reading. They are also known as **te'amim**.

Tzedakah Literally, "righteousness." It refers to the daily **mitzvah** of giving money to those in need. A traditional time to give **tzedakah** is **Erev Shabbat** or Friday afternoon, prior to **hadlakat neiros**.

Yahrzeit The anniversary of the death of a loved one. It is a date that follows the Hebrew calendar. We light a candle on that day (beginning the evening before) and recite the Kaddish prayer at the synagogue services both in the evening and morning.

Zemirot This term is a reference to the special Shabbat songs that are sung on Shabbat during or following a meal.

AN ALIYAH: IT'S AN HONOR -- BUT WHAT DO I DO?

It is a great honor to be called to the Torah. A Torah honor is known as an *aliyah*. The *aliyah* is a way in which we are privileged to give voice to the most sacred words of our Tradition, the words of Torah which represent the words of God. In ancient times, the one who received an *aliyah* also chanted the Torah. Don't worry—someone else will be chanting the text in your behalf, but the honor is still yours. This is what you do:

Before The Torah is Read

1. Ascend the *bimah* (pulpit) and move to the right of the Torah Reader.
2. Wrap the *tallit* (prayer shawl) corner around your pointer finger.
3. Women not wearing a *tallit* do the same using the *hagoret* (Torah belt).
4. Lightly touch the word that the Torah Reader is pointing to.
5. Kiss the corner of the *tallit* or *hagoret* (Torah belt).
6. Roll the Torah closed and as you hold both handles, recite the following:

You begin with:

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ.

Congregation responds:

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

You continue:

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ,

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

You begin with:

Barekhu et Adonai hamevorakh

Congregation responds:

Barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam va'ed.

You continue:

Barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam va'ed.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha'olam,

asher bahar banu mikol ha'amim

venatan lanu et Torahto,

Barukh atah Adonai, notein haTorah.

The blessing means: Praise Adonai to whom praises are due! Praises are due Adonai at all times. Praised are You, Adonai our God who rules the universe, who has chosen us from all nations by giving us Torah. Praised are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

After The Torah is Read

1. Wrap the *tallit* (prayer shawl) corner around your pointer finger.
2. Women not wearing a *tallit* do the same using the *hagoret* (Torah belt).
3. Lightly touch the word that the Torah Reader is pointing to.
4. Kiss the corner of the *tallit* or *hagoret* (Torah belt).
5. Roll the Torah closed and as you hold both handles, recite the following:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵינוּ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

***Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha'olam,
asher natan lanu Torat emet
vehayeit olam nata betokheinu,
Barukh atah Adonai, notein haTorah.***

This blessing means: Praised are You, *Adonai* our God who rules the universe, who by giving us a Torah of truth has planted eternal life deep within us. Praised are You, *Adonai*, who gives the Torah.

1. Don't leave yet.
2. Move away from the Torah Reader and remain on the *bimah* (pulpit).
3. After the following *aliyah*, greet the rabbi, cantor, and synagogue representatives.
4. You have fully completed your *aliyah* and may now return to your seat.

Following Your Aliyah

Having completed an *aliyah*, the customary greeting that others may offer to you is:

To a man: ***Yishar Kohakha*** -- יִישַׁר כֹּהֲחָךְ

To a woman: ***Yishar Koheikh*** -- יִישַׁר כֹּהֵיכָךְ

More power to you!

And the response to the greeter would be:

To a man: ***Barukh tihiyeh*** -- בְּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה

To a woman: ***Berukhah tehi*** -- בְּרוּכָה תִּהְיֶה

May you be blessed!