

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Glossary

Bar/Bat Mitzvah—literally **son/daughter of the commandment**. A child who becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah is recognized as an adult in the eyes of the Jewish community and is thus obligated to follow the commandments in the Torah.

B'nei Mitzvah- Plural of Bar Mitzvah.

B'not Mitzvah- Plural of Bat Mitzvah

TaNakh – the acronym referring to the three parts of the **Hebrew Bible**; Tav for Torah, Nun for N'vi'im ("Prophets"), and Khaf for K'tuvim ("Writings").

Torah – literally "**instruction**," this is comprised of the Chumash, or "Five Books of Moses." The English titles for these books are attempts at capturing the thematic essence of each book: **Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy**. The Hebrew titles for these books are simply the first important word from each book: **Bereishit** ("In the beginning"), **Shemot** ("Names"), **VaYikra** ("And he called"), **BaMidbar** ("In the wilderness"), & **Devarim** ("Words").

Parsha – literally "**section**" or "**portion**," is one of the 54 sections of the Torah that are read annually. The Torah readings follow an annual cycle in which each parsha is read consecutively; while Jewish holidays can interrupt the weekly parsha, readings generally progress on a weekly basis running from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy. The names of each *parsha* come from the first important word in that week's Torah reading.

Aliyah – literally "**ascension**," refers to a section of the weekly Torah reading. A person is honored by being called "up" to recite blessings before and after this reading. Traditionally, the weekly reading (parsha) was divided into seven Torah readings (aliyot).

D'var Torah – literally "**Word of Torah**." This refers to the speech, usually discussing some aspect of the weekly Torah or Haftarah portion, delivered by the Bar or Bat Mitzvah after the reading of Scriptures.

Trope (or cantillation)– special musical notation used to sing the words of Torah and Haftarah.

Maftir – literally "**concluder**," this is commonly misunderstood as simply referring to the final section of the Torah reading. It is also the title of the person called up in honor of the final section. It has become a custom for this final Torah reading to mark the child's transition into a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Haftarah – literally "**conclusion**," this is not related to the word "Torah" at all. The Haftarah is usually a reading from the **Prophets** that relates in subject or theme to the Torah reading. The Haftarah is both preceded and concluded with blessings.

T'filah – literally "**Prayer**," is also called the **Amidah** ("**Standing**"), because these blessings are recited while standing. T'filah is the main section of every worship service and is comprised of 19 blessings on weekdays and 7 blessings on Shabbat & Holy Days.

Tallit – literally "**prayer shawl**." The tallit has four fringes, one on each corner, tied in a special way to symbolize the **613 mitzvot**—the number of commandments in the Torah.

Prayer Packet Contents

(with corresponding Prayer Book pages)

- 1) **Kiddush (p. 5)** – this prayer is chanted over the **wine**, thanking God for creating the fruit of the vine. The Kiddush for Shabbat reminds us that we were chosen by God with love to observe Shabbat and to carry out God's commandments.
- 2) **Tallit Blessing (p. 171)**– the blessing we say as we wrap ourselves in a Tallit (“**prayer shawl**”).
- 3) **Birchot Hashachar (p. 175-7)** – part of the introductory **morning prayers**. These b'rachot (“blessings”) thank and acknowledge God for the good in the world and help us to make holy everyday acts such as opening our eyes and getting out of bed.
- 4) **Yotzer Or (p. 195)** – a prayer thanking God for **creating light** as well as the world and everything in it.
- 5) **V'ahavta (p. 201)** – this prayer is taken directly from the Torah and so is chanted using **trope**.

The V'ahavta **commands us to love God** by respecting and following the commandments. This prayer immediately follows the **Shema**, the most important prayer in our liturgy which proclaims that **God is One**.

- 6) **Adonai S'fatai (p. 205)** – the introductory blessing before recitation of the **T'filah**. This little opening prayer asks **God to open our lips so that we may declare God's glory**.
- 7) **Avot (p. 206)** – the first blessing of the Amidah asks God to watch over us, protect us, and bless us due to the merit of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.
- 8) **G'vurot (p. 207)** – the second blessing of the Amidah praises **God's awesome powers**. These powers are evidence of God's greatness—the same greatness that gives us life and the strength to make the world a better place.
- 9) **Torah Service** – a series of blessings and actions that prepare us to take the **Torah from the ark and to read from it**.
 - a. **Ashrei Adam- (p. 245)**- is a reading taken from Proverbs that proclaims that by studying Torah, a person becomes more fulfilled and richer than through gaining silver or fine gold.

b. **Gadlu** (p. 248)- In reciting this one line, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah invites the congregation to join in praising God.

10) **Torah Blessings** (p.250)- the reading of Torah is preceded and followed by blessings. The blessing before the reading of Torah begins with the **Bar'chu** – a call to the congregation to praise God, and continues by thanking God for choosing us to receive the gift of Torah. The blessing after the reading of Torah praises God for giving us the Torah of Truth and eternal life. Although we cannot live forever, by reading Torah and passing it on to our children, we keep Torah and our rich heritage alive forever.

11) **Haftarah Blessings** (p. 254) – the blessings preceding and following the chanting of Haftarah praise and thank God for the **teachings of the prophets**. The blessing after the reading of the Haftarah also thanks God for sanctifying **Shabbat**. p. 145-146

12) **Aleinu**- (p. 282)-is a prayer recited at the conclusion of every service. It praises God for making the Jewish people a unique nation and calls for the day when God will be one and God's name will be one.

13) **Ein Keiloheinu** (p. 322)- is sung at the conclusion of the Saturday morning service. When singing its words, we proclaim that there is no other god like our God, who is also our ruler and our redeemer.

Other Important Information Regarding Tutoring

Homework Sheets – each week the cantor will fill out an assignment sheet for your son/daughter. On it, the cantor will assess your son/daughter's progress, write down the skills reviewed in session, and describe in detail, the assignment for the following week. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that the student practices the assignment every night for approximately 20-25 minutes. Parents must sign and return the assignment sheet to the cantor at their son/daughter's next lesson with the cantor.

Prayer CD – Each student has received a prayer CD, which includes all the Prayers for which he/she will be responsible. Students should use this CD, along with the prayer packet, to help them study and learn their prayers.

