

BAR MITZVAH



RHYS
HARBOUR

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MAY 28, 2022 — 27 IYAR 5782

PARSHAT BECHUKOTAI

RABBI GILAH LANGNER

RHYS
ALLEN
HARBOUR

Dear Family and Friends,

Shalom! And welcome to Kol Ami. We are delighted and honored that you are joining us from near and far to celebrate Rhys Harbour's Bar Mitzvah.

Bar Mitzvah means "son of the commandment." Becoming Bar Mitzvah occurs when a Jewish boy turns 13 (or older) and is ready to perform mitzvot (commandments). Though the Jewish religion has been around for nearly 4,000 years, Bar Mitzvah ceremonies only became a tradition about 700 years ago, and Bat Mitzvahs for about 100 years. This "coming of age" marks the time from which the child may fully participate in the traditions and rituals of Jewish life. Covid affected many things in this world including Rhys' Bar Mitzvah—it was delayed a year so that we could have our family and friends present.

Hebrew

You will notice that most of the service is in Hebrew. Hebrew emerged as one of the first ancient Semitic languages. The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters and is written from right to left. We have many friends and family members who don't speak or read Hebrew, and we understand how awkward this whole experience might feel. First and foremost, thank you for being here. We hope to make you feel as comfortable as possible, with explanations during the service, translations on every page, and transliterations in case you'd like to try to sing along.

One important point to remember is the act of prayer is very personalized. Even Jewish congregants may feel more connected to a part of the service, particular phrase, or a certain song. If you are so inclined, you may use this time during our service to make your own personal connection to what you believe. While specific religions have their own rituals and protocols, spirituality is an element common to all religious practices. We believe that spirituality is an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being, and this may lead to a connectedness with a larger reality.

The Service

Hopefully the following explanations will help make you more comfortable with what is happening during the service.

Rhys will be joining Rabbi Gilah Langner and others in leading the congregation through the Saturday morning Sabbath service. The services are conducted from a Siddur (prayerbook). Every word is not recited. Instead, excerpts are chosen. The melodies are often universal but can also be specific to a congregation. At the beginning of the service, we express our gratitude for God and our wonder at the world, with verses largely taken from the Book of Psalms. The Sh'ma ("Listen!"), one of the oldest prayers, affirms there is but one God, and that we are all creations of God. During this prayer congregants cover their eyes so that they can concentrate properly without becoming distracted. Another prayer, the Amidah, reminds us of core values of Judaism - to give thanks, to find peace, to experience holiness, and to carry on traditions. This prayer contains a silent devotion recited while standing.

On Saturday mornings, the Torah service is a central focus of the Bar Mitzvah service. Torah means teaching and it is the sacred book of Judaism's origin and traditions. The Torah is actually a scroll that contains the books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Each Torah scroll is handwritten. Every Saturday a portion of the Torah is chanted so that eventually the whole Torah is heard by the congregation.

The act of reading from the Torah is quite involved. Because of the Torah's importance to the Jewish people, we rise as it is taken from the Ark. First the Torah is removed from the Ark. Rhys will then carry the Torah around the sanctuary. Some congregants choose to kiss the scroll as an act of love and respect. The Torah is then opened to the section of the week's reading.

Readings are preceded and concluded with blessings. It is an honor to be called to bless the Torah, and this honor is called an Aliyah. Aliyah means to go up. Rabbi Gilah will call each person to the Torah by singing "Na la-amod" (please rise). Once the blessings are recited, the reader begins chanting. The Torah reader uses a Yad (pointer) to avoid touching the scroll, as it is fragile. The excerpt is concluded with a final blessing.

Rhys will lead the Torah service. For his Torah portion, Rhys will chant from the book of Leviticus. This section, called Bechukotai, outlines a contract between God and the Israelites and what happens if they follow his commandments and if they do not. The Torah portion can be found in the large red book, Etz Hayim (Tree of Life) on page 747. The red book includes fascinating interpretations of the Torah writings that you might find of interest. When Rhys completes his chanting, the congregation will sing the song, “Siman Tov uMazel Tov,” which means “good signs and good fortune.”





Symbols and Terminology

Aliyah—Means, “to go up.” Congregation members and guests are honored by being called up to recite the blessings over the Torah.

Ark—Houses the Torah scroll. Standing when the Ark is open is a sign of respect.

Challah—A braided bread that is eaten on Shabbat, after reciting the HaMotzi blessing.

Eternal Light-- A light that shines continuously above the Ark as a symbol that God is always present.

Israel—This word when used in the prayer book and Torah refers to the Jewish people, not the State of Israel.

Kippah or Yarmulke—Head covering which is worn as a sign of reverence to God. Feel free to take one as a memento of Rhys’ Bar Mitzvah.

Kiddush—The sanctification of the day recited over wine at the beginning of festivals and Shabbat.

Mourners’ Kaddish—A prayer recited by those in mourning or those observing a recent death or the anniversary of a death.

Mazel Tov—Congratulations!

Mitzvot—Jewish commandments or laws.

Shabbat—The Jewish day of Sabbath, which begins sunset on Friday and continues for 25 hours.

Siddur—Prayer book written in Hebrew with English translations. The book opens from the right because Hebrew is read from right to left.

Tallit—A prayer shawl. The fringes attached to the corners remind us of the 613 commandments in the Torah.

Yad—Pointer used to read from the Torah.



Rhys' Bar Mitzvah Project

When a child trains for his Bar Mitzvah, he is encouraged to perform a community service project. This project is known as a "mitzvah project." Rhys originally envisioned that his mitzvah project would entail an environmental project some kind. However, when Kol Ami began emerging from Covid restrictions, the congregation was greatly in need of technical help to run hybrid services ("roomers" and "zoomers"). Rhys volunteered to be the "Zoom Gabbai" for Kol Ami. Rhys has set up the equipment and run the Zoom/tech part of Kol Ami's services, lending a much-needed hand to the community.

Todah Rabbah (Special Thanks)

We would like to thank Chaya Silver for working with Rhys over the past nine months to prepare him for his Bar Mitzvah. A big thank you to Rabbi Gilah Langner and the Kol Amites (the musicians) who worked very hard to make this day special for us. We are grateful to Rhys' Jewish Children's Educational Program (JCEP) teachers — Zachary Schrag, Erin Bueno de Mesquita, Steve Pershing and Rabbi Richard Ruth -- for teaching Rhys over the past eight years. Thank you to family and friends who have come today to honor Rhys' Bar Mitzvah. We extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone for all that you have done to influence Rhys and help him become the person he is today and will be tomorrow.

Thank you to Kevin McGuire for preparing the delicious Kiddush luncheon for us today. Please join us in Fellowship Hall following the service. Shabbat Shalom!



Honors and Aliyot

First Reading: ----- Danita Seamans (Aunt)

Second Reading: ----- Nathan Goldberg (Uncle), Lori Goldberg (Aunt),
Malach, Kira and Caleb Goldberg (Cousins)

Opening the Ark: ----- Hanna Goldberg (Grandmother)
Danita Seamans (Aunt)

First Aliyah: ----- Rhys' Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, and Grandmothers

Second Aliyah: ----- Shana and Mark Harbour (Parents)

Third Aliyah: ----- Rhys Harbour

Torah Lifter and Dresser: ---- Joel Goldberg (Uncle)
Leah Goldberg (Aunt)

Prayer for the Members
of the Armed Services: ----- Mayer Goldberg (Cousin)

Aleinu: ----- Ari Goldberg (Cousin)





Peanut Butter the cat and Trooper the Covid Pup

