

# Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah



”וקשרתם לאות על ידך והיו לטטפות בין עיניך” (דברים ו:ח)

*“And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand,  
and they shall be as ornaments between your eyes.”*

(Devarim 6:8)



## Becoming Bar Mitzvah

...אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שַׁבָּת "דְּבָרִים (ו:ח)

*"Who has made us holy with His commandments and  
has commanded us to light the Shabbat light."*

(Devarim 6:8)



**Becoming Bat Mitzvah**

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## Dear Bar Mitzvah...

*Dear Bar Mitzvah*

*It gives us great pleasure to wish you and your family Mazal Tov on your forthcoming Bar Mitzvah. We sincerely hope that all the preparations go well so that when the great day finally arrives, everything will run smoothly. The weeks and months ahead are certainly going to be very busy and exciting for all your family as you plan for this great event in your life.*

*We are sure you will be relieved to know that a number of important details will be done on your behalf. Therefore, you will probably not have to worry about booking a hall and caterer, or choosing the printer to produce the invitations. But of course, there are some important aspects regarding your Bar Mitzvah that will be your responsibility alone. Firstly, you will surely want to be word perfect when you are called up to the Torah so you will of course, need to practise regularly. But there is an even more important aspect, which we would like you to think about. You are fortunate to be a member of a great and proud people - the Jewish people. Therefore, all the studies you undertake now will be a basis on which to build for your future as a responsible and knowledgeable Jewish adult.*

*The good news is that your Bar Mitzvah is not an event that will happen for just one day or weekend and then be over and forgotten, because once you become a Bar Mitzvah, you remain a Bar Mitzvah for the rest of your life.*

*We wish you a very happy and successful future and I pray that you will take your place as an active and committed member of your community.*



## Dear Bat Mitzvah...

*Dear Bat Mitzvah*

*Becoming Bat Mitzvah is a very special time in your life. It is a time to look back with satisfaction at past achievements. It is a time to look forward with excitement and anticipation to a future filled with happiness and success. Most of all, it is a time to express your gratitude to Hashem and your appreciation to your parents for enabling you to reach this important milestone in your life.*

*Becoming Bat Mitzvah signifies that you are now of an age when you take upon yourself the obligation and responsibility to be a part of our Jewish nation.*

*As a Bat Mitzvah, you are a precious link in the chain of our heritage. You now have the opportunity to continue a legacy which has kept the Jewish people alive throughout the centuries.*

*As you embark upon this road to adulthood, draw on the strengths and values of our Matriarchs as your role models: the faith of Sarah who together with her husband Avraham taught the world to believe in the Oneness of G-d; the loving kindness of Rivkah who demonstrated her concern for the welfare of both humans and animals; the self sacrifice of Rachel who motivated by compassion shared the secret signals with her sister; the gratitude of Leah who saw the wonders of Hashem in seemingly natural events. These women have charted the course upon which you will travel to become a proud and confident daughter of Israel - a Bat Yisrael - faithful to the privileges and responsibilities of our Jewish heritage and its traditions.*

*Becoming Bat Mitzvah is a time for celebration. It is a celebration in which your parents and family share their joy that you are now able to perform the mitzvot as an adult. But it is also a celebration, significant enough to leave you with a lasting spiritual impression long after your party is over.*

*With warmest good wishes for a happy and successful future in which you will become a valued and valuable member of your community.*



## Section One

## The Written Test



*Hebrew writing may be in block or script and should be without vowels.*

### Jewish Education

The aim of this section is to highlight the importance of Jewish education as an ongoing experience. Ideally, it begins from earliest childhood. However, Rabbi Akiva was forty years of age when he began to study. Therefore, we are never too old to begin our Jewish learning and certainly never old enough to stop learning.

You should be aware of the vital role that Jewish education has played in ensuring the survival of the Jewish people.

### General Knowledge

- Your Jewish name spelled correctly in Hebrew
- The Hebrew Alef Bet in the correct order and the numerical value of each letter
- (*For boys only*) The name of your sidrah spelled correctly in Hebrew
- Any Jewish date in Hebrew including the year.

*The answers to the following questions may be written in Hebrew or English. There will be no penalty for incorrect Hebrew spelling or transliteration.*

- The Hebrew names of the three sections of the **תנ"ך** (Tenach) in order
- The Hebrew names of the five books of the **חומש** (Chumash) in order
- The Hebrew names of the four books of the **נביאים ראשונים** (Nevi'im Rishonim) in order
- The Hebrew names of the **חמש מגילות** (Five Megillot)
- The Hebrew names of the three daily services in order
- The Hebrew name of the additional service for special days
- The Hebrew names of the Jewish months in order
- The Hebrew main occasions in each month (*see pages 14-19*)

### **שבת** (Shabbat) – A Day of Holiness, Rest and Delight

- The origin of Shabbat; its prayers, laws and customs
- Preparation for Shabbat
- The concept of **מלאכה** (Melachah)
- **קידוש** (Kiddush); **לחם משנה** (Lechem Mishneh);

#### Recommended

#### Reading:

*The Jewish Way*  
by Rabbi Arye Forta –  
Part Four  
(United Synagogue  
Agency for Jewish  
Education Publications)

**זמירות** (Zemirot); **ברכת המזון** (Birkat Hamazon)

- Shabbat in the synagogue including: the role of the Rabbi, Chazan and wardens
  - **Special events:** Naming a Baby; Bar Mitzvah; Aufruf; Yahrzeit
  - **סעודה שלישית** (Seudah Shlishit); **הבדלה** (Havdalah)
- (See pages 19-21)



## **בית הכנסת (The Synagogue)**

You should be able to explain the following:

<b>אָרֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ</b>	(Aron HaKodesh)	<b>נֵר תָּמִיד</b>	(Ner Tamid)
<b>מִזְרָח</b>	(Mizrach)	<b>בִּמָּה</b>	(Bimah)
<b>שְׁלִיחַ צַבּוּר</b>	(Sh'lich Tzibbur)	<b>פְּתִיחָה</b>	(Petichah)
<b>עֲלִיָּה</b>	(Aliyah)	<b>בַּעַל קֶרִי'אָה</b>	(Ba'al Keri'ah)
<b>מַפְטִיר</b>	(Maftir)	<b>הַפְּטָרָה</b>	(Haftarah)
<b>הַגְּבָהָה</b>	(Hagbahah)	<b>גְּלִילָה</b>	(Gelilah)
<b>מִנְיָן</b>	(Minyan)		

(See pages 22-24)

## **תפילה (Tefillah)**

**שְׁמָע** (Shema) and **עֲמִידָה** (Amidah)

(See pages 25-26)

## **כַּשְׁרוּת (Kashrut)**

You should be aware of the major importance of kashrut in Jewish living and how its observance has played such a vital role in Jewish survival.

- The **כָּשֶׁר** (kasher) butcher
- Characteristics of permitted animals, birds and fish
- **שְׁחִיטָה** (Shechitah)
- The laws of kashering meat and liver
- The kasher kitchen – its design and equipment; meat and milk; inspection of fruit and vegetables; eggs;
- **טְבִילַת כֵּלִים** (tevilat kelim)
- Eating out -kashrut away from home.

(See pages 26-28)

### **Recommended**

#### **Reading:**

*The Jewish Way*  
by Rabbi Arye Forta –  
Part Four  
(United Synagogue  
Agency for Jewish  
Education Publications)





## Special Events Throughout Our Lives

- **ברית מילה** (Brit Milah)
  - **פדיון הבן** (Pidyon HaBen)
  - **סדר זכד הבת** (Seder Zeved Habat)
  - **בר מצוה** (Bar Mitzvah)
  - **בת מצוה** (Bat Mitzvah)
  - Jewish Marriage
- (See pages 29-31)

## ספר תורה (Sefer Torah)

Its sanctity; how it is written; its laws and customs  
(See pages 31-35)

### Notes:

## The Outward Signs

- **תפלין** (Tefillin)
  - **מזוזה** (Mezuzah)
  - **ציצית** (Tzitzit)
- (See pages 36-37)

## Jewish Values

- **כבוד אב ואם** (Kibbud Av Va'em) – Honouring Parents
  - **הכנסת אורחים** (Hachnassat Orchim) – Hospitality
  - **צדקה** (Tzedakah) – Charity
  - **בקר חולים** (Bikkur Cholim) – Visiting the Sick
  - **הכנסת כלה** (Hachnassat Kalah) – Providing for a Poor Bride
  - **הלויית המת** (Halvayat Hamet) – Accompanying the Dead
  - **הבאת שלום בין אדם לחבירו**  
(Hava'at Shalom Bein Adam Lachavero) –  
Making Peace Between One and Another
  - **קדוש השם** (Kiddush Hashem) – Sanctifying Hashem's Name
  - **חלול השם** (Chillul Hashem) – Profaning Hashem's Name
- (See pages 37-40)

## מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל (Medinat Yisrael)

You should be familiar with the following:

*Personalities and events leading up to the establishment of the State of Israel, including:*

- Theodor Herzl
- The Zionist Congress
- The Balfour Declaration
- Chaim Weizmann
- The Second World War
- The Effect of the Holocaust
- Illegal Immigration
- The Declaration of Independence

*Israel from May 1948 onwards, including:*

- The Israeli Flag
- The War of Independence
- The Knesset
- The Sinai Campaign
- The Six Day War
- The Camp David Accords
- Intifada
- The Search for Peace

*Everyday life in Israel, including:*

- Eliezer Ben Yehudah and the Hebrew Language
- Religious Life
- Jewish Holy Places
- Transport
- Agricultural Settlements – the Kibbutz and Moshav
- The Arab Boycott
- The Geography and Climate of Israel



### **Recommended**

#### **Reading:**

*Medinatenu  
(second edition)  
(United Synagogue  
Agency for Jewish  
Education  
Publications)*

## Section Two

## Judaism and Me



*This section presents opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts, feelings, opinions and ideas through a range of creative options.*

**Pupils may choose one topic from any of the following three sections:**

### **i) Project**

- Shabbat
- Chagim
- Kashrut
- Tefillin
- My Favourite Biblical Personality
- Israel
- Jewish Life in Eastern Europe
- My Family History\*
- A History of My Synagogue
- A Visitor's Handbook for My Synagogue

### **ii) Creative Writing**

- How becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah can change my life
- What it means to be responsible for my actions
- Report of an interview with either my Rabbi, Chazan or Warden
- Description of a mitzvah that I have been, or would like to be involved in
- A memorable Jewish experience of mine
- What Shabbat\* means to me  
\*(you may, if you wish, choose any festival in place of Shabbat)
- The Jewish things I value most

### **iii) Design & Technology**

- Tzitzit
- Challah cloth
- Etrog box
- Chanukiah
- Tefillin bag
- Afikoman bag

*\* This project is devised by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain and project material (which includes a copy of the book) should be obtained from:  
JGSGB  
PO Box 180,  
St Albans,  
Herts AL2 3WH  
for £7.25  
including postage  
(cheques made payable to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain)*

The chosen topic should be produced under the guidance of the tutor.

Projects and creative writing should contain the pupil's personal thoughts, feelings and experiences. Where appropriate, reference should be made to the Biblical sources, and its laws and customs.

The completed work should be sent to the United Synagogue Agency for Jewish Education for assessment, clearly marked with the pupil's name and address, to be received **at least two months before the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.**



Please ensure that design and technology items are carefully packaged so as to avoid being damaged in transit.

All work will be returned after assessment.

In awarding a grade, the following criteria will be taken into account as applicable:

Comprehensiveness • Factual Accuracy • Originality  
Presentation • Neatness and General Appearance

## Practical Activities

## Section Three

Attendance and participation at the Bnei Mitzvah weekend organised by Tribe.

In addition, the following should be strongly encouraged:

- i) Participation in appropriate programmes provided within the pupil's local community
- ii) Contribution to the local community in the form of community or social service, e.g. assisting at children's services; visiting the sick or elderly; etc.
- iii) For girls, a visit to a mikvah, accompanied by an appropriate adult.

*Notes:*

## Section Four

## Oral and Practical Test

(Conducted locally by the Rabbi)



### Hebrew Reading - prepared and unprepared texts.

#### *Prepared texts:*

- קידוש (Kiddush) for Friday night
- First paragraph of בְּרַכַּת הַמֶּזֶן (Grace after meals)
- First paragraph of שְׁמַע (Shema)
- Topography of the Siddur

You should know the following בְּרָכוֹת (blessings) by heart and when they are said:

- הַמּוֹצִיא וְנִטְיִילַת יָדַיִם
- שְׁהַכֵּל
- מְזוֹנוֹת
- הָעֵץ
- הָאֲדָמָה
- צִיצִית (for boys)
- הַגָּפֶן
- שְׁחֵינִי
- לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת (for girls)

#### *The contents of your sidrah (for boys)*

Comprehension of the portion you will be reading from the Torah

- The connection between your sidrah and haftarah or between the haftarah and the occasion on which it is read.
- Ability to put on your Tefillin, reciting the appropriate blessings by heart.

#### *For Kohanim and Levi'im*

If you are a Kohen or Levi, you will be asked questions on your special role and responsibilities concerning the following:

- Being called up to the Torah
- נְשִׂאֵת כַּפִּיִם (Nesi'at Kappayim)
- Marriage
- פְּדִיּוֹן הַבֵּן (Pidyon HaBen)
- Visiting a cemetery

(See pages 40-44)

*Notes:*

## The Jewish Year

*The following information refers to the last item under the heading 'General Knowledge' (see page 4). You should be familiar with the Hebrew names and terms and know what they mean in English.*



### רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ (Rosh Chodesh)

A Jewish month has either 29 or 30 days. A Jewish leap year has 13 months. The thirteenth month is called **אָדָר שֵׁנִי** (Adar Sheni). There are 7 Jewish leap years in every cycle of 19 years.

On Rosh Chodesh, we add **יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֵא** (Ya'aleh Veyavo) in the Amidah and Birkat Hamazon. We recite **חֲצִי הַלֵּל** (Chatzi Hallel) and a special Amidah for Musaf.

The Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh is called **שַׁבַּת מְבָרָכִים** (Shabbat Mevarachim). On this Shabbat, we recite a special prayer called **בִּרְכַּת הַחֹדֶשׁ** (Birkat Hachodesh) during which the name of the new month is announced plus the day(s) on which it will occur during the coming week.

### Notes on the Jewish Calendar

1. The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, which means it depends on the moon. Nevertheless, as will be explained shortly, the Jewish year must be regulated according to the solar year.
2. There are normally 12 months in the Jewish year and the length of each month is based on the time taken by the moon to orbit the earth, which is approximately twenty-nine and a half days. As we cannot have a month with twenty-nine and a half days, a Jewish month has either 29 or 30 days, never more or less.
3. The first and thirtieth days are called Rosh Chodesh. The twenty ninth of every month is always Erev Rosh Chodesh because the following day will either be the thirtieth of that month or the first of the new month.
4. If the month has 30 days, there are two days Rosh Chodesh. They are the thirtieth, which is the first day Rosh Chodesh, and the first of the new month, which is the second day Rosh Chodesh. If the month has only 29 days, then there is only one day Rosh Chodesh, which is on the first of the new month.

**Notes:**



5. The Jewish (lunar) year is usually 11 days shorter than the solar year. Therefore, after three years it will be 33 days shorter. This means that as the years go by, Pesach would not occur in spring as the Torah commands. Shavuot therefore, would not occur in summer or Succot in autumn. We cannot allow that to happen, so to solve the problem, we insert an extra month of thirty days every two or three years to lengthen the Jewish year. These years are called leap years.

6. In a Jewish leap year, the twelfth month is called **אָדָר רִשּׁוֹן** (Adar Rishon) and the thirteenth month is **אָדָר שֵׁנִי** (Adar Sheni). The extra month is in fact Adar Rishon and not, as mistakenly thought, Adar Sheni.

**Notes:**

**ניסן**

**Nissan**

**תַּעֲנִית בְּכוֹרִים** (Ta'anit Bechorim) Fast of the Firstborn is on the 14th. **פֶּסַח** (Pesach) commences on the 15th and lasts for 8 days. It is the first of the **שְׁלוֹשׁ רְגָלִים** (Shalosh Regalim).

Pesach is also called **חַג הַמַּצּוֹת** (Chag Hamatzot) and **זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ** (Zeman Cherutenu).

*The following activities are essential to ensure that the home is ready for Pesach. You should know what these terms mean and when and how they are performed.*

- **בְּדִיקַת חֻמֶּץ** (Bedikat Chametz)
- **בְּעוֹר חֻמֶּץ** (Biur Chametz)
- **מַכִּירַת חֻמֶּץ** (Mechirat Chametz)

The **סֵדֶר** (Seder): **הַגָּדָה** (Hagadah); the four questions; the items on the Seder plate including their significance and how they are used; the four cups; the three matzot; salt water; Cup of Elijah.

The **אֶפִּיקוֹמָן** (afikoman) is the larger part of the broken middle matzah, which is wrapped up and put aside to be eaten at the end of the meal. Nothing should be eaten after the afikoman. It is eaten as a reminder of the Pesach offering. There is a custom to hide the afikoman during the Seder.

We commence **סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר** (Sefirat Ha'Omer) on the second night and count 49 days (7 weeks) until **שְׁבֻעוֹת** (Shavuot).

The middle days of Pesach are called **חֹל הַמוֹעֵד** (Chol HaMoed).

אייר

Iyar

**יום העצמאות** (Yom Ha'atzma'ut) is on the 5th. The State of Israel was established in 1948. The capital city is Jerusalem. Israel's parliament is called the Knesset.

You should be able to draw or describe the flag of Israel.  
You should know the name of the current Prime Minister and President of Israel.

**ל"ג בעומר** (Lag Ba'Omer), the 33rd day of the Omer is on the 18th. The plague affecting Rabbi Akiva's students ceased.

Weddings do not take place during this month except on Rosh Chodesh and Lag Ba'Omer.

**יום ירושלים** (Yom Yerushalayim) is on the 28th. The Old City including the Western Wall was recaptured by the Israel Defence Forces during the Six Day War in 1967.

סיון

Sivan

**שבועות** (Shavuot) on the 6th and 7th. It is the second of the Shalosh Regalim.

Shavuot is also called **יום הבikkurim** (Yom HaBikkurim) and **זמן מתן תורתנו** (Zeman Matan Toratenu).

**מגילת רות** (Megillat Ruth) is read because it describes how Ruth accepted the Torah as the Jewish people did at Mount Sinai.

It is a custom to decorate the synagogue with flowers, to eat milky foods and to take part in a **תקון ליל שבועות** (staying up on the first night to study Torah).

תמוז

Tammuz

Fast day on 17th. Commences three sad weeks leading to the Fast of Av. Commemorates the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem that led to the destruction of the two Temples. The walls were breached by the Babylonians during the time of the first Temple and by the Romans during the time of the second Temple.

As a sign of mourning during the three weeks, we do not celebrate weddings. We should also avoid listening to music and having a haircut.



Notes:





## אָב

## Av

**תשעה באב** (9th of Av). This fast day, which begins on the preceding evening, commemorates the destruction of the two Temples. It is the saddest day in the Jewish year.

We recite **מגילת איכה** (Megillat Echah) which contains an eye-witness account of the destruction of the first Temple.

We avoid wearing leather shoes. We also avoid eating meat and drinking wine from Rosh Chodesh until after Tish'ah B'Av with the exception of Shabbat.

### Notes:

## אֵלוּל

## Ellul

The **שופר** (shofar) is blown each weekday morning throughout the month except on the last day **ערב ראש השנה** (erev Rosh Hashanah). Towards the end of the month, we recite special prayers for forgiveness called **סליחות** (Selichot).

## תִּשְׁרִי

## Tishri

Rosh Hashanah is on the 1st and 2nd. Beginning of **עשרת ימי תשובה** (Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah).

Rosh Hashanah is also called **יום הדין** (Yom HaDin) and **יום תרועה** (Yom Teruah).

You should know the meaning and significance of **צדקה**, **תפילה**, **תשובה** (Teshuvah, Tefillah and Tzedakah).

A festival prayer book is called a **מחזור** (machzor).

The significance of white in the synagogue e.g. **פרכת** (Parochet); mantles on the Sifrei Torah; cover on the reading desk; kittel.

You should know: the names of the shofar notes; the number blown each day; the story of **עקדת יצחק** (Akedat Yitzchak) and its connection with the shofar.

It is a custom to eat apple dipped in honey and to perform the ceremony of **תשליך** (Tashlich) on the first day, or on the second day if the first is Shabbat.

**צום גדליה** (Tzom Gedaliah). The Fast of Gedaliah is on the 3rd. (If the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on a Thursday, the Fast of

Gedaliah is observed on the following Sunday which is the 4th). The Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and **יום כפור** (Yom Kippur) is called **שבת שובה** (Shabbat Shuvah).

Yom Kippur on the 10th. A fast day which begins on the preceding day. The names of the five services in order.

The Haftarah reading during the Minchah service is the story of **יונה** (Yonah). You should know its relevance to Yom Kippur. You should know which verse in the Shema, usually said quietly, is said aloud and the reason why we avoid wearing leather shoes.



**סוכות** (Succot) commences on the 15th and lasts for 7 days. It is the third of the Shalosh Regalim. The seventh day, which is the 21st, is called **הושענא רבא** (Hoshana Raba).

Succot is also called **זמן שמחתנו** (Zeman Simchatenu).

You should know: why we live in a succah and what sechach is; the berachah for sitting in a succah.

You should know the Hebrew or English names for the **ארבעה מינים** (Arba'ah Minim) and the berachah said for them.

On each morning of Succot except on Shabbat, we walk around the bimah once whilst holding the arba'ah minim and say special prayers called 'Hoshanot'. On Hoshana Raba, we walk round seven times.

The middle days of Succot are called **חול המועד** (Chol HaMoed).

**שמיני עצרת** (Shemini Atzeret) is a special festival on the 22nd.

**שמחת תורה** (Simchat Torah) is on the 23rd. We celebrate the completion of the Reading of the Torah.

Two men are chosen for the special honour of being

**חתן תורה** (Chatan Torah) and **חתן בראשית** (Chatan Bereshit).

### Notes:

**כסליו**

**Kislev**

**חנוכה** (Chanukah) commences on the 25th and lasts for 8 days. You should know the story of Chanukah and the procedure for kindling the lights.

On the first night, we add **שהחיינו** (Shehecheyanu).

There is an extra light called a **שמש** (shamash) because we are forbidden to make use of the Chanukah lights.

We add **על הנסים** (Al Hanissim) in the Amidah and Birkat Hamazon. You should know about the customs associated with Chanukah.



Notes:

טֵבֵת

Tevet

Fast day on the 10th. The siege of Jerusalem began on this day, which was the beginning of the tragedies leading to the destruction of the Temple.

שֶׁבֶט

Shevat

**ט"ו בשבט** (Tu BiShevat), the New Year for Trees on the 15th. It is a custom to plant trees in Israel and eat a variety of fruits grown in Israel.

You should know the following benefits we derive from trees:

- they give us food and timber
- they prevent soil erosion
- they provide shade
- they enable us to observe mitzvot e.g. sechach for the succah and arba'ah minim
- they provide the wood for the rollers around which the parchment of a Sefer Torah is attached

אָדָר

Adar

אָדָר שֵׁנִי

Adar Sheni

The Shabbat before **פּוּרִים** (Purim) is called **שַׁבַּת זָכוֹר** (Shabbat Zachor). **תַּעֲנִית אֶסְתֵּר** (The Fast of Esther) is on the 13th. Purim is on the 14th and Shushan Purim is on the 15th.

In a Jewish leap year, the above events are observed in Adar Sheni. You should know the story of Purim and the four special mitzvot performed on Purim in Hebrew or English. We add Al Hanissim in the Amidah and Birkat Hamazon. You should know about the customs associated with Purim.

שַׁבָּת

Shabbat. A day of Holiness, Rest and Delight

The laws of Shabbat are given in the fourth commandment of the **עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדִּבְרוֹת** (Aseret Hadibrot).

In Shemot 20:8, the following is written:

**זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ** (Zachor et yom haShabbat l'kadsho)  
*Remember the Shabbat day to keep it holy.*

In Devarim 5:12, we read:

**שְׁמוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ** (Shamor et yom haShabbat l'kadsho)  
*Observe the Shabbat day to keep it holy.*

Our Rabbis explain that **Zachor – Remember** – refers to the positive mitzvot of Shabbat such as Kiddush, the Shabbat prayers and our enjoyment of Shabbat by eating three meals, wearing our best clothes etc.

**Shamor – Observe** – refers to the acts of **מלאכה** (Melachah) – activity, which we must avoid so that we are able to appreciate and enjoy Shabbat as a day of delight.



There is another important difference between these two sections of the Torah. In Shemot, the reason given for the mitzvah of Shabbat is because Hashem created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Therefore, by doing the same, we declare our belief in Hashem as the Creator of the Universe.

In Devarim, the reason given is to remember that we were once slaves in Egypt and were unable to rest until Hashem brought us out to freedom. Shabbat, therefore, represents freedom from slavery. This is particularly relevant nowadays. Just stop to think of the many modern-day items to which we have become ‘enslaved’! Television, Internet, telephone, and fax machine are just a few examples. These are in addition to the many other pressures we have during the working week. Shabbat is therefore, very precious to the Jewish people. By observing it as Hashem has commanded, we remember the two great events in our history, the creation of the world and the departure from Egypt.

Preparing for Shabbat reflects the way we honour Shabbat.

Preparations include:

- preparing and cooking enough food for three meals
- boiling water in a Shabbat urn
- tidying the house
- preparing clean Shabbat clothes
- setting the Shabbat table with a white tablecloth and best tableware
- setting time switches for heating and lighting

You should know the blessing and procedure for lighting the Shabbat candles. At least two candles are lit. They symbolise **שְׁלוֹם בֵּית** (Shalom Bayit) – peace and harmony in the Jewish home.

**בְּרַכַּת הַבְּנִיִּים** (Birkat Habanim). It is a custom for parents to bless their children on Friday night before Kiddush.

Kiddush is recited to fulfil the mitzvah of remembering the Shabbat day to make it holy.

### Notes:



We have two complete **חלות** (challot) at each of the three Shabbat meals. The two challot are referred to as **לֶחֶם מִשְׁנֶה** (Lechem Mishneh). They remind us of the double portion of manna, which fell in the desert on Friday. This was sufficient for Friday and Shabbat, as no manna fell on Shabbat.

The white tablecloth and the challah cover remind us of the layers of dew above and beneath the manna.

**Notes:**

We eat three meals in honour of Shabbat. The third meal is referred to as **סַעֲדָה שְׁלִישִׁית** (Se'udah Shelishit).

We sing **זְמִירוֹת** (zemiroth), special songs during each meal. The singing of these songs in praise of Hashem and Shabbat creates an atmosphere of holiness and joy at the Shabbat table.

When Shabbat goes out, we perform the ceremony of **הַבְדָּלָה** (Havdalah). The word means 'separation' or 'division' and marks the separation between the holiness of Shabbat and the ordinary working week. The ceremony consists of four blessings.

- the first is over a full cup of wine
- the second is over spices
- the third is over the flames of a special plaited Havdalah candle
- the fourth refers to the separation between Shabbat and the rest of the week

The Torah contains the following phrase within the mitzvah relating to Shabbat:

***You may not do any form of מְלָאכָה (melachah).***

To understand the term 'melachah', we have to think about the 39 activities that were necessary for the construction of the Sanctuary in the desert. Each of these melachot – activities, required the Jewish people to exercise their intelligence and skill. On Shabbat, these 39 melachot were forbidden even though the construction of the Sanctuary was one of the holiest tasks given to the Jewish people. We see therefore, that the holiness of Shabbat is even greater, as the work of the Sanctuary had to stop on Shabbat.

In order to prevent us from performing a melachah on Shabbat unintentionally, our Rabbis instituted the laws of **מִקְטָה** (Muktzeh). This means that we must not handle an object that could be used to perform a melachah. For example, writing is a melachah, therefore a pen is muktzeh on Shabbat. By not handling a pen, we will not accidentally write with it.

## בֵּית הַכְּנֶסֶת

## Bet Hak'nesset

### אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ

### Aron HaKodesh

This is the Holy Ark where the Torah scrolls are kept in the Bet K'nesset. It reminds us of the holiest part of the Sanctuary that the Jewish people built in the desert, and later, of the Temple in Jerusalem.



### נֵר תָּמִיד

### Ner Tamid

It is the everlasting light that suspends from the ceiling in front of the Aron Kodesh. This light, which remains on permanently reminds us of the Menorah which was kept burning in the Sanctuary and in the Temple. It also symbolises the Shechinah – Divine Presence of Hashem that dwells amongst the Jewish people.

*Notes:*

### מִזְרַח

### Mizrach

Mizrach which means 'east', is the direction we face in the Bet K'nesset when we say the Amidah. This is the direction of the Aron Kodesh. When we face Mizrach, we are turning towards the Holy City of Jerusalem where the Temple once stood. In some countries, for example Australia and parts of Israel, we would face in different directions in order to turn towards Jerusalem.

### בִּימָה

### Bimah

The Bimah is the platform in the Bet K'nesset on which the Torah and Haftarah are read. In many synagogues, the entire service is conducted on the Bimah.

### שְׁלִיחַ צִבּוּר

### Sh'liach Tzibbur

The man who leads the service in the Bet K'nesset is called the Sh'liach Tzibbur or the Chazan. A Sh'liach Tzibbur, meaning 'representative of the congregation', can be any adult male congregant who is chosen to conduct the service on a particular occasion. A chazan is usually an employee of the Bet K'nesset and besides conducting services regularly on Shabbat and festivals, often performs other duties such as teaching religious studies and visiting the sick.



## פתיחה

## Petichah

Petichah means 'opening' and refers to the honour of opening the Ark during the service. The man chosen to perform this mitzvah usually goes up to the Ark with one of the wardens. After opening the Ark, he takes out a Sefer Torah and hands it to the Sh'liach Tzibbur. The Ark is also opened for the recital of certain prayers, for example An'im Zemirot, when the Sefer Torah is not removed. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, many such prayers are recited and the Ark is therefore opened frequently.

### Notes:

## עליה

## Aliyah

The word 'aliyah' comes from the Hebrew root meaning 'to go up' and refers to the mitzvah of 'being called up' to the Torah. The honour of being called up first to the Torah is given to a Kohen and the second to a Levi. The number of Aliyot varies according to the occasion. For example, three men are called up on Monday and Thursday mornings, four on Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed, five on festivals except Yom Kippur, six on Yom Kippur and seven on Shabbat morning.

## בַּעַל קְרִיאָה

## Ba'al Keriah

The Ba'al Keriah is the title given to the man who reads the Torah in the Bet K'nesset. This could be the Rabbi, Sh'liach Tzibbur, or any competent male congregant. A boy celebrating his Bar Mitzvah usually acts as the Ba'al Keriah by reading a section from his sidrah, and in some cases, the entire sidrah. As there are no vowels, punctuation or musical notes in the Sefer Torah, the Ba'al Keriah must prepare the reading thoroughly, as he must be careful not to make any mistakes.

## מפטיר

## Maftir

On Shabbat and festivals, there is an extra Aliyah called Maftir, which may be given to a Kohen, Levi or Yisrael. On Shabbat, the reading for the Maftir is usually the repetition of the last few verses of the weekly sidrah. On festivals, there is an additional reading, and this is read from a second Sefer Torah. On Simchat Torah, the Maftir is read from a third Sefer Torah. The man called up for Maftir is referred to as the Ba'al Maftir. This honour is often given to a boy celebrating his Bar Mitzvah.

## הַפְּטָרָה

## Haftarah

On Shabbat and festival mornings, a section from the Book of Prophets is read by the Ba'al Maftir after the reading from the Torah. This reading is referred to as the Haftarah, which means 'conclusion'. The theme of the Haftarah usually has a connection with the weekly sidrah, but sometimes, the theme is connected with the occasion on which it is read.



## הַגְּבָהָה and גְּלִילָה

## Hagbahah and Gelilah

After the Torah has been read, two men are called up for the important mitzvot of Hagbahah and Gelilah. Hagbahah means 'raising up' and the one chosen for this mitzvah opens the Sefer Torah and raises it up from the reading desk. He turns around so that everyone in the Bet K'nesset can see it as they sing *V'zot HaTorah* – **And this is the Torah that Moshe set before the Children of Israel, according to the command of Hashem, by the hand of Moshe.** He then sits down still holding the Sefer Torah.

Gelilah means 'rolling', and the second man rolls the Sefer Torah together ensuring that the roller on the right of the Sefer Torah is placed above the one on the left. He then secures the binder around the Sefer Torah and finally, he replaces the velvet mantle and the silver ornaments.

Notes:

## מִיָּנִין

## Minyan

Minyan means 'number' and refers to the minimum number of ten men required to conduct a full service. Saying prayers with a minyan is far more desirable than praying on one's own as it helps to unite Jews as members of one people. Certain parts of the service can only be said if a minyan is present. These include: Kaddish, Kedushah and the reading of the Torah.





## תפילה

## Tefillah

### שמע

### Shema

The three paragraphs of the Shema are recited twice every day at Shacharit and at Ma'ariv.

#### First Paragraph: Devarim 6: 4-9

The opening verse **שמע ישראל יהוה אחד** is the most important declaration of our faith, for in it, we recognise that Hashem is One.

#### Notes:

The first paragraph contains seven mitzvot. They are:

- to know of the Oneness of Hashem
- to love Hashem
- to learn and teach Torah
- to recite the Shema twice every day
- to bind Tefillin on our arm
- to put Tefillin on our head
- to fix a Mezuzah

#### Second Paragraph: Devarim 11: 13-21

This paragraph deals with reward and punishment. If we obey Hashem, He will send rain for the land so that crops will grow for our food.

#### Third Paragraph: Bamidbar 15: 37-41

This paragraph deals with the mitzvah of **ציצית** (tzitzit), which we wear to remind us of all the mitzvot in the Torah.

The last verse refers to **יציאת מצרים** (Yetziat Mitzrayim).

We must constantly be aware of our debt of gratitude to Hashem for delivering us from slavery. We therefore recite this paragraph twice each day to fulfil the mitzvah of remembering the departure from Egypt.

### עמידה

### Amidah

The name Amidah comes from the root meaning 'to stand', because the prayer is said standing, with feet together facing Mizrach.

Another name for the Amidah is **שמונה עשרה** (Shemoneh Esreh) which means 'eighteen'. This refers to the number of blessings it originally contained. However, the name used in the Mishnah is simply **תפילה** (Tefillah) – Prayer. This name reminds us that the Amidah is the central part of each service.

The Amidah is recited silently at every service. It is then repeated aloud by the Sh'liach Tzibbur at every service except Ma'ariv.

The first three blessings and the last three blessings are a feature of every Amidah. The middle part varies according to the occasion. The middle part of the weekday Amidah contains thirteen blessings making nineteen in total.

The Amidah said on Shabbat, festivals, and the Musaf of Rosh Chodesh contain one central blessing dealing with the holiness of the day, making seven in total. There is one exception to this rule. On Rosh Hashanah, there are three central blessings in the Musaf service, making nine in total.



## כַּשְׁרוּת

## Kashrut

*Notes:*

### Rationale

The Torah states that the reason for the laws of Kashrut is to enable us to attain the ideal of holiness. In addition, these laws distinguish us from other nations, thereby preventing us from becoming assimilated.

### Characteristics of Permitted Animals, Birds and Fish

**Animals** - Four-legged animals that have cloven hoofs and chew the cud may be eaten provided they have been killed according to Jewish law by a qualified shochet. Animals that have only one of these two characteristics are forbidden.

**Birds** - The Torah lists twenty-four species of forbidden birds. These include all birds of prey. Permitted birds include domestic fowl such as chicken, duck, goose and turkey.

**Fish** – The Torah states that fish that have fins and scales are permitted. Fish that have only one of these two characteristics are forbidden.

### Meat and Milk

The prohibition to mix meat and milk is written three times in the Torah. This teaches us three rules.

- it is forbidden to cook a mixture of meat and milk
- it is forbidden to eat a mixture of meat and milk
- it is forbidden to derive any benefit from a mixture of meat and milk

### The Kasher Butcher

Fresh meat and fowl may be purchased only from a butcher licensed by a recognised orthodox rabbinical authority. Pre-packed meat and fowl, such as frozen chicken, may be purchased in any supermarket, providing it is sealed and bears the label of a recognised orthodox rabbinical authority.



**Notes:**

**שחיטה**

**Shechita**

Shechitah is the act of slaughtering a permitted animal or fowl according to the laws of the Torah. This is performed by a shochet who must be licensed by a recognised orthodox rabbinical authority. The shochet is a learned and observant Jew, highly skilled in the complex laws of shechitah.

**Kashering Meat and Liver**

The Torah strictly forbids us to eat the blood of animals and fowl. Therefore, the blood must be removed from the raw meat by a process referred to as 'kashering'.

Nowadays, many kosher butchers perform the task of kashering the meat before it is offered for sale, and kosher pre-packed and processed meat products will certainly have been kashered. There should be a label to indicate this and it is most important to check the label before purchasing.

The process of kashering is carried out in three stages. The first stage is soaking. The meat or fowl is soaked in a bucket of cold water for half an hour. It is then placed on a slanting board and after the water has drained away, it is sprinkled all over with medium coarse salt. It is important that the salt is sprinkled on all sides paying particular attention to any folds and cuts. It is left on the slanting board for one hour to allow the blood to drain away. Finally, it is rinsed thoroughly under running water to ensure that all the remaining blood is washed away. The utensils used for kashering must be kept especially for this purpose.

Liver cannot be kashered by this method because of its high blood content. It must therefore be roasted over an open flame or placed under a grill in a special container.

**Eggs**

Eggs must be inspected in a glass container for blood spots before using. If an egg is found to have a blood spot, the entire egg must be discarded, and the utensil rinsed out immediately.

**Inspection of Fruit and Vegetables**

The Torah forbids us to eat insects. Therefore, any fruit or vegetables, which are likely to contain insects or worms, must be inspected before cooking or eating. Any insects or worms that are found must be carefully removed or washed away and the food may then be eaten. Foods that need checking include stoned fruit, soft fruit, leafy vegetables, peas, pulses and nuts. Foodstuffs such as flour must also be checked as they may contain mites if stored for a long time.

**The Kosher Kitchen**

In order to ensure that meat and milk are kept apart, it is essential to have

separate utensils, dishes and cutlery. These should be easily distinguishable and kept in separate cupboards and drawers. Separate washing-up facilities such as dishwashers, bowls, dishcloths and tea towels are also necessary.

The term 'parve' or 'parev' refers to the category of food that is neither meaty nor milky. Foods in this category include fish, eggs, fruit, vegetables, rice and pasta. However, once parve food is cooked or mixed with meat or milk items, it too becomes meaty or milky and no longer remains parve.

A typical kosher kitchen will have colour coding to identify the meat, milk and parve utensils.

### **טבילת כלים (Tevilat Kelim) – Immersion of Vessels**

We have already learned that the reason for the laws of Kashrut is to achieve the ideal of holiness. In fact, the observance of Kashrut does not just begin with the purchase of food. It begins at an earlier stage with the purchase of the utensils we use to cook and eat our food. Jewish law requires that utensils made of metal, glass and glazed earthenware must be immersed in a special ritual bath before being used for the first time. The Hebrew term for a ritual bath is 'mikveh'. Many synagogues have a mikveh for vessels on their premises. As with most mitzvot, a blessing is recited before performing the immersion.

### **שאלה (She'elah) – A Religious Question**

The occasional mishap may occur in the kitchen. For example, a milky spoon gets washed up with the meaty dishes or the contents of a milky saucepan spill on to a meaty surface. What should one do if such a situation should occur? The answer is to 'Ask your Rabbi!' This is called 'Asking a She'elah'. An important part of a rabbi's role is to answer religious questions of this kind.

### **Shopping for Food**

*It is preferable, whenever possible, to buy food products under rabbinical supervision. (The London Beth Din Kashrut Guide).*

Many foods need rabbinical supervision to ensure that they do not contain non-kosher ingredients. It is therefore essential to look for a hechsher on the packaging. A hechsher is a label or seal confirming that the product has been prepared under rabbinical supervision. Products which do not have a hechsher but are permitted, are listed in the 'Really Jewish Food Guide' published by United Synagogue Publications Ltd. This most useful guide is readily available in Jewish bookshops.

### **Eating Out – Kashrut Away from Home**

When eating out, one should ensure that the restaurant or takeaway, including any vegetarian restaurant, is under the supervision of a recognised orthodox rabbinical authority.



**Notes:**



## Special Events Throughout Our Lives

### ברית מילה

### Brit Milah. The Covenant of Circumcision

The mitzvah of Brit Milah was first given to Abraham, and for this reason, the ceremony is also referred to as 'The Covenant of Abraham'.

Of all the 613 mitzvot in the Torah, Brit Milah is one of only three that are referred to as **אֹת** (ot) - a sign. The other two are Shabbat and Tefillin. The 'sign' of Brit Milah demonstrates that even though we are the creation of Hashem, he wants us to do something in order to perfect ourselves.

#### Notes:

Brit Milah must be performed on the eighth day, even if that day should be a Shabbat or festival. Only for medical reasons may Brit Milah be postponed.

The chair on which the baby is placed before the Brit Milah is performed is called 'The Chair (or Throne) of Elijah'. According to tradition, the Prophet Elijah is present at every Brit Milah ceremony.

The man who performs Brit Milah is called a 'mohel'. A mohel is a learned and religious Jew who has undergone extensive study and training before being granted his certificate of qualification.

Immediately after the Brit Milah has been performed, the baby receives his Jewish name.

### פדיון הבן

### Pidyon HaBen. Redemption of the Firstborn

One of the many beautiful teachings of the Torah is the duty to dedicate the first of our produce to Hashem. For this reason, the firstborn males were originally chosen to serve in the Temple. Unfortunately, they forfeited their right when they took part in the sin of the Golden Calf, and instead, the privilege was given to the Tribe of Levi, which was not involved in this sin. It was therefore necessary for firstborn males to be redeemed.

The Pidyon HaBen ceremony takes place on the thirty-first day but is postponed if that day falls on a Shabbat or festival. It is performed by a Kohen who redeems the child for five silver shekalim (or their equivalent value) which is the redemption sum commanded in the Torah.

The mitzvah of Pidyon HaBen does not apply to all firstborn. For example, the ceremony is not required if the boy is a Kohen or Levi, or if the mother is the daughter of a Kohen or Levi. Nor is it required if the boy is born by Caesarean section.

## בַּר מִצְוָה

## Bar Mitzvah

The Mishnah states 'at thirteen for the fulfilment of mitzvot'. Therefore, when a boy reaches his thirteenth Jewish birthday, he becomes a Bar Mitzvah, which implies that from then on, he is regarded as a Jewish adult and is required to observe the mitzvot. The first two mitzvot he will perform are those that he could not do as a minor. One is putting on his Tefillin every weekday morning, and the other is being called up to the Torah.



In recent times, it has become the custom in some families to hold lavish Bar Mitzvah parties. These are not really necessary according to Jewish law. However, whilst they are very nice and enjoyable, the significance of becoming a Bar Mitzvah should not be forgotten. It is essential to remember that once a boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah, he remains a Bar Mitzvah for the rest of his life. The real importance is what happens after the celebrations have taken place. Will the Bar Mitzvah remain a loyal member of the Jewish people? Will he treasure his Tefillin by putting them on every weekday morning? Will he attend synagogue regularly where he will be counted in a minyan? These are the real issues concerning this major event in the life of a Jewish boy.

**Notes:**

## בַּת מִצְוָה

## Bat Mitzvah

A girl becomes a Bat Mitzvah on reaching her twelfth birthday. Since Judaism recognises important differences in the respective roles of men and women, no formal ceremony is required to mark her transition to Jewish womanhood. Nevertheless, the occasion is marked in many communities nowadays, thereby highlighting the importance of this major event in her life.

In the same way that a Bar Mitzvah should be aware of his important new status and obligations, so too, should a Bat Mitzvah realise that she will have a major role to play in her future life as a Jewish woman, wife and mother.

## Jewish Marriage

The Hebrew term for the marriage service is Kiddushin, which means 'Holy'. This indicates that Judaism regards marriage as a holy act instituted by Hashem. In the second chapter of the Torah, we read how Hashem said that it was not good for man to be alone. Therefore, He created a wife for Adam. Later in the Torah, we read how Abraham was anxious that his son Isaac should not marry a non-Jewish woman, so he instructed his trusted servant to go to his family in order to find a suitable wife for him.



The wedding ceremony takes place under a canopy called a 'chupah'. This symbolises the home the couple is about to set up. The chatan (bridegroom) places the ring on his bride's finger and makes a solemn declaration saying **'Behold, you are consecrated to me by this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel'**. The marriage contract, called a ketubah, is then read out and this is followed by the singing of the Sheva Brachot (Seven Blessings). The ceremony concludes with the chatan breaking a glass by stamping on it with his foot. This custom is a reminder of the destruction of the Temple. This teaches us that even at the joyous event of a wedding celebration, our joy is incomplete as we recall the most tragic event in our history.

*Notes:*

## סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה

## Sefer Torah

What is the Torah? The Torah is the greatest gift that the Jewish people received from Hashem. This major event in our history occurred at Mount Sinai on Shavuot, which is why the festival is also referred to as Zeman Matan Toratenu – The Season of the Giving of our Torah.

Our Rabbis teach us that the Torah, which was handed to Moshe, was passed down to Yehoshua, who then passed it down to the elders. They, in turn, passed it down to the prophets, who passed it down to the Men of the Great Assembly. In this way, the Torah has been passed down from generation to generation right down to us.

Imagine! The words written on every Sefer Torah, in every Bet K'nesset throughout the world, are exactly the same words that Hashem spoke to Moshe, who wrote the very first Sefer Torah.

This is very important to bear in mind. Every single word in the Torah is Divine – that means it comes from Hashem, unlike the books of Nevi'im and Ketuvim, which were written by divinely inspired individuals.

Of course, the whole of Tenach is holy, as is also a Siddur, Mishnah or any other religious book. However, there are degrees of holiness, and the Sefer Torah has always been, and will always be the **holiest treasure in our possession**.

The Torah is not just a history book, nor is it just a book containing laws. Certainly, history and laws are part of it, but it is so much more besides.

Have you ever wondered how it is that we, the Jewish people, a tiny minority of the world's population, have survived throughout history, in spite of the many enemies in each generation who have tried to

destroy us? Yet, mighty powers that once ruled the world, such as the Greek, Babylonian and Roman empires, have long disappeared from the face of the earth.

The story is told of the great Rabbi Akiva, who was asked by a Roman officer, 'Why are you Jews so stubborn? Give up your Torah as we ask, and you can live in peace with us.' Rabbi Akiva answered with the following story.

A fox observing some fish in a lake asked them why they were scurrying to and fro in the water. The fish replied that they were trying to avoid the nets of the fishermen trying to catch them. The fox then asked the fish why they did not come out of the water where there were no nets. The fish replied, 'You sly fox, we may well be in danger in the water, but what chance do we have of surviving out of it?'

'This is the situation with us Jews,' said Rabbi Akiva to the Roman. 'We may well be in danger studying our holy Torah, but we certainly could not survive if we neglect it.'

This then is what the Torah means to us. It is the source of our very life and existence. Indeed, throughout our history, Jews have fought with their lives to defend it, for without the Torah, there could be no Jewish life.

One of the unique things about the Torah is that the more it is studied, the more one realises how impossible it is to exhaust its contents. Not a single word or letter is without a Divine purpose. Throughout our history, the greatest Jewish minds have dedicated themselves to studying the Torah and living their lives according to its teachings.

But Torah study is not just for rabbis and sages. It is for all the Jewish people, whether they are young children learning to read Alef Bet, older ones like yourselves about to become Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or adults who had little opportunity when they were younger. In each generation we all have a responsibility to honour, study and observe the Torah, thereby ensuring our future survival as Am Kadosh – A Holy People.

### **Laws and Customs**

Bearing in mind the immense importance and holiness of the Torah, you will appreciate that it is necessary to treat it in an appropriate manner. There are a number of important laws and customs to be observed so that the Torah always receives its due honour and respect.

When not in use, the Sefer Torah is housed securely in the Aron Kodesh. The very first Aron Kodesh was made while the Jewish people were in the wilderness. They were commanded to build the 'Mishkan' (Sanctuary), a sort of portable Temple that could be



### **Notes:**





transported from place to place during their forty year journey towards Eretz Yisrael. The Aron Kodesh was a magnificent example of craftsmanship (see Shemot 25).

Nowadays too, the Aron Kodesh is usually the most beautiful part of every Bet K'neset, designed to create an immediate impression as one enters.

### **Respect and Honour**

No doubt you are aware that whenever the Aron Kodesh is open, the congregation stands. The ceremony of carrying the Sefer Torah to and from the Aron Kodesh is a most impressive part of the service. Many men leave their places in order to kiss the Sefer Torah, while others bow respectfully.

#### **Notes:**

Once the Sefer Torah has been placed on the reading desk, two men, usually the synagogue wardens, stand on either side. In this way, the Sefer Torah is not left unattended, in the same way as a VIP would not be left alone.

The Sefer Torah is prepared for reading by removing the silver ornaments and velvet mantle. However, during the times that it is not actually being read, it is covered over with an embroidered cover. This is an example of the general rule that holy objects should remain covered while not in use.

It is most important to avoid touching the actual parchment of the Sefer Torah. For this reason, the Ba'al Keriah (the one who reads the Torah aloud for the congregation) points as he reads using a 'Yad'. This is the pointer, usually of silver, with the design of a hand ('yad' means hand). The person called up to the Torah should hold both rollers whilst he recites the blessings before and after the reading. During the actual reading, he should hold the right roller and follow each word carefully. Ideally, he should say the words quietly along with the Ba'al Keriah.

When the reading is completed, two more men are called up for Hagbahah and Gelilah. (*See page 21*)

The greatest possible care must be taken when the Sefer Torah is being raised or carried. If, Heaven forbid, it were accidentally dropped, the congregation would be required to fast, as such an event would be regarded as a major calamity. In an emergency, such as a fire for example, every effort must be made to rescue the Sifrei Torah, provided of course, human life is not put at risk. It is even required to override the laws of Shabbat to rescue a Sefer Torah, such is its importance and holiness.

## Writing a Sefer Torah



The writing of a Sefer Torah is in itself a holy act. It is performed by a סופר (sofer) - scribe who, besides being a pious and learned Jew, must also possess artistic talent and immense patience as the work requires precision and concentration.

### The Materials Used by a Sofer

The basic materials required by a sofer are parchment, quill, ink, stylus (sharp marker) and ruler.

The parchment must be prepared from the skin of a kosher animal. A verbal declaration that the skin is being prepared for the holy purpose of writing a Sefer Torah must be made.

The feather of a large kosher bird, usually a turkey, is used as a quill. The ink is made by boiling a mixture of gallnuts, gum arabic and copper sulphate crystals. Vinegar and alcohol can also be added.

### A Day in the Life of a Sofer

*Before I begin to write, I immerse myself in a mikveh (ritual bath) so that I can make myself aware of the holiness of the task and carry out this work in a state of spiritual cleanliness.*

*I cut a new quill and prepare a fresh container of ink. I test these out by writing the word 'Amalek' and then erasing it. (Amalek attacked the Jewish people when they left Egypt. He did so in a most cowardly way by striking at the weakest who were at the very back and unable to defend themselves. Because of this unprovoked attack the Torah commands us to blot out the name of Amalek – see Shemot 17: 8-16 and Devarim 25: 17-19.)*

*I then make the following declaration: 'I am writing this Torah in the name of its sanctity and the name of Hashem in its sanctity.'*

*When I write the name of Hashem, I declare: 'I am writing the name of Hashem for the holiness of His name.'*

*With a stylus and a ruler, I mark forty-three horizontal lines across the parchment plus two vertical lines on each side. I leave a margin of approximately seven and a half centimetres at the top and bottom and a margin of approximately five centimetres between each column. I must ensure that each line is long enough to contain thirty letters.*

*I have a copy of the actual text of the Torah next to me and I read each verse aloud before writing it in square script. I do not write the letters on the line but beneath it as if the letters are hanging from the line.*

Notes:



*I am particularly careful when writing certain letters which are similar in appearance such as א and ח.*

*I am also very careful to remember the six places where a letter is written smaller than normal (there is one in Bereshit 2:4 – see if you can find some more), and the eleven places where a letter is enlarged (there are two in a very well known verse in Devarim 6. Can you find more?)*

*According to tradition, seven letters have a special crown design on the upper left corner.*

### **Notes:**

*There are two songs in the Torah, which I write in a special way to highlight them. The first is in the sidrah of Beshalach and the second is in Ha'azinu.*

*No doubt you are aware that there are no vowels, punctuation marks or musical notes in a Sefer Torah.*

*When I have completed the writing of the Torah, the sections of parchment are sewn together using thread made from the tendon of a kosher animal. The scroll is then joined to the wooden rollers.*

*I also write Mezuzot, Tefillin and Megillot. However, a lot of my time is spent checking old Sifrei Torah in order to correct mistakes or rewrite letters that have faded. Until these corrections have been made, a Sefer Torah is 'pasul' (unfit) and one may not recite the blessings over it.*

*It would be of great benefit if you had the opportunity to observe these various points from an actual Sefer Torah. Perhaps your teacher or Rabbi could arrange this for you.*

### **A Torah Law**

According to the Torah, everyone is obliged to write a Sefer Torah for himself (see Devarim 31:19). One who purchases a Sefer Torah or engages a sofer to write one on his behalf also fulfils the mitzvah.

However, most people are not in a position to do this. Therefore, our sages teach us that one who writes or corrects just one word, or even a single letter, is regarded as having fulfilled the mitzvah.

For this purpose, the custom has developed for a sofer to write just the outlines of the letters in the first and last sections of the Torah. The final writing is undertaken by others under the guidance of the sofer at a special ceremony called 'Siyum HaTorah' (completion of the writing of a Sefer Torah). In this way, many more people have the opportunity of participating in this unique mitzvah.

## The Outward Signs

### תפילין

### Tefillin

As your Bar Mitzvah draws near, you will no doubt receive many wonderful presents, which you will treasure. There is one special present that you should treasure the most – your Tefillin.

#### What Are Tefillin?

Tefillin are square black boxes, which contain four sections of the Torah. The words are written by hand on parchment by a sofer. The parchment, as well as the boxes and straps, are made from the skins of kosher animals specially selected for this holy purpose.

If you examine a pair of Tefillin, you will notice that one is completely plain while the other is split into four compartments and has the letter **פ** on each side. The plain one is called 'Shel Yad' which means 'for the hand' and the other is called 'Shel Rosh' which means 'for the head'. If you check the two letters **פ** on each side of the 'Shel Rosh' you will notice something unusual about one of them.

#### Why Do We Wear Tefillin?

The Torah tells us 'And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand and they shall be as ornaments between your eyes'.

This well-known verse is written in the first and second paragraphs of the Shema. There are also two other places in the Torah, which command us to observe this mitzvah. These four paragraphs referring to the Tefillin are the ones that are placed inside every pair. In the 'Shel Yad', the four paragraphs are written on one piece of parchment, and in the 'Shel Rosh', they are placed separately in each of the four compartments.

#### Why Are Tefillin So Important?

The fact that the mitzvah is mentioned four times in the Torah shows us how special it is. The Torah describes Tefillin as a 'sign'. This means that they are to remind us of our responsibilities as full members of the Jewish people. We therefore wear our Tefillin as a proud sign symbolising an attachment to Hashem, the Torah and the Jewish people. The Tefillin link us with all the great people of the past through each generation to the present day. In this way, we ensure that we, the Jewish people, will continue into the future.



*Notes:*

### מזוזה

### Mezuzah

The Torah tells us 'And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates'. This mitzvah, like Tefillin, is written in the first and second paragraphs of the Shema. We observe the mitzvah by fixing, on our doors, a small parchment scroll on which



the first two paragraphs of the Shema have been written by a sofer. The entrance to every room in our house excluding the toilet and bathroom requires a Mezuzah. It should be fixed on the right-hand post as one enters, and placed about a third of the way down with the top of the Mezuzah slanting towards the left.

In many Jewish homes, the Mezuzot are encased in ornate containers. This is commendable as it beautifies the performance of the mitzvah. However, it should be remembered that the contents are far more important than the container. Unfortunately, some ornate containers contain texts printed on paper, which are of course, absolutely invalid. Even Mezuzot that were originally kosher can fade or deteriorate as time goes by. Therefore, it is necessary to have one's Mezuzot checked regularly by a qualified sofer.

#### Notes:

### ציצית

### Tzitzit

The Torah commands men to wear tzitzit so that we shall never forget our duties towards Hashem. In the third paragraph of the Shema, we are instructed to look at the tzitzit so that we shall remember the mitzvot in order to do them. The idea of remembering the mitzvot by looking at them, is highlighted by the fact that the value of the Hebrew letters of the word 'tzitzit', plus the eight threads and five knots on each corner, add up to 613, which is equal to the number of mitzvot in the Torah.

Men and boys fulfil the mitzvah of tzitzit by wearing a four-cornered garment during the day called arba kanfot meaning 'four corners'. This garment is also called tallit katan meaning 'a small tallit' in contrast to the larger tallit worn only at prayer.

## Jewish Values

### כבוד אב ואם

### Kibbud Av Va'em. Honouring Parents

The duty to honour and respect one's parents is of major importance in Jewish law. The creation of every human being is due to the partnership of Hashem and one's parents and, therefore, by honouring parents, it is considered as though one has honoured Hashem. There are special laws to be observed in the performance of this mitzvah. For example, children should obey their parents and avoid interrupting or contradicting them. As a further mark of respect, they should not sit in their special seat. In later life, as parents grow old and are in need of help, children should look after them and take care of their needs.

## הַכְנָסַת אֹרְחִים

## Hachnassat Orchim. Hospitality

The Torah describes how Abraham and Sarah performed the mitzvah of Hachnassat Orchim when three travellers came towards their tent. Their wonderful example has been the benchmark for Jewish people down the ages in ensuring that visitors are offered hospitality in a warm and caring manner.

There is beautiful saying in the Mishnah that states: 'Let your house be open wide and treat the poor as members of your household'. On the night of Pesach, as we sit at our Seder table, we declare at the beginning of the ceremony: 'Let anyone in need enter and eat'.

Hosting a guest for Shabbat is a particularly worthy deed. In many communities, Hachnassat Orchim is organised by a special committee in order to ensure that visitors are not alone in a strange town over Shabbat.



## צְדָקָה

## Tzedakah

The word 'tzedakah' comes from the root meaning 'righteousness'. This teaches us that by helping the poor and needy, we are performing an act of righteousness and mercy. We should remember that all our possessions come from Hashem. Therefore, we have a duty to share them with those less fortunate than ourselves.

The manner in which we give tzedakah is also very important. It can make the recipients feel like a king or reduce them to the level of a beggar. One of our greatest sages who lived in the twelfth century, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, known as Rambam, taught that there are eight levels of giving tzedakah. The lowest level is giving it, resentful of the fact that one is obliged to give. A slightly higher level is to give less than one can afford but with grace. A much higher level is to give generously and in such a way so that neither the donor nor the recipient knows one another's identity. The very highest level of tzedakah is helping the poor to become self-sufficient so that they no longer need to depend on charity. An example of this would be to help them find employment or enable them to learn a skill or trade. Jewish law requires that at least one tenth of one's income be donated to tzedakah.

*Notes:*

## בִּיקּוּר חוֹלִים

## Bikkur Cholim. Visiting the Sick

Visiting the sick and taking care of their needs is regarded as such an important mitzvah, that Bikkur Cholim societies exist in practically every organised Jewish community.

The weekday Amidah contains a blessing in which we pray for the welfare of the sick. In cases of serious illness, special additional prayers are said on behalf of the patient.



*Notes:*

When visiting the sick, one must be sensitive to their needs. One should never visit at an inconvenient time for the patient nor should one stay too long. A sick person who is in a lot of pain may find it difficult to speak, and may therefore not wish to be engaged in conversation. Sometimes, it might be more appropriate to telephone or write rather than to visit. Wherever possible, one should first enquire from a member of the family.

### הַכְנָסַת כֶּלֶה

#### **Hachnasset Kallah. Providing for a Poor Bride**

Because of the importance Judaism attaches to marriage, it is a great mitzvah to give financial assistance, when needed, by contributing towards the wedding celebrations and the couple's future home. One can perform this mitzvah by donating to the Hachnasset Kallah fund that is organised in many communities.

### הַלְוִיַת הָמֵת

#### **Halvayat Hamet. Accompanying the Dead**

The mitzvah of accompanying the dead to their burial place is referred to as **חֶסֶד שֶׁל אֱמֶת** (Chesed Shel Emet) - a true act of kindness. There can be no expectation of receiving any reward for performing this mitzvah, therefore it is considered an act of kindness in its highest form.

### הַבָּאָת שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵירוֹ

#### **Hava'at Shalom Bein Adam Lachavero. Making Peace Between People**

One should always strive to act in a friendly and peaceable manner, avoiding arguments and quarrels. The highest ideal is to emulate Aaron the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) who was famous for influencing those who had fallen out, to settle their differences and become friends again.

### קִדּוּשׁ הַשֵּׁם

#### **Kiddush Hashem. Sanctifying Hashem's Name**

The highest form of Kiddush Hashem is a Jew's readiness to defend Judaism by standing up against enemies who wish to destroy it. Throughout our history, there have been brave Jews who gave their lives fighting for their religious beliefs.

On a day to day level, Kiddush Hashem refers to behaving in a way that brings credit and honour to Judaism and the Jewish people. The Talmud

relates the story of a Jew named Abba Oshia who performed a great act of Kiddush Hashem. He once found a precious jewel belonging to the Queen. When he returned the article, the Queen, at first would not accept it saying that he was entitled to keep it. Abba Oshia refused, explaining that the Torah commands that one must return lost articles. The Queen exclaimed: 'Blessed be the God of the Jews'.



## חלול השם

### Chillul Hashem. Profaning Hashem's Name

The opposite of Kiddush Hashem is Chillul Hashem. This is an act that brings Judaism and the Jewish people into disrepute. Such an act is a grave sin and is very damaging because it causes non-Jews to despise Jewish people in general. Jews must remember that they have an important role to play in upholding Jewish values by the way they behave in their everyday lives.

Notes:

## שבט לוי

### Shevet Levi. The Tribe of Levi

The Tribe of Levi, named after the third son of Ya'akov, was the smallest of the tribes in the wilderness.

We read in the Torah (Shemot 32:26) that the L'viyim - (Levites) were not involved in the sin of the golden calf, but remained loyal to Hashem. Therefore, they were rewarded with privileges which would otherwise have belonged to the firstborn of Israel (Bamidbar 3:41). These privileges were in connection with the Sanctuary, and later with the Temple.

While the Jewish people were in the wilderness, they worshipped Hashem by means of the Sanctuary. The L'viyim were responsible for carrying the Sanctuary and all its furniture when travelling, taking it apart before starting a journey, and putting it together again when encamping. The L'viyim served in the Sanctuary and were privileged to pitch their tents around it (Bamidbar 1:53).

In Temple times, the L'viyim continued to serve as assistants to the Kohanim. They were the musicians and singers who accompanied the Kohanim as they offered up the sacrifices on behalf of the people.

Because of their special duties in the Temple, the L'viyim had no time to cultivate the land and were therefore not given their own territory when the country was divided among the tribes. In fact, they lived all over the country and took turns to go to Jerusalem twice a year, for one week at a time, in order to perform their duties in the Temple.





Another major function of the L'viyim, while they were not serving in the Temple, was to teach Torah to the people (Devarim 33:10). It is for this reason that they were scattered all over the country and had no time to engage in farming.

It is obvious that without land of their own, the L'viyim had no means of supporting themselves financially and therefore, the Torah commands that they were to receive ma'aser, a tenth of the annual produce known as tithes (Bamidbar 18:21). This was given as a kind of wage for performing their holy work on behalf of the people.

### Notes:

There is still a tradition nowadays for some pious and learned men to devote themselves fully to the study of the Torah. They receive support from members of the community, many of whom, being unable to study Torah themselves, at least fulfil the mitzvah by helping others to do so. In this way, the holy Torah will not be neglected. The college where this study takes place is known as a 'kollel'. Boys and girls also often spend a year or two, before university or work, studying our traditional texts in a yeshivah or seminary, either in Britain or, perhaps, Israel.

Nowadays, a privilege enjoyed by a Levi is to be the second man to be 'called up' to the Torah. Another privilege is that the L'viyim assist the Kohanim with the washing of their hands before the ceremony of Nesiat Kappayim. This ceremony, also known as 'Duchaning', refers to the Priestly Blessing performed during the Musaph service on festivals.

## Names

Certain surnames usually, although not always, indicate that a man is a Levi. For example, 'Levy' and 'Segal' which is an abbreviation for the words 'Segan LaKohen' (assistant to the Kohen).

**כֹּהֲנִים**

**Kohanim**

Ever since the time of Aharon, the Kohanim have played a major role in the religious life of the Jewish people. From Shemot 28:1, we see that Hashem chose Aharon from the Tribe of Levi to be the first Kohen, and all future Kohanim would likewise be descended from that family only.

The Torah, in the sidrah of Tetzaveh (Shemot 27:20), describes the special garments worn by the Kohanim, as well as the unique garments worn by the Kohen Gadol when performing their holy duties in the Sanctuary and Temple. The first part of the book of Vayikra describes in great detail the laws of the sacrifices performed by the Kohanim and for this reason, the earliest name of this book is 'Torat Kohanim' (the Law of the Priests).

## אורים ותמים

## Urim VeTumim. Lights and Perfection

The Kohen Gadol had a very special relationship with Hashem. He was able to communicate with Hashem in a unique and mysterious manner in order to obtain guidance when presented with a difficult question to which he did not know the answer. To help understand this, it is necessary to describe briefly, two special items worn by the Kohen Gadol. Around his body, he wore the 'Ephod', an apron-like garment. On the Ephod, was the 'Choshen Mishpat' (Breastplate of Judgement). The Ephod and Choshen Mishpat were woven from gold, blue wool, purple wool, scarlet wool and linen. The Choshen Mishpat was so made that when it was folded over, it formed the shape of a square approximately 23cm x 23cm.



On the Choshen Mishpat, were twelve precious stones with the name of one tribe inscribed on each stone. This reminded the Kohen Gadol that he served the entire people of Israel and that each tribe was precious to Hashem.

Placed inside the Choshen Mishpat, were two mysterious objects on which were written the Divine name of Hashem. They were called 'Urim and Tumim' which translated means 'Lights and Perfection'. Whereas all the other garments were made by skilled craftsmen according to the specifications given in the Torah, there is no indication in the Torah as to how the Urim and Tumim were to be made. This is because they were not made by man, but given secretly by Hashem to Moshe. It was Moshe who placed them in the fold of the Choshen Mishpat. The Kohen would carry these items for judgement and decision making on his heart and would therefore know what should or should not be done. Exactly how this was so, we do not understand. Our sages have suggested various ideas. One view is that the Urim would cause the appropriate letters on the Choshen Mishpat to light up thereby giving the answer. For example, if he wanted to know which tribe should be the first to go up to battle, the answer might be 'Yehudah ya'aleh' (Judah shall go up). In such a case, the appropriate letters would light up. However, the letters would not be in the correct order. Therefore, the purpose of the Tumim (meaning perfection) was to arrange the letters perfectly. Perhaps the Choshen Mishpat was the original 'text message'!

**Notes:**

## ברכת כהנים

## Birkat Kohanim. Priestly Blessing

One of the privileges given by Hashem to the Kohanim is to bless the Jewish people using the beautiful formula from the Torah (Bamidbar 6: 24-26). The fifteen words of this blessing are divided into three verses containing three, five and seven words respectively. Birkat Kohanim concludes with the word 'Shalom' (peace) for without peace,



all other blessings cannot be fully appreciated.

Birkat Kohanim is recited by everyone each morning at the very beginning of Shacharit even if there is no minyan. It is also recited by the Sh'liach Tzibbur during the repetition of the Amidah at Shacharit and Musaph, as well as at Minchah on fast days.

### Notes:

However, we are concerned here with the Birkat Kohanim recited by the Kohanim, in fulfilment of the mitzvah to bless the Jewish people as commanded in the Torah (Bamidbar 6:23). In this context, Birkat Kohanim is also known by the names 'Aliyah Laduchan' and 'Nesiat Kappayim'. 'Aliyah Laduchan' means 'ascending the platform.' The Kohanim must first remove their shoes and then wash their hands, assisted by the L'viyim. The Kohanim then go up to the duchan (platform) in front of the Aron Kodesh to pronounce the Blessing. The name 'Aliyah Laduchan' is the source of the familiar term 'Duchaning'.

'Nesiat Kappayim' means 'raising of the hands'. In Vayikra 9:22, we read that Aharon raised his hands to bless the people, and this practice has continued to the present day. The hands are stretched out at shoulder height with thumbs touching, and the first two fingers of each hand separated from the other two, forming a sort of fan. The head and hands are covered with a large tallit.

Before chanting each of the fifteen words one by one after the Sh'liach Tzibbur, the Kohanim say a special blessing. The formula of this blessing is unique, because instead of the usual words **אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו** (Who sanctified us with His commandments), the wording is:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּקִדְּשֹׁתֶיךָ  
שֶׁל אֶהְרֹן וְצִוְּנוּ לְבָרֶךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבָה.**

*Blessed are You O Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, Who sanctified us with the holiness of Aharon, and has commanded us to bless His people Israel with love.*

Note how the blessing concludes. This is indeed very appropriate as Aharon, throughout his lifetime, served the Jewish people with unselfish love. This is a quality that his descendants must try to emulate.

In Jerusalem, the ceremony of Nesiat Kappayim takes place every single day. In other parts of Israel, customs vary. However, outside Israel, it is the custom to perform the ceremony only during the Musaph on festivals.

Kohanim who sadly are in avelut (mourning) do not perform Nesiat Kappayim but should leave the Bet K'nesset before the ceremony commences.

## עליה לתורה

## Being Called up to the Torah

Another privilege belonging to the Kohanim is the honour of being called up first to the Torah. If a Kohen is present but there is no Levi, then the Kohen says the blessings a second time in place of the absent Levi. If however, there is no Kohen present but there is a Levi, the Levi may be called up in place of the absent Kohen but this is not essential as a Yisrael may also be called.



It is also the custom to refer specifically to a Kohen if he is present among a group of three or more men (Mezuman) who have eaten together, and are about to recite Grace After Meals (commencing with Rabbotai Nevarech).

## Special Responsibilities

As has already been explained, to be a Kohen one must be a direct descendant of the family of Aharon. Just as there are privileges associated with the Kehunah (Priesthood), so there are also special responsibilities which are necessary to enable the Kohanim to reach a higher spiritual level than the rest of the Jewish people.

We shall now refer to some special laws relating to marriage and death that only apply to Kohanim.

1. A Kohen is forbidden to marry a divorcee.
2. A Kohen is forbidden to enter a building if he knows that there is a dead body there. This does not apply to his own close family i.e. parents, child, brother, wife or unmarried sister.
3. If a Kohen attends a funeral, he must enter a special room in the cemetery, separated from the main hall where the coffin lies before burial.
4. A Kohen is forbidden to come within four cubits (approx 1.8 metres) of a grave. For this reason, a Kohen who dies, leaving priestly relations, is buried at the end of a row so that the relatives may visit his grave.

## Names

As with L'viyim, certain surnames usually, although not always, indicate that a man is a Kohen. For example, Cohen, Cohn, Kahn and Kaplan, as well as Kagan, as the Russian letter 'g' is like our letter 'h'. In addition, the name Katz which is an abbreviation for 'Kohen Tzedek (Righteous Priest).

**Notes:**

## Recommended Jewish Book List

The following books would make ideal Bar Mitzvah gifts

Book	Author	Publisher
Love Your Neighbour	Zelig Pliskin	Aish HaTorah
Growth Through Torah	Zelig Pliskin	Aish HaTorah
Guard Your Tongue	Zelig Pliskin	Aish HaTorah
Living Each Day	Abraham Twerski	Mesorah Publications Ltd
Growing Each Day	Abraham Twerski	Mesorah Publications Ltd
Masterplan	Arye Carmel	Feldheim
The World of Prayer	Elie Munk	Feldheim
The Book of Our Heritage	Eliyahu Kitov	Feldheim
The Thinking Jewish Teenager's Guide to Life	Akiva Tatz	Feldheim
Torah: The Oral Tradition	Noah Aminoah & Yoseph Nitzon	WZO Publications
Judaism A-Z	Yacov Newman & Gavriel Sivan	WZO Publications
History of the Jews	S Grayzel	A New American Library
To Be a Jew	Chaim Donin	Basic Books
Moral Issues in Judaism	Ayre Forta	United Synagogue Agency for Jewish Education
Atlas of Jewish History	Martin Gilbert	J M Dent Ltd
The Taryag Mitzvos	AY Kahan	Keser Torah Publications
On Judaism	E Feldman	The Shaar Press

*Jewish bookshops are happy to assist with further suggestions and most offer a Book List service for gifts.*



The United Synagogue Agency for Jewish Education gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance of Rabbi Sholom Bloom, Rabbi Mordechai Ginsbury, Rabbi Emanuel Levy, Rabbi Meir Salasnik and Shimon Pincus in the production of this project.