



Machar
The Washington Congregation for
Secular Humanistic Judaism

2004 B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony

June 19, 2004



Alexandra Behar Schatz

Ilana Maria Kahan

Sol Logan Braithwaite Prensky

Adiel Sophia Kaplan





Special Acknowledgements

Rabbi Binyamin Biber

Marlene Cohen
Director, Jewish Cultural School

Joy Markowitz
B'nei Mitzvah Liaison

Laurie Kauffman
B'nei Mitzvah Class Instructor

Ken Giles, Barbara Gorin and the Machar Band

The Machar Board





Welcome

Introduction of Students

(Please sing along)

Hinneh, Mah Tov! - Behold, How Good!

(T'hillah / Psalm 133.1 - egalitarian adaptation, traditional melody)

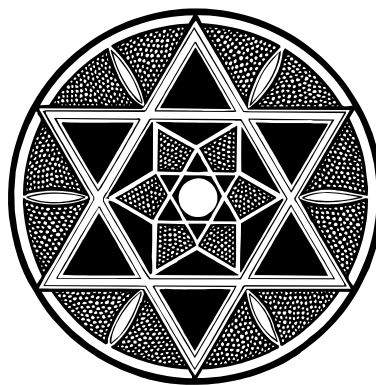
Hinneh, mah tov u-mah naim

הִנֵּה, מַה־טוֹב וּמַה־נָּעִים

shevet ammim gam yahad!

שֵׁבֶת עַמִּים גַּם־יַחַד!

[Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
when peoples dwell together in unity!]





Lighting Sabbath Candles

Hadlaqat Nerot Shel Shabbat

Rabbi:

N'-varekh `et ha-`or
 ka-`asher ni-qavets b'-tsavta`
 l'-hadliq nerot shel Shabbat ba-simha-tenu.
 B'-`or n'-varekh `et ha-haiyim.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאוֹר
 כְּאֲשֶׁר נִקְבְּץ בְּצוֹתָא
 לְהַדְלִיק נְרוֹת שֶׁל שַׁבָּת בְּשִׂמְחָתֵנוּ.
 בְּאוֹר נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַחַיִּים.

Congregation:

Let us bless the light
 as we gather together
 to kindle Sabbath candles at our joyous occasion.
 With light let us bless life.

(Light the candles.)

Rabbi:

We kindle these lights as symbols:
 their light a sign of human learning, enlightenment, and hope;
 their radiant warmth a sign of human kindness, concern, and commitment.
 Let us remember the generations before us who lit candles as we do,
 and who were uplifted by the beauty and serenity of their light.

Congregation:

May the lighting of these candles connect us to our past,
 to each other, and to ourselves.
 May these candles shed light on our inner strength and vision.
 May these flames inspire us to seek each other in peace.





The B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony:



Its History and Meaning



Rabbi Binyamin Biber



Secular Humanistic Judaism

*Reading by Donna Bassin,
President of Machar*

Our movement is secular because its focus is on the pleasures and pains of this world. It is humanistic because it finds the source of power for solving problems in human beings and because it sees the meaning of Jewish history in the Jewish defiance of an unjust world. It is cultural because it views Judaism as the culture of the Jewish people. Our movement is part of the struggle for Jewish continuity and Jewish integrity.

—Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, founder
of the Humanistic Judaism movement





Alexandra Behar Schatz



Reading

Read by Zachary Popkin-Hall

When we seek in our past the sources that should and do water our life and creativity...we should consider their intrinsic worth—whether they have dried up and are empty or whether they are still full and ebullient. From each epoch, each stream, each current in our historic life, we should select those religious and ethical values or those intellectual and artistic achievements that can help bind us to our historical tradition without being bound by it.

--Shmuel Niger, literary and social critic (1883-1955)

Sisters

Read by Samantha Schatz

Na'aseh Shalom - Let Us Make Peace

נְעֻשָׂה שְׁלוֹם

(adapted song from the end of the Mourner's Qaddish)

All sing:

Na'aseh shalom ba-olam.

Na` na'aseh shalom alei-nu,

v'-al kol Yisra`el.

V'-no`mar, no`mar: "Amen."

נְעֻשָׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם,
נָא נְעֻשָׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ,
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְנֹאמֶר, נֹאמֶר: אָמֵן.





Na'aseh shalom, na'aseh shalom -
 shalom alei-nu,
 v'-al kol Yisra`el.
 Na'aseh shalom, na'aseh shalom -
 shalom alei-nu,
 v'-al kol ha-olam.

נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם, נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם,
 שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,
 וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם, נַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם,
 שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,
 וְעַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם.

(repeat these last 6 lines once, the first 3 with a higher pitch)

Translation:

Let us make peace in the world.
 Peace is our responsibility,
 the responsibility of all the Jewish people, all of Yisra`el,
 and the responsibility of all peoples in the world.

Who Died and Made You King?

Alexandra Behar Schatz ☆ B'nei Mitzvah Presentation



Family Candle Lighting





Ilana Maria Kahan



Our Commitment to Social Justice

Read by Alexander Beede

We believe that it is human beings who have the responsibility for solving human problems. We are committed, in the enduring Jewish tradition of support for social action and social progress, to community service and actions for social justice. We each take responsibility for our own behavior, and all of us take collective responsibility for the state of our world.

Family

Read by Alex Kahan

Machar

by Naomi Shemer

Mahar, `ulai naphligah ba-sphinot
Me-hoph `Eilat ad Hoph Shenhav.
V'-al ha-mash`hatot ha-y'shanot
Yat'inu tapuhei zahav.

Kol zeh `eino mashal v'-lo` halom.
Zeh nakhon ka-`or b'-tsohorayim.
Kol zeh yavo` mahar, `im lo` ha-yom,
V'-`im lo` mahar, `az mohoratayim.

מָחָר אוֹלֵי נִפְלְגָה בְּסַפְנוֹת
מִחוּף אֵילַת עַד חוּף שְׁנָהֵב.
וְעַל הַמְשַׁחְתוֹת הַיְשָׁנוֹת
יִטְעִינוּ תַפּוּחֵי זָהָב.

כָּל זֶה אֵינוֹ מִשָּׁל וְלֹא חֵלוֹם.
זֶה נִכּוֹן כְּאוֹר בְּצַהֲרָיִם.
כָּל זֶה יָבוֹא מָחָר, אִם לֹא הַיּוֹם,
וְאִם לֹא מָחָר, אֲזַי מִחֲרָתִים.





"Machar," in spite of gray and gloomy skies
Tomorrow will be clear and bright.
"Machar," we have a hope that never dies
That dawn will soon replace the night.

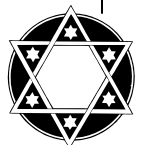
Sing for tomorrow is another day
Dream a dream that's free of care and sorrow.
When it's dark, let your heart lead the way
And machar will be (and machar will be, and machar will be)
a bright tomorrow.

Lillian Wald: A Profile in Caring

Ilana Maria Kahan ☆ B'nei Mitzvah Presentation



Family Candle Lighting





Sol Logan Braithwaite Prensky



Meditation on Peace

read by Jacob Lennen

We can perhaps remember—even if only for a time—that those who live with us are our brothers [and sisters]; that they share with us the same short moment of life; that they seek—as we do—nothing but the chance to live out their lives in purpose and happiness, winning what satisfaction and fulfillment they can.

Surely this bond of common faith, this bond of common goal, can begin to teach us something. Surely, we can learn, at least, to look at those around us as fellow men. And surely we can begin to work a little harder to bind up the wounds among us and to become in our own hearts brothers, [sisters], and countrymen once again.

—Robert F. Kennedy, Day of Affirmation, South Africa, 1966

Reflections on Coming of Age

By Kahlil Gibran

Read by Dinah Prensky





Imagine

Imagine there's no heaven,
It's easy if you try,
No hell below us,
Above us only sky,
Imagine all the people
living for today...

Imagine no possessions,
I wonder if you can,
No need for greed or hunger,
A brotherhood of man,
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...

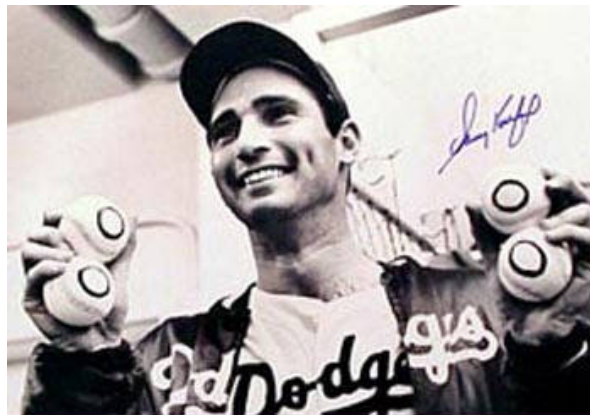
Imagine there's no countries,
It isn't hard to do,
Nothing to kill or die for,
No religion too,
Imagine all the people
living life in peace...

*You may say I'm a dreamer,
but I'm not the only one,
I hope some day you'll join us,
And the world will live as one.*

-- John Lennon

Sandy Koufax—Athlete, Role Model, and Maybe a Secular Humanist Jew

Sol Logan Braithwaite Prensky ☆ B'nei Mitzvah Presentation



Family Candle Lighting





Adiel Sophia Kaplan



Tiqqun Olam read by Amelia Coffey

Tiqqun Olam means repairing the world. It involves working actively and positively to try to bring about healing and transformation of the world through social action. Drawing on the wisdom and efforts of generations past, *Tiqqun Olam* involves us in helping alleviate hunger, homelessness, disease, ignorance, abuse, and political oppression among all people, and in preserving the health of the environment upon which all life depends.

"Just What is a Jew?" by Albert Einstein

Read by Judy Kaplan Baron

Ba-Shanah ha-Ba`ah - The Coming Year

(Lyrics by Ehud Manor, music by Nurit Hirsch.
Written during the Six Day War in 1967.)

Ba-shanah ha-ba`ah
neshev al ha-mirpeset,
V'-nispor tsiporim nod'dot.
Y'ladim b'-huph'shah y'sahaqu topheset
Bein ha-bayit l'-vein ha-sadot.

בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה
נִשֵּׁב עַל הַמִּרְפֶּסֶת
וְנִסְפּוֹר צִפּוֹרִים נוֹדְדוֹת.
יְלָדִים בְּחוֹפְשָׁה יִשְׁחָקוּ תּוֹפֶסֶת
בֵּין הַבַּיִת לְבֵין הַשְּׂדוֹת.





(Chorus - sing 2 times)

Od tir`eh, od tir`eh,

ka-mah tov yih'yeh

Ba-shanah, ba-shanah ha-ba`ah!

עוֹד תִּרְאֶה, עוֹד תִּרְאֶה,

כַּמָּה טוֹב יִהְיֶה

בַּשָּׁנָה, בַּשָּׁנָה הַבָּאָה.

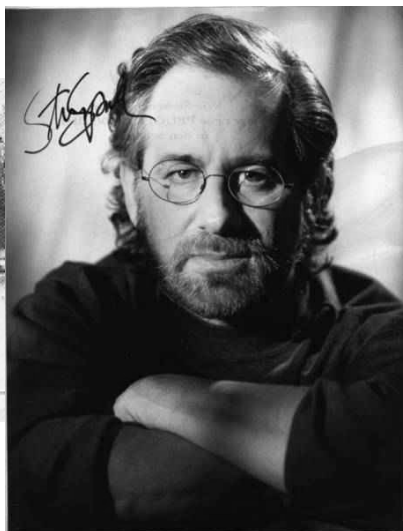
Soon the day will arrive when we will be together,
and no longer will we live in fear.

And the children will smile without wondering whether
On that day dark new clouds will appear.

Wait and see, wait and see, what a world there can be,
if we share, if we care, you and me. (Chorus - repeat last two lines)

Spielberg's List

Adiel Sophia Kaplan ☆ B'nei Mitsvah Presentation



Family Candle Lighting





A Parent's Meditation

Our children are not forever children. Too quickly, they grow up and want their independence. In a few brief years, our early job is finished and our sons and daughters are adults.

Wise parents are willing to let go. When the time comes, they are able to transfer authority to its proper source. They are fulfilled, not threatened, by the emerging maturity of their children.

May we find the wisdom to release our children gracefully and with no regrets. May we let our children live their own lives and not the ones we wish we had lived. May we see each day's missteps in the perspective of their growing maturity. May we raise our voices more in happiness at what they are than in vexation at what they are not. May we support their choices and their right to choose for themselves.

Then, as our children stride forward eagerly, confidently and in good conscience, our proud and grateful hearts will swell with joy.



Presentations to the B'nei Mitzvah Students

Marlene Cohen, Director of the Jewish Cultural School





Blessing the B'nei Mitsvah

Rabbi:

B'nei mitsvah, in the past several years, each of you has learned and grown so much. We have tried to help you to start your life journeys with progressive values, a healthy sense of self-worth, and a positive Jewish identity. We now gather together to acknowledge your achievements, to celebrate your transition into young adulthood, and to encourage you to increasingly guide yourselves toward your highest ideals. With our continuing support, we hope you will take the initiative to further develop your learning and your good deeds, your Jewishness and your humanity, your active commitment to a better world.

Congregation:

Let us bless the youth,
the hope of tomorrow

Rabbi:

N'-varekh `et ha-ts'irim,
ha-tiqvah shel maḥar.

נְבָרֶךְ אֶת הַצְעִירִים,
הַתִּקְוָה שֶׁל מָחָר.

Shalom Alei-khem – Peace Upon You (traditional)

Shalom alei-khem,
mal`akhei ha-shalom,
shomrei shalom.
Shalom alei-khem,
rodphei ha-shalom.
Shalom alei-khem.

שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם,
מַלְאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם,
שׁוֹמְרֵי שְׁלוֹם.
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם,
רוֹדְפֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם.
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם.

Bo`a-khem b'-shalom,
`ohavei ha-shalom.
Shevet-khem b'-shalom.
Tset-khem b'-shalom,
mal`akhei ha-shalom.
Shalom alei-khem.

בּוֹאֲכֶם בְּשְׁלוֹם,
אוֹהְבֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם.
שֵׁבֶתְכֶם בְּשְׁלוֹם.
צֵאתְכֶם בְּשְׁלוֹם,
מַלְאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם.
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם.

[Peace upon you, messengers of peace,
guardians of peace, pursuers of peace, lovers of peace.
May your coming, your sitting down, and your going be in peace.]





Qiddush

Congregation:

Wine -

symbol of pleasure and sorrow,
symbol of passion and blood,
symbol of plenty and of excess.

Let us bless our lives with community

by sharing our joy, our spirit, and our bounty, by inviting visitors to join us,
by welcoming the stranger, by caring for those in need.

Let us create a healthy community.

The fruit of the vine - with it, let us drink "To Life!"

Rabbi:

Nivra` qahal bari`.

נְבָרָא קְהַל בְּרִיא.

P'ri ha-gaphen - `itto, nishteh "L'-Haiyim!" פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן - אֶתּוֹ נִשְׁתֶּה "לְחַיִּים!"

Congregation:

L'-Haiyim!

"לְחַיִּים!"

Breaking Bread and Making Peace:

A Covenant for a Better World

Rabbi:

Breaking bread together, *b'rit lehem*,

was an ancient Jewish custom for making a pact of peace, *b'rit shalom*.

Today, we break bread with all kinds of people to transform this world
by fostering understanding, peace, and justice.





A Blessing for Breaking Bread

Let Us Bring Forth Food

נוציא לחם - Notsi` Lehem

(inspired by "Ha-Motsi`," meaning "the one who brings forth")

Congregation:

Each time we break bread,
let us appreciate our bounty
and share it with others.
Each time we break bread,
let us nourish ourselves
to work for peace and justice.
Each time we break bread,
let us commit ourselves
to a covenant for a better world.

Rabbi:

Notsi` lehem min ha-`arets
k'dei she-nistapeq v'-nit-kalkel kula-nu.

נוציא לחם מן הארץ
כדי שנסתפק ונתכלכל כלנו.

Congregation:

Let us bring forth food from the land
so we all may be satisfied and sustained.
`Amen.

אמן.

(Distribute *hallah*.)





Turn-turn-turn

(to Everything There Is a Season)

To everything - turn, turn, turn
There is a season - turn, turn, turn
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep

To everything - turn, turn, turn
There is a season - turn, turn, turn
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time of war, a time of peace
A time of love, a time of hate
A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracing

To everything - turn, turn, turn
There is a season - turn, turn, turn
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rend, a time to sew
A time to love, a time to hate
A time of peace, I swear it's not too late!

- Pete Seeger





Announcements



Candy Toss

Siman Tov u-Mazzal Tov!
Good Omen and Good Fortune! (Traditional)

Siman tov u-mazzal tov

סימן טוב ומזל טוב

u-mazzal tov v'-siman tov! (1st 2 lines x3)

ומזל טוב וסימן טוב.

Y'hei la-nu!

יהא לנו.

Y'hei lanu, y'hei la-nu u-l'-khol Yisra`el!

יהא לנו, יהא לנו וילכל ישראל.

Y'hei lanu, y'hei la-nu u-l'-khol ha-olam!

יהא לנו, יהא לנו וילכל העולם.

(x2)

Siman tov u-mazzal tov

סימן טוב ומזל טוב

u-mazzal tov v'-siman tov! (1st 2 lines x3)

ומזל טוב וסימן טוב.

Y'hei la-nu!

יהא לנו.

[Good luck and good fortune!

May these be unto us, the Jewish people, and all the world!]





The Jewish Cultural School

Machar and its Jewish Cultural School embrace the history and culture of Judaism with a non-theistic approach. As Humanistic Jews, we want our children to know and understand the diverse traditions of the Jewish people. We help them to draw on the lessons of the past to create a better future. We teach our children to take responsibility for their own lives and to use their abilities to help improve the larger community. The Jewish Cultural School curriculum focuses on Jewish culture and history as well as Jewish Secular Humanist values.

During the early grades (K to 3) topics covered include the Jewish family and the Jewish calendar and its holidays, Jewish customs and culture around the world, Jewish history, and Jewish Secular Humanist values.

In the later years (grades 4 to 6), the curriculum focuses on Jewish history, with special emphasis on certain key periods, such as shtetl life in Eastern Europe, nineteenth century Jewish life in Western Europe, Jewish immigration to the United States and the Jewish-American experience, the history of Zionism and Israel, and the Holocaust. In addition, students learn about different branches of Judaism and about other major religions.

In the *B'nei Mitzvah* year (seventh grade) the parents plan the curriculum with input from the students. The parents themselves, as well as Rabbi Binyamin Biber and guest speakers from Machar and elsewhere, teach the classes, and the parents attend along with the students. This year's topics were organized around three themes: Jewish identity, Jewish history, and social action. Topics included: the meaning of a humanistic *B'nei Mitzvah*; comparing theological and humanist world views; ethics; Jewish history from the beginning to the present; the Talmud; Jewish art, literature, poetry and music; Jewish involvement in the labor and civil rights movements, and in community organizing; anti-Semitism; Israel and the Palestinians; as well as tolerance and diversity. The students also spent time working on independent research projects, which eventually became their *B'nei Mitzvah* presentations. Members of the class also participated in group community service activities, such as cleaning Rock Creek Park.

