

What can be done in a week-day Bar Mitzvah where there is no Kerias Hatorah? The boy conducts the Shachris service without an Aliyah and delivers his speech. Sometimes, if parents wish, we permit the reading of the Haftorah without borocho's, and the boy refers to it in his speech as the Haftorah of the preceding Sabbath.

The Rabbi should explain to the assemblage the rationale behind the week-day Bar Mitzvah and that, in fact, it is a Kiddush Hashem to so schedule them in order to preserve the Shabbos. With the passage of time, a community accepts this procedure, enjoys its festivity and ceremoniousness as others do the Sabbath Bar Mitzvah.

Dear colleagues, I maintain that my plan can be implemented and will evoke a community acceptance if the Rabbi himself believes in it. There is nothing more important than the Shabbos. This plan will serve to accentuate the Sabbath in the community and will facilitate our efforts to enforce Shabbos observance in other areas, such as with our Boy Scouts or other affiliated groups.

A Judge Rules on Bar-Mitzvahs

We often try without success to impress parents of young boys with the fact that the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is a religious occasion, and not an occasion for social advancement and unlimited spending. Now, however, we have a legal decision to lend weight to our words. Perhaps now some more parents of prospective Bar Mitzvah boys will cooperate in restoring the spiritual tone of the ceremony, and stamp as social exhibitionism the vulgar extravagance that has come to characterize this religious ceremony. Parents who have always understood this, but have felt impelled to "go along" with the "others," can now find support from this unexpected source:

The November 6, 1957, official edition of Law Reports and Session Laws, State of New York, carries on page 99 a decision handed down by Justice Samuel H. Hofstadter of the New York Supreme Court, involving the parents of a twelve year old boy who was being prepared for Bar Mitzvah. The parents made application to withdraw the entire proceeds of the boy's funds resulting from a settlement of a personal injury action. A deposit of \$100 had been paid to a Bronx caterer for a dinner-reception, and the Court was petitioned for permission to deplete the child's moneys in order to pay the balance. Justice Hofstadter permitted the

withdrawal of less than one-third of the amount requested, and accompanied his decision with the following statement:

"The Bar Mitzvah ceremony is a solemnization of a boy's becoming a 'son of commandment,' and should encourage him in the path of righteousness. It was never intended to be a vehicle for mere entertainment and display. It signalizes a boy's religious coming of age as a 'son of the Law'; the religious practices of his faith are now incumbent upon him. The spiritual values the occasion symbolizes may not be relegated to second place in favor of a gesture of conspicuous consumption. It would be more fitting if the funds belonging to this boy were utilized to initiate, or to continue, his education in faith and in morals.

"While it is manifest that it was never intended that the principal feature of the Bar Mitzvah festivities be an Epicurean adventure, the solemnity of the occasion need not render it less joyous. For the Psalmist has enjoined us to 'serve the Lord in gladness.'"

To all the above we add a hearty "amen".

Rabbi Norman Lamm