

Jacob Perlis

# BAR/BAT MITZVAH SPEECHES MADE EASY

CREATE A THOUGHTFUL AND MEMORABLE SPEECH  
FOR YOUR CHILD'S SPECIAL DAY



## Samples

We've put together a variety of example speeches for you to peruse and use at your leisure. Note that each speech is pieced together using various segments that you've already seen throughout the book and this is how we chose to piece them together. When appropriate, the speeches are organized by theme.

You can choose one of these themes, a theme based on another Jewish value, a selection from the Torah, or something entirely different and unique to you and your manner of

speaking and relating with others. You may want to include a few of the sentiments expressed in our section about the Torah, for example, along with a quotation from the Thank You section, and then develop the rest originally. Or you might decide to use just a few bits and pieces in this book and customize the rest. You're certainly welcome to use the speeches and words herein—just be sure to include the proper names, locations, and anecdotes so it all makes sense!

### **Sample 1: The Value of Learning**

Thank you for coming today to celebrate (*insert name*)'s bar/bat mitzvah. It means so much to me, as (*insert name*)'s (*father/mother/grandfather/grandmother*) that so many of you chose to spend your day celebrating my (*son/daughter/grandson/granddaughter*).

When I was getting bar/bat mitzvahed, my (*mother/father/grandmother/grandfather*) would sit with me and go over my portion of the Torah late into the night, putting this event, this bar/bat mitzvah, at the helm of my studies. If you think I was hard on you, be thankful that you didn't have Bubbe/Zayte breathing down your neck! He/she pushed me not just to work hard, but to think and to ask questions and to really become the man/woman of G-d that I was created to be. And that's why I'm here today as your proud father/mother/grandfather/grandmother, and that's why we celebrate: you are becoming the man/woman of G-d that He created and intended for you to be.

Ever since you were a baby, you've had an inquisitive spirit. You were always getting into (the cupboard, entertainment center, bookshelves, etc.) and wanted to examine every little nook and cranny, every bug that landed on the front steps, every butterfly that landed on a petal, and every leaf that fell down from the trees. (Gesture to audience) You might think I'm exaggerating—I only wish! (*Insert name*), that curious nature has served you well. You excel at school, and to this day you are always learning new things. May you ever be this way and may G-d bless your intellect and curious nature, revealing His deep truths and mysteries to you as you continue to grow and mature in your faith. I am so proud of you.

When I saw/heard you practicing and studying, I was flooded with memories. I remember vividly what it was like to prepare for this day, for certain, but it was the memories of your earliest years that came back to me. I remember teaching how to (*insert memory here*) and now here you are, maturing before my very eyes not just as a young adult, but a young adult with a rich faith, and I am so proud. Today is a day that we celebrate your spiritual maturity. All of this preparation—for the ceremony, for this party—all of this is to rejoice in the fact that you are on the threshold of understanding life's depth and complexities. The voice of your inner spirit is beginning to speak, and you will be responsible for listening to it and make the choices that will guide the rest of your life.

You have studied hard, attended your Hebrew lessons, and learned much—but remember that today does not celebrate the ending of Hebrew lessons; on the contrary, we recognize that today marks a journey of a lifetime—a lifetime of spiritual discovery. The most important lessons will occur after this caterer packs up, after the music stops playing, and after you send thank-you notes to all of these generous guests.

As Jewish people, we need to rely on the Torah as the authoritative guide for how to live our lives. When you are confronted with choices, you may rely on the strength of your character as you make decisions, but you can always confirm and discern which choice is the best choice to make by consulting G-d in prayer and by asking Him to guide you to a

place in the Torah for added wisdom. Remember, the Torah not only contains our commandments and virtues, but it also contains a great degree of wealth in the stories of our people. As you walk along your life's path and all of the options that come along with it, trust that I will be here for you.

Remember, (insert name), that the earth is the L-rd's , or Shmirat haAdamah. You might be too young to remember the play *You Can't Take It With You*, but I'll tell you the moral of the story: money, possessions, people—none of this can we take with us into the next world. Everything is on a temporary loan to us here on earth—including the Earth! Remember this—your ancestors have, and they were green long before green was cool. Consider yourself the caretaker for all that you have: your relationships...your home...and your world. Treasure it all while you have it with the knowledge that the greatest treasure we have comes from knowing it all belongs to the one true G-d.

Once again, I'd like to thank everyone for coming here to join us this evening, and I'd like to thank you, (insert name), for all of the hard work you've done to uphold our traditions and our faith while making it your own. I'd like to close with a few words from the great Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, who once said this: "If you won't be better tomorrow than you were today, then what do you need tomorrow for?" (Insert name), with G-d's help, may you always choose a path that honors Him. May you always seek to learn more about yourself, your Jewish faith, and the world around you so that your role and your choices will become clearer and clearer with each passing day. Mazel Tov!

### **Sample 2: The Value of Loving-kindness**

I'm glad that you all could make it here today to celebrate (*insert name*)'s bar/bat mitzvah. We have quite a crowd here, and I'm sorry if I haven't made my way over to introduce myself yet. I'm (*your name*) and I'm (insert name)'s (father/mother/grandfather/grandmother).

When I became a bat mitzvah, I felt an enormous amount of pressure to do everything perfectly from my mitzvah project to my prayer to my hair! Looking back, I realized that G-d does not demand perfection from us, rather, He demands that we have hearts and minds that want to honor His ways. If I had known that, sure, I might have still worried about my hair (smile and pause for laughs), but I would have enjoyed my experience so much more, reveling in the fact that I was growing in my Jewish faith and that G-d was pleased with me. I will never forget the time you (share story here). You were so young, yet you were so perceptive to the needs of others around you. Your sensitivity is a gift from the L-rd, and your display of loving-kindness towards others is inspiring. I am very proud of you.

Today we celebrate because you, as a new bar/bat mitzvah, are taking an important step in your life's journey: you are now on the path to adulthood. While I may always have fond memories of you as a baby and as a young child, I look forward to the new memories we will have together as you grown and learn and become the full person that G-d has created you to be.

Recently, you and I have spent much time considering the *parsha* together. Those are moments that I will always treasure, because not only did they teach me more about our G-d, but G-d also used that time to enlighten me that you, my (*child/grandchild*), were nearing

adulthood. It is a hard and beautiful truth for (*parents/grandparents*), but my heart *kvells* with joy to see you taking a serious interest and love for your Jewish faith.

(Insert name), anyone who knows you understands that you are a person of deep emotions and passions. This is a good thing. You aren't like everyone else, nor do you need to be, because the L-rd created you uniquely and for a specific purpose. Fuel your impulses and passions into serving G-d, just like Moses did. God valued his passion and used that quality while using Moses as a go-between Him and the Israelites. People of great passion are given that passion to be used for the good of others, so be like Moses, dear (insert name), and serve the L-rd.

(Insert name), do your best to practice *gmilut chasadim*—acts of loving-kindness. The spark of the Divine is in all of us. Every time you pass someone on the street, whether it is someone you feel sympathy towards, someone you love, or someone you fear, remember that we are all G-d's children. He created each one. Express benevolence to all and have a compassionate heart.

(Insert name), I am thankful for you and for your heart for G-d. With that said, I'd like to leave you with a few words from our beloved Torah. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead." (Deuteronomy 6:4–8) (Insert name), hold fast to your faith, share it with others who want to know about it, and may G-d bless you in a life lived with loving-kindness. *Mazel Tov!*

### **Sample 3: Healing the World**

It isn't every day that a (boy/girl) grows up, and today is the day that marks the transition from childhood into adulthood for (insert name). As (insert name)'s (father/mother/grandfather/grandmother), I welcome you all to this bar/bat mitzvah and thank you for joining us here.

You know, I remember becoming bar mitzvah, and even though I was entrenched in learning and studying for this day, I was just much more excited on the party—what can I say? I bet if you asked around, this would have been the case for most of my friends, too. It's more common than we all would admit, but what I gained from this is this: there is no shame in feeling happy and excited about gathering together to celebrate the important celebrations of life, and G-d has given us each other, and all of us gathered here today, to be a people who love and support one another as we go through life and deepening our Jewish faith.

My dear (insert name), I have always enjoyed your ability to find joy and laughter in the world. Your smile and sense of humor has brought such blessings to me, to the family, to everyone around you. I believe with my whole heart that you have been blessed by G-d to look at the world in this beautiful way—not everyone is able to find joy, and you my (child/grandchild) have found it. May you always continue to find G-d's happiness in yourself, in others, and in the world around you. I will never forget the time you (share story here). You were so young, yet you were so perceptive to the needs of others around

you. Your sensitivity is a gift from the L-rd, and your display of loving-kindness towards others is inspiring. I am very proud of you.

You have studied hard, attended your Hebrew lessons, and learned much—but remember that today does not celebrate the ending of Hebrew lessons; on the contrary, we recognize that today marks a journey of a lifetime—a lifetime of spiritual discovery. The most important lessons will occur after this caterer packs up, after the music stops playing, and after you send thank-you notes to all of these generous guests.

Today is a day that we celebrate your spiritual maturity. All of this preparation—for the ceremony, for this party—all of this is to rejoice in the fact that you are on the threshold of understanding life's depth and complexities. The voice of your inner spirit is beginning to speak, and you will be responsible for listening to it and make the choices that will guide the rest of your life.

G-d has called us to be a people of peace. That is His ultimate intention for us: that we obey Him, love others, and live in peace. You can begin to repair the world by remembering Joseph, who was calm and gracious even when faced his brothers' betrayal. He responded to them with grace and peace and offered forgiveness. It is hard to be the bigger person, but you have G-d on your side to help you be a strong, gracious instrument of his peace.

(Insert name), I feel for you because this world of ours and of our future generations is in desperate need of repair. When you can, promote peace. When you can, promote loving-kindness. When you can, promote compassion. When can you do these things? All of the time. Sure, sometimes it feels easier and more natural than others, but you have G-d on your side. Look for ways to heal the world, to find ways to perform acts of tikkun olam, and if you can't find them, ask Him to guide you. He'll show you, all right, and you will then be responsible for making this earth a better place.

(Insert name), your personality and your faith, in combination, are providing you with a fantastic platform to be a true world-changer. I thank you for your heart towards serving others and your G-d given desire to create change in this world. Mazel Tov, (insert name!) And in the words of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, "If you were there and the Romans or the Babylonians were about to destroy Jerusalem and you had the power to do something about it, would you sit and mourn and cry? Or would you turn the world upside down to change history? So what is stopping you? Overturn the world today!"

#### **Sample 4: Living with Wisdom**

They say that apples don't fall far from the tree, but I certainly hope my (son/daughter/grandson/granddaughter) turns out a better apple cake than the one they made with me! (Pause for laughs). I'm (your name) and I'm very proud to be here today for my (son/daughter/grandson/granddaughter).

(Insert name), I remember my own bar/bat mitzvah. I recall spending just as many hours trying to figure out how to pronounce all of these Hebrew words correctly as I spent on my mitzvah project, am I right? All of the hard work and effort you put forth today will stay with you always as you can never put a price on the value of hard work.

Ever since you were a baby, you've had an inquisitive spirit. You were always getting into (the cupboard, entertainment center, bookshelves, etc.) and wanted to examine every little

nook and cranny, every bug that landed on the front steps, every butterfly that landed on a petal, and every leaf that fell down from the trees. (Gesture to audience) You might think I'm exaggerating—I only wish! (Insert name), that curious nature has served you well. You excel at school, and to this day you are always learning new things. May you ever be this way and may G-d bless your intellect and curious nature, revealing His deep truths and mysteries to you as you continue to grow and mature in your faith. I am so proud of you.

One of the biggest traits I see developing in you, (insert name), is your patience. It's hard to tell if a child will grow into a patient person; after all, little children are all about what they want, when they want it—which is usually right now! However, (insert name), you're not a little child anymore. On the contrary, you have developed into a responsible, calm young (man/woman), and I can see how G-d is growing you in maturity every day. I am so proud of you and proud to be your (father/mother/grandfather/grandmother).

You have studied hard, attended your Hebrew lessons, and learned much—but remember that today does not celebrate the ending of Hebrew lessons; on the contrary, we recognize that today marks a journey of a lifetime—a lifetime of spiritual discovery. The most important lessons will occur after this caterer packs up, after the music stops playing, and after you send thank-you notes to all of these generous guests.

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As Jewish people, we need to rely on the Torah as the authoritative guide for how to live our lives. When you are confronted with choices, you may rely on the strength of your character as you make decisions, but you can always confirm and discern which choice is the best choice to make by consulting G-d in prayer and by asking Him to guide you to a place in the Torah for added wisdom. Remember, the Torah not only contains our commandments and virtues, but it also contains a great degree of wealth in the stories of our people. As you walk along your life's path and all of the options that come along with it, trust that I will be here for you.

(Insert name), it is clear to me that you have a wisdom beyond your years. I pray that G-d blesses you with abundant wisdom so that you may live a life of abundant faith, joy, and love. The Rabbi Noah Weinberg said this: "People often avoid making decisions out of fear of making a mistake. Actually, the failure to make decisions is one of life's biggest mistakes." Continue to put your trust in G-d, (insert name), and don't be afraid to make decisions. Choose with wisdom. Choose faith. Choose G-d. Mazel Tov, (insert name!)

### **Sample 5: Remember your Jewish Identity**

They say that apples don't fall far from the tree, but I certainly hope my (son/daughter/grandson/granddaughter) turns out a better apple cake than the one they made with me! (Pause for laughs). I'm (your name) and I'm very proud to be here today for my (son/daughter/grandson/granddaughter).

When I was getting bar/bat mitzvah, my (mother/father/grandmother/grandfather) would sit with me and go over my portion of the Torah late into the night, putting this

event, this bar/bat mitzvah, at the helm of my studies. If you think I was hard on you, be thankful that you didn't have Bubbe/Zayte breathing down your neck! He/she pushed me not just to work hard, but to think and to ask questions and to really become the man/woman of G-d that I was created to be. And that's why I'm here today as your proud father/mother/grandfather/grandmother, and that's why we celebrate: you are becoming the man/woman of G-d that He created and intended for you to be.

Usually, when I talk about (insert name), I'm *plotzing* with pride—I mean, how could I not be? If you know (insert name), you know about all of the awards, the honor, the trophies, the medals, the accomplishments—the list goes on and we're not even in high school yet! Yale (or name of college child wishes to attend one day), get ready! All jokes aside, I'm very proud of (insert name), because I know how hard (insert name) worked to make such achievements. There is no skillset out there greater than natural G-d-given ability and hard work, and (insert name) has been blessed with both. I'm proud of you (insert name), not for all that you have accomplished, which is so much, but for all that you are and for all that G-d is creating you to be.

Recently, you and I have spent much time considering the *parsha* together. Those are moments that I will always treasure, because not only did they teach me more about our G-d, but G-d also used that time to enlighten me that you, my (*child/grandchild*), were nearing adulthood. It is a hard and beautiful truth for (*parents/grandparents*), but my heart *kvells* with joy to see you taking a serious interest and love for your Jewish faith. You have studied hard, attended your Hebrew lessons, and learned much—but remember that today does not celebrate the ending of Hebrew lessons; on the contrary, we recognize that today marks a journey of a lifetime—a lifetime of spiritual discovery. The most important lessons will occur after this caterer packs up, after the music stops playing, and after you send thank-you notes to all of these generous guests.

When I saw/heard you practicing and studying, I was flooded with memories. I remember vividly what it was like to prepare for this day, for certain, but it was the memories of your earliest years that came back to me. I remember teaching how to (*insert memory here*) and now here you are, maturing before my very eyes not just as a young adult, but a young adult with a rich faith.

(*Insert name*), the Torah, the cornerstone of our faith, teaches the stories of our ancestors and how their lives unfolded. It teaches about the traditions and values that we with Jewish faith hold dear. These traditions and values are passed down from generation to generation, and today, you become the newest holder of our traditions. As your faith grows, you will confront challenges, and as your family, friends, and clergy, it is our tradition and our way to help you through those challenges of faith. We will always be here for you.

“One man's candle is light for many,” says the Talmud on Shabbat. We might view this quotation in different ways, but today, I see that you, (insert name), have a light shining bright from you: the light of faith, the light of belief. I am thankful that you are becoming a person of stronger faith, and I am thankful for those that have helped you shape and mold your Jewish faith and identity. May your faith grow ever stronger, may you light the way for the future, and may you always remember this day, the day that you became a bar/bat mitzvah in front of all of your family and friend. Mazel Tov, (insert name)!

