



# CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

BLANCHE BAYAR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

PARASHA STUDY

AND

HIDDUR HAMITZVAH: A STUDY IN PERFORMING MITZVOT



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## PARASHA STUDY

The Torah is the foundational book of Judaism, revered as the inspired word of God, traditionally said to have been revealed to Moses. The word Torah means "teaching," "instruction," or "law" in Hebrew. The Torah is the first five books of the Tanakh or Hebrew Bible. The five books contain both a complete and ordered system of laws, particularly the 613 mitzvot (613 distinct "commandments", individually called a mitzvah), as well as a historical description of the beginnings of what came to be known as Judaism. For these reasons alone, it has been used in Jewish study for centuries as the source for everything Jewish.

During the course of the Jewish year, the Torah is read weekly on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbat morning, and on Shabbat afternoon. It is also read on all holidays including Rosh Hodesh, the start of the Jewish month. The Torah was divided into 54 weekly portions known individually as a **parasha** or in plural as **parshiyot**.

The goal of the **Parasha Study** program is familiarize the students with our earliest history and the basis for all Jewish law.

**Parasha study requirement: Each Zayin student is required to hand in 8 completed Parasha study forms. The forms are included in this booklet.**

1. In order to guide the students in their learning, they will participate in a Parasha class on Thursdays with Rabbi Paul Resnick. At the conclusion of each week, students will have the opportunity to fill out a Parasha study form and hand it in to Morah Lisa.
2. Alternatively, students may complete their forms independently and hand them in to Morah Lisa.

Recommended websites for independent Parasha study:

<https://www.bimbam.com/weekly-parsha/>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/torah-portions/>

<https://www.conservativeyeshiva.org/torahsparks/>

# HIDDUR HAMITZVAH: A STUDY IN PERFORMING MITZVOT

As young Jews approach their B'nai Mitzvah celebrations, many different concerns occur. There is the initial worry about the social arrangements of the celebration, which is followed by the anxiety over the ceremony and its preparations. Underneath all of this is an inquiry into the meaning behind the ritual. The purpose of this course is to aid in this inquiry, to answer the question, "What does it mean to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?"

To become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah means to become a son/daughter of the mitzvot. It means to join the millions of other Jews throughout the world as a responsible member of the Jewish family. One of the goals of a Religious School education is to become acquainted with a variety of mitzvot, which are now a young adult's responsibility, through participating and studying them.

What then is a mitzvah? "Oh, that's easy," you say, "a mitzvah is anything you do that's good." Actually, there is more to it than that. The mitzvot are commandments, given to the Jewish people by God. They are our part of the brit, the covenant, between God and the Jews. They are **our obligation**. By observing the mitzvot, we do God's will and draw closer to God.

There are two basic types of mitzvot. There are those which deal with actions between people (*Bein Adam L'Chavero*), and those which deal with actions between man and God (*Bein Adam L'Makom*). Mitzvot are anything a Jew does, or does not do, that reflects that we are acting in the image of God.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

Hiddur Hamitzvah is designed as an independent study. The goal of the program is to familiarize the student with the depth and breadth of the mitzvot. Some mitzvot are done routinely (lighting Hanukah or Shabbat candles); others need a bit more thought and planning.

**Hiddur Hamitzvah program requirement: Each Zayin student is required to complete 18 points by May 2, 2020.**

### Implementation:

1. In this packet, there are 4 Mitzvah Calendar pages. Each page consists of different mitzvot relevant to the monthly mitzvah theme and the holidays which take place during that period. Each mitzvah is assigned a point value.
  - a. Over the course of the months, students are expected to accumulate 18 points. These points are earned through the performance of various mitzvot which are described on the pages to follow.
  - b. Each page has a deadline and must be handed in on time to Morah Lisa. Students are reminded and encouraged to hand in forms on time as it makes performing the mitzvot more meaningful and it avoids an overload at the end of the year.

There is a page of General Mitzvot which may be done at any time and noted on the Mitzvah Calendar page.

The student may perform a mitzvah not listed, points to be determined by Morah Lisa.

Address questions to Morah Lisa or Rabbi Julie during school Thursdays or by email at [rabbijulie@cbi-nj.org](mailto:rabbijulie@cbi-nj.org).

This program is designed for independent study. It is not the same as the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Project.

## MITZVOT FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

This page is due: **October 24, 2019**

<p align="center"><b>MITZVAH THEME: HACHNASAT ORCHIM – HOSPITALITY</b></p> <p>Explanation: According to tradition, Abraham and Sarah kept their tent open in all four directions, the more easily to share their food and water with travelers from anywhere. From them we learn the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim.</p>	Sign off date	Point Value
<p><b>Mitzvot related to this mitzvah: choose one or more (2 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified)</b></p>		
<p>Work at a food pantry</p>		
<p>b. Help make a Shabbat dinner and invite a friend/family over</p>		
<p>c. Help build a sukkah</p>		
<p>d. Eat a meal in the sukkah and recite the appropriate brachot</p>		
<p><b>Holidays for these months and their mitzvot: choose one or more (2 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified)</b></p>		
<p>a. Rosh Hashana – Ask 3 people for forgiveness</p>		
<p>b. Rosh Hashana - Perform tashlich (cast off your sins)</p>		
<p>c. 10 days of Awe - Write a paragraph on how you will be a better person next year</p>		
<p>d. Yom Kippur - Attend Kol Nidre service</p>		
<p>e. Yom Kippur – Fast for the entire 25 hours</p>		
<p>f. Simchat Torah – Attend a synagogue service on the holiday</p>		
<p>g. Help make a holiday meal (1 point)</p>		
<p><b>General Mitzvot – please refer to the General Mitzvot page in this booklet and complete 3 points each month. You may also choose from any of the Mitzvot Themes listed on any of these pages. List your mitzvot on the back of this page</b></p>		

Print your name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

# MITZVOT FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

This page is due: **January 16, 2020**

<p align="center"><b>MITZVAH THEME: GEVUROT – HEROISM</b></p> <p>Explanation: “God is with me; I shall not fear” (Psalms 118:6) By trusting in God, we gain the courage necessary to face the challenges of life.</p>	Sign off date	Point Value
<p><b>Mitzvot related to this mitzvah: choose one or more (3 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified)</b></p>		
<p>a. Learn about organizations that support Israeli soldiers and create a poster in support of it /and or donate to it. Suggestions: <b>A Package from Home; Lone Soldiers Program; Friends of the Israel Defense Forces</b></p>		
<p>b. Support our U.S. soldiers through USO or other programs. Describe your mitzvah in writing.</p>		
<p>c. Investigate and write a blog about a volunteer from overseas that helped in the 1948 Israel War for Independence (3 points). For more information check out:  <a href="http://www.machal.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=441&amp;Itemid=808&amp;lang=en">http://www.machal.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=441&amp;Itemid=808&amp;lang=en</a></p>		
<p>d. Support your local police and firefighters and describe your mitzvah in writing.</p>		
<p>e. Write to an Israeli soldier - email to <a href="mailto:lettertosoldeier@jazo.org.il">lettertosoldeier@jazo.org.il</a></p>		
<p>f. Write to Jewish U.S. Soldier – <a href="http://www.jewsingreen.com/">http://www.jewsingreen.com/</a></p>		
<p>g. Check out <a href="http://www.vetshelpingheroes.com/">http://www.vetshelpingheroes.com/</a> or other veteran help organization and contribute to it.</p>		
<p><b>Holidays these months &amp; their mitzvot: choose one or more (2 pts each)</b></p>		
<p>Hanukkah:</p>		
<p>a. Donate toys/clothing to the needy.</p>		
<p>b. Light Hanukkiah each night and recite appropriate brachot.</p>		
<p>c. Perform at a nursing home or adult living center (3 points).</p>		
<p><b>General Mitzvot – please refer to the General Mitzvot page in this booklet and complete 3 points each month. You may also choose from any of the Mitzvot Themes listed on any of these pages. List your mitzvot on the back of this page.</b></p>		

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# MITZVOT FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH

This page is due: **April 2, 2020**

<p align="center"><b>MITZVAH THEME: L'AVODA U'LSHMIRAH – PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>Explanation: “Be mindful not to corrupt or destroy My world, for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to repair it after you” (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13). According to this Midrash, God describes to Adam humans’ responsibility to care for the world.</p>	Sign off date	Point Value
<b>Mitzvot related to this mitzvah: choose one or more (2 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified)</b>		
a. Support an endangered species by making a donation (attach donation receipt)		
b. Work in an animal shelter - Contact JAC		
c. Be in charge of recycling in your home for one week.		
<b>Holidays for these months and their mitzvot: choose one or more (2 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified)</b>		
Tu b'Shevat		
a. Plant a tree through JNF.		
b. Find the biblical references for the “sheva minim” (3 points) and create a poster to demonstrate your new knowledge.		
Purim		
a. Fast of Esther – fast for a minimum of 5 hours.		
b. Attend the Megillah reading.		
c. Read a pasook from the Megillah for the congregation (3 points).		
d. Make and give Mishloach Manot to 3 people.		
e. Give MatanotL'Evyonim (gifts to the poor).		
<b>General Mitzvot – please refer to the General Mitzvot page in this booklet and complete 3 points each month. You may also choose from any of the Mitzvot Themes listed on any of these pages. List your mitzvot on the back of this page.</b>		

Print your name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# MITZVOT FOR APRIL AND MAY

This page is due: **May 4, 2020**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MITZVAH THEME: SHALOM - PEACE</b></p> <p>Explanation: “Who is the person who desires life, who loves days to see good? Restrain your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking falsehood. Avoid bad, and do good. Seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:13 – 15) Our opportunities to “seek peace” are many and it is our job to pursue it in every aspect of our lives.</p>	Sign off date	Point Value
<p><b>Mitzvot related to this mitzvah: choose one or more (3 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified).</b></p>		
<p>a. Learn about an organization that is working to create shalom between Jews and Arabs and create a poster to promote the organization and/or make a donation Suggestions: <a href="http://www.abrahamfund.org/main/siteNew/index.php">http://www.abrahamfund.org/main/siteNew/index.php</a></p>		
<p>b. Sit next to someone in class whom you have never sat next to before. Describe your conversation.</p>		
<p>c. Volunteer to tutor a student, neighbor, or community member who needs help learning English.</p>		
<p>d. Check out <a href="http://www.hopeforsderot.com">http://www.hopeforsderot.com</a> and participate in one of their current projects. Prepare a lesson for your class to demonstrate your interest. (3 points)</p>		
<p>e. Refrain from Lashon HaRa (gossip) for 5 days – describe a time you were tempted.</p>		
<p><b>Holidays for these months and their mitzvot: choose one or more ( 2 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified).</b></p>		
<p>Pesach:</p>		
<p>a. Do not eat bread for all 8 days.</p>		
<p>b. Contribute to a change in your family seder and write a short paragraph describing your addition.</p>		
<p>c. Attend 2 Seders.</p>		
<p>d. Attend services for one day of the holiday.</p>		
<p>e. Give Maot Hitim (Gifts of Food to the Poor; can be a tzedakah contribution).</p>		
<p>Yom Hashoah</p>		
<p>a. Interview a Holocaust survivor (see Rabbi Julie for help).</p>		
<p>b. Light a yellow candle of remembrance – and take a picture.</p>		
<p>c. Attend a memorial service and describe its effect on you.</p>		
<p>Yom Ha’atzmaut</p>		
<p>a. Attend a celebration.</p>		

b. Find online the original text for HaTikvah and show the differences (3 points).		
<b>General Mitzvot – please refer to the General Mitzvot page in this booklet and complete 3 points each month. You may also choose from any of the Mitzvot Themes listed on any of these pages. List your mitzvot on the back of this page.</b>		

Print your name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## GENERAL MITZVOT

Please complete any of these mitzvot over the course of the school year and write them on the appropriate Mitzvah Monthly form.

<b>Shabbat Mitzvot</b>
Introduce your home to the celebration of Shabbat - include challah, wine, candles and brachot- follow for minimum of 3 weeks (3 points).
Refrain from doing homework on Shabbat for 3 weeks (2 points).
Write a comparison paragraph about services at CBI and another synagogue (2 points).
<b>Ritual Mitzvot – (2 points for each mitzvah)</b>
Attend a Jewish wedding – write a paragraph on it.
Attend a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at another synagogue – write a comparison paragraph on it.
Attend a Brit Milah – write a paragraph on it.
Choose a holiday – write a paragraph describing its rituals and meanings.
Attend morning minyan (3 times).
Wear tefilin at a morning minyan (3 times).
Read Torah in the Main Sanctuary or Family Shabbat service (3 pesukim total).
<b>Gemilut Hasadim – Deeds of Kindness – (2 points for each mitzvah unless otherwise specified)</b>
Visit the sick – 1 point each time (maximum 2 points)
Give Tzedakah at CBI for 5 weeks (get receipt from teacher).
Call your grandparent (or “substitute” grandparent”) once a week for 5 weeks.
Visit a shiva house (maximum 2 times) – describe how you felt about performing your mitzvah.
Visit a senior citizen home (maximum 2 times).
Donate your hair to a cancer organization - 5 points.
<b>Talmud Torah – study</b>
Complete additional Parasha forms (beyond the requirement) (1 point each).
Prepare and deliver a d’var Torah during davening (5 points).
Study Rashi’s commentary by doing a “What’s Bothering Rashi” (4 points). <a href="http://www.shemayisrael.com/parsha/bonchek/index.htm">http://www.shemayisrael.com/parsha/bonchek/index.htm</a>



## Parashat HaShavuah Worksheet

Complete ONE side of this sheet for each parasha, depending on which fits better with the week's Torah reading. Your goal is one a month for 8 months. Each worksheet completed over 8 will count for 2 mitzvah points.

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parasha \_\_\_\_\_

From which book of the Torah \_\_\_\_\_

1) Who in this parasha is/are experiencing a problem? Describe the problem.

2) Describe their feelings.

3) How do they solve the problem?

4) Name another way the problem could have been solved.

5) What might have been the outcome(s) if they had solved the problem this way.