

שְׁהֶחֵינּוּ The Shehecheyanu

The שְׁהֶחֵינּוּ is one of the most precious blessings that we can say. According to Jewish tradition, it is recited in thanksgiving for arriving at any special, joyous occasion in one's life. For example:

- celebrating the three major festivals of Passover, Sukkot and Shavuot
- seeing or tasting a fruit for the first time that year
- meeting a close friend or relative after a long absence
- attaining a landmark event in the life cycle – such as the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of one's child or at one's wedding

In each case, we give thanks to God for being alive to witness – and participate in – a significant event. The blessing enables us to mark off a span of time and acknowledge it as holy.

At The Community Synagogue, we ask the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to come on the *bima*, say a personal prayer and then the שְׁהֶחֵינּוּ. This takes place after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah has chanted the Torah and *Haftarah* and delivered the *d'var Torah* (sermon). It is prefaced by a personal prayer from either or both parents.

The blessing itself is printed below, in case you wish to practice it. May you have many occasions to say it during your lifetime!

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׁהֶחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעַנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam,
shehecheyanu vikeymanu vehigiyanu lazman hazeh.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the universe,
who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day of joy.