

טלית Tallit

We encourage all who are becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at The Community Synagogue to wear a טלית *tallit* for the Shabbat morning ceremony. Reform Judaism, with its emphasis on equality, advocates that both women and men can wear the טלית.

The טלית *tallit* (in Ashkenazi-pronounced Hebrew *tallis*) is a prayer shawl with fringes called ציצית *tzitzit* on each of the four corners. Most *tallitot* have a neckband, called an *atarah*, which often has the blessing one recites when donning the טלית embroidered across it. In many communities (including ours) the custom is that the first time that a young man or woman wears a טלית is when they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The commandment for wearing a טלית comes from the Torah: "The Eternal said to Moses, 'Speak to the Israelites and instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout the ages; let them attach a cord

of blue to the fringe at each corner. That shall be your fringe; look at it and recall all the commandments of the Eternal; and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. Thus you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God. I, the Eternal, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I, the Eternal am your God.'" [Numbers 15:37-41] Therefore, when we wear a טלית *tallit* we are reminded to fulfill all of God's commandments. In fact, "hidden" in the knots and strings of the ציצית *tzitzit* are reminders of God's unity and of the commandments.

There is a ritual and a blessing associated with donning a טלית. Whether a טלית will be worn by a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or not, we ask all B'nai Mitzvah and their parent(s) to join in Rabbi Z's study at 10:15 am the morning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for a moment of quiet reflection and (if a טלית is worn), for a ceremony to put it on.

To put on a טלית:

1. Open טלית and hold in both hands so you can see *atarah* (the collar band on which the blessing is often embroidered).
2. Some say this meditation to themselves

Praise the Eternal, my soul!
O Eternal God, You are very great.
Clothed in glory and majesty,
You wrap Your self in light like a garment,
You stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יְיָ,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלַּת מְאֹד,
הוֹד וְהָדָר לְבִשְׁתָּ.
עָטָה אֹר כְּשֵׁלְמָה,
נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּי־רִיעָה.

3. Recite the blessing.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצִית.

Praised are You, O God, Ruler of the universe, who sanctifies with *mitzvot* and commands us to wrap ourselves in the *tzitzit*.

4. Wrap the *tallit* around your shoulders.