

Noah,

In deciding just what I was going to say to you this morning, I looked back at the very first speech I wrote and delivered to you at your *bris*, held exactly 13 years ago today. After all, these two events in your life, your birth and your bar mitzvah, are connected in many ways. As a newborn, your father and I brought you into the covenant of the Jewish people, and today as a Bar Mitzvah, your voice joins all of ours in a vibrant renewal of the Jewish faith. In front of this community of family and friends you are accepting the responsibility of living a life guided by Torah and G-d.



Thirteen years ago you were wrapped in a cloth as your Grandfather, the *sandek*, held you. That cloth has been sewn into strips and assembled as a belt for the Torah from which you will read today. This Torah binder, or *wimple* is embellished with a blessing for you to grow strong and proud in G-d eyes and to embrace the lessons of Torah, and of a full Jewish life through actions of kindness and righteousness.

Thirteen years ago, I was expressing my hopes and prayers without even knowing you. After all, you were only 8 days old. I spoke about how we, or should I say, how Dorie choose your name. I spoke a great deal about your heritage and about the family into which you were born. I assumed you would take on the strong and positive characteristics of that family and I told you that you would be loved, always and completely.

Today it is easier for me to see who you will become because I have had a chance to see who you are. Noah, you have the biggest heart of anyone I know. You are kind and gentle and loving to all around you. One example is the relationship you have, the one you have always had with your sister. It is awe inspiring to me. It is a tribute to you and to Dorie that you have always protected, loved and cared for each other.

Noah, you are also one of the most courageous people I know. There are many things in life that frighten or overwhelm you but you do not run from them. I have seen you face so many challenges and I have seen you succeed every time. Your father and I are so proud of you. Our pride comes not just from the fact that you have achieved so much but from the fact that you don't give up. Kindness *and* courage, not a bad combination of personality traits!

You are about to put on your *tallis* for the first time. Over 50 years ago, your grandmother bought a *tallis* for her soon to be husband, your grandpa. This last summer, she went into the same shop in Jerusalem to buy a *tallis* for you. As you wrap it around your shoulders, you will see a beautiful reminder of your faith, but if you look closely, you will also see the love of all your family surrounding you and the strength of the Torah supporting you.

I would like to conclude by reading the lineage of your ancestors inscribed on your *wimple*. They are part of this *simcha* and a part of you.

Noah Jerome Mishael is the son of Samuel and Deborah Mishael, the sister of Dorie Ora Mishael and the Grandson of Moshe and Barbara Mishael and Jack and Roberta Swedelson. Noah is the great-grandson of Aharon and Margalit Mishael, Dave and Sylvia Estrada, Max and Ann Swedelson, and Jerome and Annette Skoll.

