

Ritual Ethnography Topic Proposal
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Anthropology of Religion, Magic, & Witchcraft
March 6, 2020

The event in which I have chosen to produce my Ritual Ethnography Assignment on is a Bar Mitzvah. I will be writing about my experience at a Bar Mitzvah of a friend, the first Bar Mitzvah I have ever attended. This Bar Mitzvah held a religious ceremony at the Chabad of Beverly Hills, while an after-party reception was hosted in his home in Los Angeles, due to COVID19 restrictions. The permission to attend this event was personally allowed, as I was invited as a plus one of my younger sister. This is not an event in which I could participate in, as I am not customary to many Jewish practices, nor is there any availability to participate in anything other than celebrating with the rest of the guests. My informant of this religious ceremony is the birthday boy himself, Daniel Cohen.

The first scholarly article I will be providing as substantial support for my assignment is Rabbi Michael Hilton's (2014) *Bar Mitzvah A History*. This editorial is the telling of the history behind the Jewish Bar Mitzvah, it is told through a cultural anthropologist's point of view. It is the telling of the different steps an individual must take leading up to his commemoration and celebration. It focuses on the various academic studies and history of a Bar Mitzvah. This article will act as an informant for the Ritual Ethnography Assignment I will write due to its vast informatory passages. This journal works as an in depth analysis and non-biased explanatory of the history behind a religious ceremony of Bar Mitzvahs.

The second reading I will be relying back to for my assignment, is Ilana Korber's (2017) *A Bar Mitzvah Year: Rethinking Ritual*. This is a story told in the author's perspective of the years leading to her son's thirteenth birthday, the year of the Bar Mitzvah. This story is told in a series of diary entries, a much more emotional perspective, as this story is told in a autobiographical tone. This article is substantial to my assignment, as it provides a more personal

approach to the events in which I will be writing observations of. It works to provide more personal evidence to the story, as well as informative in regard to what certain aspects mean to the families participating.

The final scholarly article I will be using in my assignment, will be Aaron B. Seidman's (1973), *Bar Mitzvah Ah-An Approach To Social Maturity*. This is a dissertation in which the rite of passage behind a Bar Mitzvah is analyzed on a much deeper level. This is the telling of an individual's journey of transition from childhood into adulthood, based off a religious ritual. A further development into discussing the original meaning of a Bar Mitzvah and how it has changed to its relevant meaning today. This submission will provide a more thorough inquiry into the modern styling of a Bar Mitzvah and the different understandings behind them.

Hilton, M. (2014). *Bar Mitzvah, a History*. Philadelphia [Pennsylvania: The Jewish Publication Society.

Korber, I. (2017). A Bar Mitzvah Year: Rethinking Ritual. *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, 50(1), 136-154. Retrieved March 8, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44631753>

Seidman, A. (1973). BAR MITZVAH—AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL MATURITY. *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*, 13(3), 85-89. Retrieved March 8, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23257401>