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Talk to Bar Mitzvah

On this occasion of your Bar Mitzvah, as you have made so eloquently obvious in your address, you reach your majority. According to Jewish Law, you are an adult in the full sense of the word - with all the priveleges and responsibilities that it implies. When your father, just a short while ago, recited the traditional formula עליון מן עתה, he announced that from now on you are, so to speak, "on your own." You are expected to act and behave as a mature Jew acts and behaves.

Let me draw your attention to an episode recorded in this week's Sedra in which another young man was just coming into his own and beginning on the adventure of mature Jewish life. Joseph was sent away from home by his loving father Jacob. He was sent to inquire after his brothers, to learn to live with them, to make headway in Society and in Life. And as so often happens with so many Jews, as we begin our adventures in maturity, we find ourselves אין אנו דורש - wandering in the field. We feel lost. We don't know the right way from the wrong way. Many such people continue to travel in circles, and never reach the desired goal, they never find the right path. Their life is all wandering aimlessly. But not a Joseph. Not the son of Jacob. Not a young man with a love for his family and his people and his G-d. When such a young man first leaves his childhood behind him and begins to feel lost, then איש אחד, then, as with Joseph, a "man" finds him. This man, who our Rabbis say was an angel, sets him straight, shows him the right path, points out to him how he can find his brothers and ultimately, after many adventures, realize his great ambitions and becomes a source of pride to his family.

As you go out on the great road of life, we hope and pray that you too may be guided by an angel, that you too - thanks to the training your parents and family and community have given you - will find the right ways and follow it,

And do you know who this angel is? Some Rabbis said it was Gabriel, and others said he was Raphael. Now, מלאך comes from the word מלאך

strength of character and mind, firmness of personality and purity of intentions;

Gabriel is the angel appointed over these matters of the spirit. And

שׁוֹמֵר

comes from

שׁוֹמֵר

- health, physical fitness and happiness.

In the name of Kadimah, its officers and members, I wish you both

שׁוֹמֵר and

שׁוֹמֵר

, and strength of spirit and health of body, faith-

fulness and happiness, on the right road you will choose. And may your family

and friends find in you a life-long source of pride and affection.