

A stop-the-madness book, *MitzvahChic*, proves finally that Judaism is the coolest bar/bat mitzvah theme ever!

The *Irrelevant Party's* Over

A 13-year-old boy rides a Harley into a synagogue auditorium that's outfitted as a biker bar. Another in the role of Harry Potter fights a choreographed battle with Lord Voldemort complete with smoke and lightning bolts. An adolescent girl treats her guests to a party with a "shopping" theme that includes centerpieces made out of signature blue Tiffany bags.

Welcome to the American bar/bat mitzvah.

No custom has done more to make Judaism both unfathomable and laughable than the way some Jews have come to celebrate the bar/bat mitzvah. But that's all over now because of a brand new *stop-the-madness* book entitled, *MitzvahChic: A New Approach to Hosting A Bar or Bat Mitzvah That is Meaningful, Hip, Relevant, Fun & Drop-Dead Gorgeous*.

If the book is embraced, says its author, Gail Anthony Greenberg, it will amount to a cultural revolution among Jews; one she hopes can help save the Jewish people by making Judaism look "cool" to the younger generation and reminding all Jews how essential their values and history have been in the development of a common humanity.

"I want everyone to finish the bar/bat mitzvah process feeling that *I'm so glad and excited that I'm Jewish*," she says. The back cover of her innovative book features quotes from celebrities as varied as Sam Raimi, director of "Spider-Man" and "A Simple Plan", and Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin, author of *Putting God on the Guest List* – the "bible", Greenberg says, of the soulful bar/bat mitzvah. Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, also endorsed the book after printing and says *MitzvahChic* is "just the right mix of serious content and entertainment tips."

"*MitzvahChic* is scholarly tome meets Martha Stewart," Greenberg says, "because it supplies the *how to* for people who want to marry high substance with high style." The book says bar/bat mitzvah celebrations should be about the child, the family and the great ideas of the Jewish faith, and deliver a three-punch combination of "heart, soul and style." According to Greenberg, it's been traditional for parents to try to "capture" their adolescent in the party theme, but they end up instead reducing their wonderfully complex child to one dull cliché: *he loves basketball; she's into horses!*

"Parents gather an audience of friends and family with a genuine interest in knowing how this child is growing and evolving and they showcase the one thing that probably everyone already knows about him," she concludes. Other popular themes like "sports" and "the beach", Greenberg continues, not

only trivialize the occasion and the child, but are missed opportunities to share a sense of what a powerful and special experience it is to be Jewish.

In the course of writing the book, Greenberg read the entire Torah and was amazed at how relevant it was to modern life. “I’m not a religious scholar but I found the experience awe-inspiring,” she says. “I knew if I could help other people experience the same wonder and build their celebrations around it, that they would not only have a more compelling bar/bat mitzvah experience, but it could change their lives.”

Greenberg summarizes the Torah by “portion” and gives for each, video and reading suggestions – like the popular novel, *The Red Tent* – that bring the portion to life. Then she gives party ideas for each portion. In addition, the book shows “Eight Complete Parties that Will Leave You *Farklemt!*”, a lavishly photographed chapter of theme parties – from table decorations to party favors – based on general concepts from Torah that explore such important human ideas as embracing change, having dreams, being grateful, having courage and taking things to heart.

MitzvahChic also ushers in a new style of celebration. “In the same way that Martha Stewart redefined wedding style,” Greenberg concludes, “*MitzvahChic* could change people’s view of what a party marking a life milestone can be: fun, moving, hip, emotional and, yes, drop-dead gorgeous.”

MitzvahChic is also a website, www.MitzvahChic.com, where people can buy the book and interact with Greenberg and each other. It’s designed to be a village square to share creative ideas and information and find links to items and ideas from the book. The press is cordially invited there to review the entire online press kit.

#