

The Great Leap Forward
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Q My son was born in Adar thirteen years ago, in a non-leap year. In which Adar this year does he become a bar mitzvah?

A Discussing the same question with regard to *yahrzeits*, *Rishonim* disagree. The Shulchan Aruch rules that such *yahrzeits* are commemorated in Adar Sheini, while according to the Rama, they are marked in Adar Rishon (see O.C. 568:7).



Although there is also a *machlokess* concerning a bar mitzvah, the accepted halacha seems to be that it happens in Adar Sheini (see Rama O.C. 55:10). Still, there are grounds to be *machmir*—with regard to both *yahrzeit* and bar mitzvah—to accommodate both opinions if possible (see, e.g., Gra O.C. 568:7).

In light of this preference to be strict, R' Shmuel Vosner rules (Sheivet Halevi 6:9, 10:105) that even those who do not normally begin donning tefillin thirty days before the bar mitzvah should be *machmir* in this case, to accommodate the *shitah* that Adar Rishon is the actual bar mitzvah. Those who do begin *hanachas* tefillin thirty days in advance may normally delay it a bit where necessary (e.g., if one wishes to daven with a *gadol* the first day of *hanachas* tefillin and receive a *bracha*). In our leap year scenario, however, for the reason stated, it is recommended that one begin a full thirty days before the Adar Sheini bar mitzvah.[1]

Note that if a boy is born in a leap year Adar, and the year of his bar mitzvah is also a leap year, he becomes a bar mitzvah in the Adar of his birth.

[1] The Sheivet Halevi in the second *teshuvah* cites from the Bais Shlomo that one should not begin on the exact day of Adar Rishon that the bar

mitzvah falls on in Adar Sheini, so that people don't mistakenly think that the halacha follows the Maharash Halevi that the bar mitzvah is really in Adar Rishon.