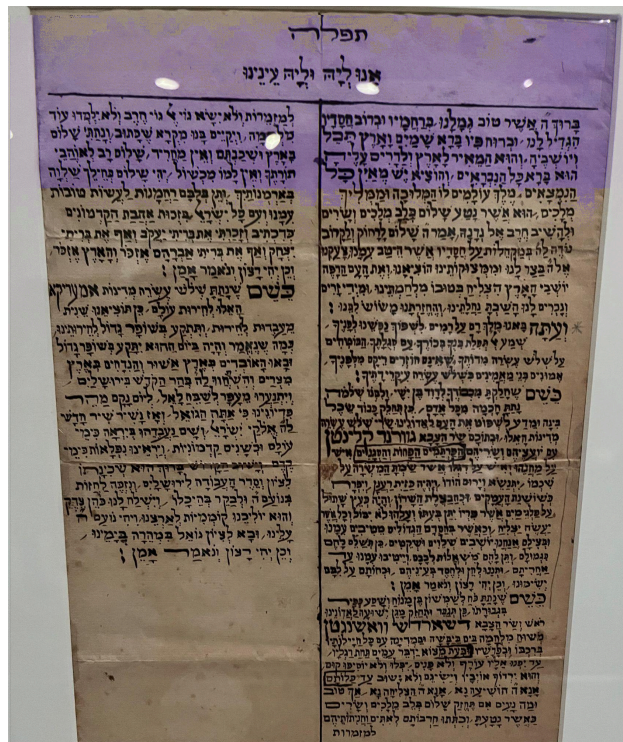


Dear Shearith Israel family,

Our Year of Hope. We continue to march towards our goal of \$500k for carpet, flooring, and smaller items. Yet our pace has slowed, considerably. Have we hit a wall? I don't think so for the simple reason that our goal from the outset was \$500k **AND** 100% participation. Many congregants and friends have donated with extraordinary generosity. We can't thank you enough. Many, however, have not yet been able to commit. We want to end the campaign early if we can; that way, we will maximize the chance that the new carpeting can be chosen, ordered, and delivered, and all the work can be done by summer's end.

Please, [click here](#) to pledge as generously as your circumstances permit. Let's get to 100% participation. And if you are not a Shearith Israel member but you are a Shearith Israel friend (and reader of these missives), your contribution will count toward the 100% (don't ask me how; take my word for it).

Shearith Israel plays a central role in far more than our own story. We need a Sanctuary befitting that role. Thank you to Billy Schuder for reminding us of the extraordinary Maimonides exhibition now at the Center for Jewish History. Thank you to Billy as well for sending along the following two pics from items at the exhibit, which relate to our Congregation centuries ago.



PRAYER COMPOSED IN NEW YORK AFTER THE REVOLUTION
 Hendla Jochanan van Ottingen
 New York, 1784
 Courtesy of the American Jewish Historical Society

Maimonides's literary impact lay beyond his own writings, as his work frequently inspired new compositions. His 13 Principles of Faith, composed as part of his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, served as the basis for the hymn *Yigdal* – recited on the Sabbath and during weekday morning prayers – and for this prayer once recited at New York's Congregation Shearith Israel. The prayer mentions Governor George Clinton and General George Washington and speaks of the freedom granted to the original 13 States of America.

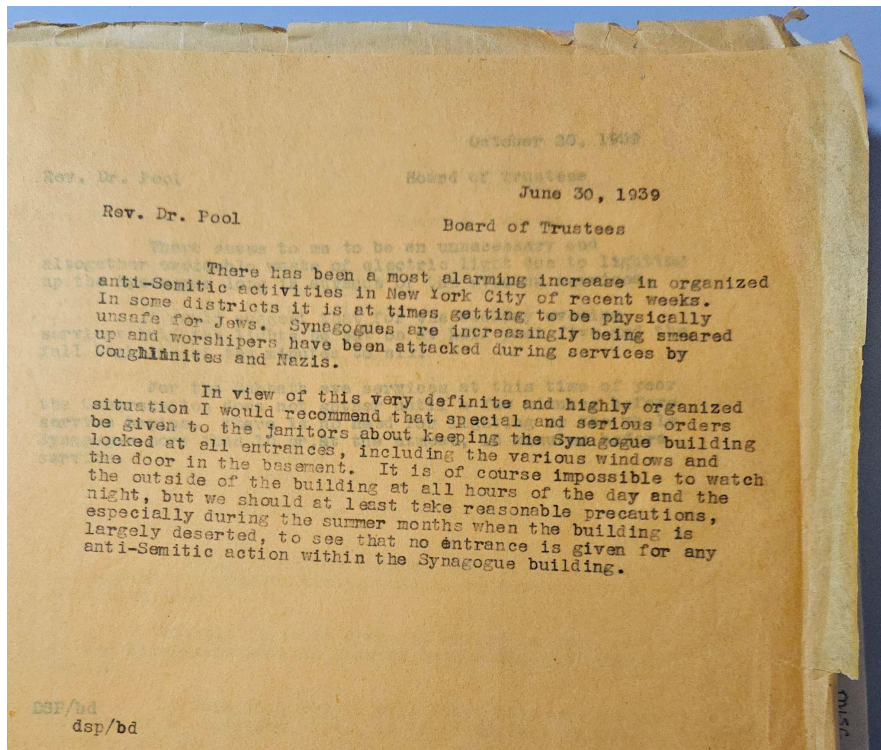
Rabbi Soloveichik's lecture topic this week, the fifth in the series supporting the Campaign, is *The Astonishing Torah Shield of the Sassoon Collection*. Please join us Shabbat morning.

Revisiting "Changes". In last week's email, I was having so much fun with the David Bowie song, *Changes*, that, as David Sable pointed out, I missed an even better "changes" song: [The Times They Are A-Changin'](#), by Bob Dylan. David's favorite lines:

*Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin*

The point of the song and the lyrics perfectly express the changes I was trying to emphasize. Yet was I too quick? Two reactions seem fair:

First, Reverend Zachary Edinger reminds us that some things don't really change. Read the letter that our Reverend Dr. Pool wrote to our Congregation's Board of Trustees in 1939, which Rev. Edinger unearthed recently. Eighty-five years ago, Dr. Pool was concerned about growing antisemitic sentiment in New York and more broadly in America. He encouraged the Shearith Israel Board to be vigilant about increasing security around our Synagogue building.



Second, the letter unearthed, studied, transcribed, and elaborated on by our next-gen threesome of Jonathan Nathan, Baruch-Lev Kelman, and Adams Kornblum-Carney, which I discussed and attached last week, dates from 1661. Gil Deutsch and Michael Schulder separately (and nearly instantaneously) reminded me of the diarist Samuel Pepys's visit to a London synagogue during a *Simchat Torah* service that Rabbi Soloveichik has from time to time described. [Here is a link](#) to the diary. The Pepys diary

entry appears to date from 1663, two years after the N-K-KC find, and it also provides evidence of a functioning London Jewish congregation. I've gone back to N-K-KC for a comment. Stay tuned.

Tinkers to Evers to Chance And Other Mighty Threesomes. When I referred to collaboration and productive teamwork of N-K-KC, I likened it to Tinkers to Evers to Chance. A bunch of old- and new-timers, including Robert Starkand, Ritual Director Jay Harwitt, and Irving Ruderman, instantly got the reference, receiving the coveted points that come with answering our challenges quickly and correctly.

“Tinkers to Evers to Chance” is a good story and a great reference for all of us to use every day. Joe Tinkers, Johnny Evers, and Frank Chance were, respectively, the shortstop (moved from third base), second baseman, and first baseman of the Chicago Cubs during the decade beginning in 1902. From 1906 to 1910, their choreography and teamwork turned 491 double plays. The Cubs won the National League pennant four times from 1906 to 1910 and won back-to-back World Series championships in 1907 and 1908. Alone we can lead but only together succeed, as the famous song goes.

Let's think about other terrific threesomes. I'm taking suggestions. Last week it was the N-K-KC collaboration. I'm sure they will be back. This week, one that comes to mind are Lynnette Gruenhut, Billy Schulder, and Michael Schulder (there is a fourth sibling who lives in Silver Spring). Just look at this week's email. From this Congregational trio we have valuable contributions of engagement, brains, wonderful song suggestions, a fabulous book recommendation, and, with their families, a generous financial commitment to our Year of Hope Campaign. I'm not trying to embarrass them. But they have our abiding thanks for their invaluable contribution to our communal well-being. They are our *Trio of the Week*. I'm taking suggestions for future trios.

E4E Reactions. The courageous position taken by Howard Schranz discussed last week was that the eye-for-an-eye principle was meant literally in Biblical times but was restated in Talmudic times, at which point monetary compensation took the place of physical punishment. This is contrary to the view I had expressed; to me it was pretty clear from the Talmudic discussion that even in Biblical times the legal principles did not mandate corporal punishment.

Claude Nadaf and another learned congregant side with Howard. That's ok; we are here to be disagreed with. What was interesting is that, for both Claude and this congregant independently, the “reformation” that took place was the familiar one of our Talmudic Sages deciding that they had the power and authority to legislate rather than simply interpret Jewish law. Do we often apply that principle to such radical changes, as from corporal punishment to fines and compensation?

Baba Kama's (Final) Chapter 10. The tenth and final chapter of Tractate Baba Kama, being learned this week and into next week as part of the worldwide Daf Yomi learning cycle, again raises the issue of compensation for stolen objects. Two short, simple, yet penetrating thoughts ended Chapter 9 and begin Chapter 10.

First, right at the end of Chapter 9 (page 104b), the Talmud discusses how much atonement derives from making a charitable payment to the Temple rather than stepping up, admitting the theft, and asking for forgiveness. Abaye reasons that fully half the atonement comes from the actual making of the charitable contribution. We are not a religion of monetary dispensations (see the excellent

treatment in Michael Massing's *Fatal Discord: Erasmus, Luther, and the Fight for the Western Mind*, which I discussed in my [email of Feb. 4, 2021](#)). Without actual atonement there is no forgiveness. Still, as you are thinking about our Year of Hope Campaign, let's not forget that half is a mighty big percentage.

Second, in the first Mishna of Chapter 10 (page 105a), the Sages ask whether the person who receives the stolen object from the thief is required to return the object. In many cases, the Sages say that the second-in-line takes free and clear. Modern concepts, say under the Uniform Commercial Code, dealing with "good faith purchases for value [and without notice]", create something of the same set of rules. Where, however, circumstances show that the initial victim has not given up hope of the object's return, or where the object stolen is real property that the second-in-line knew was of suspect provenance, then the second-in-line still has to repay the victim.

But even that principle has an exception. The Mishna says that:

If one robs and feeds the stolen object to his children, then the children do not have an obligation to repay the object or its value.

Thus with brevity and eloquence does the Talmud again teach us the fundamental value of charitable behavior. There is much at stake in this edict; the entire issue of inter-generational justice is bound up in the question when do we require the next generation, here the children, to pay for the sins of the prior generation. I believe that Judaism does not look favorably on that approach to justice, since too often it overlooks the personal responsibility of the relevant actors. Here, however, having to return the stolen object is given priority except in the case where funds are used to feed the next generation. There the Talmud asks us to pause and consider whether or not to exact punishment on that next generation. Food for thought.

Books. We are back to our kick-of-the-month, Sci-Fi. Dr. Michael Schulder highly recommends another in the Sci-Fi category: *The Three-Body Problem*, by Cixin Liu. Says Michael:

It's a trilogy and is best read as such. Coming soon to Netflix, but no way will that equal the books.

The trilogy, I think, goes under the title *Remembrance of Earth's Past*, paying at least some homage to Proust (Liu pays homage to the great American Sci-Fi writers, too, in the books themselves). The other two books in the trilogy (in addition to *The Three-Body Problem*) are titled, *The Dark Forest* and *Death's End*.

I read *Three-Body Problem*. It was uneven, but in the main it was excellent. The actual three-body problem evolved from two-body problems that folks like Kepler and Newton solved relating to how bodies in motion and under the influence of gravity behave. The three-body problem was posed by mathematicians Heinrich Bruns and Henri Poincaré and stated that it was hard-to-impossible to express analytically the movement of three bodies in gravitational attraction. The problem challenged physicists and mathematicians for over a century. Today, large-scale computing capabilities have led to over 12,000 solutions (this was announced with fanfare in the general press last year). The novel is concerned with the issue but, in its strong areas, is brilliant. With Michael's excellent recommendations, I'm off to read the other two installments of the trilogy. Thank you, Michael.

Does anyone else have suggestions as good in this genre?

And also, while we are here, who has some great Sci-Fi *movie* suggestions? They seem to be even harder to come by.

Songs. Here is where we were holding last week:

- [Stand by Me](#), by Ben E. King
- [You've Got a Friend](#), by Carole King
- [Wishing & Hoping](#), by Burt Bacharach & Dusty Springfield
- [The Morning After](#), written by Al Kasha & Joel Hirschhorn for the *The Poseidon Adventure*, and recorded by Maureen McGovern
- [I Believe](#), written by Ervin Drake, Irvin Graham, Jack Mendelsohn, and Al Stillman
- [Blue Skies](#), here sung by Frank Sinatra,
- [Count Your Blessings](#), by Irving Berlin, sung by Bing Crosby
- [I've Got the Sun in the Morning and the Moon at Night](#), by Irving Berlin, sung by Ethel Merman
- [G-d Bless America](#), here sung by Irving Berlin himself
- [Lean On Me](#), by Bill Withers
- [I Think It's Going to Rain Today](#), by Randy Newman
- [That's What Friends Are For](#), here by Dionne Warwick
- [You've Got A Friend In Me](#), by Randy Newman
- [Ain't No Mountain High Enough](#), by Marvin Gaye
- [For Good](#), from WICKED
- [Tomorrow](#), from *Annie*
- [I Hope You Dance](#), by Lee Ann Womack
- [A Change Is Gonna Come](#), by Sam Cooke
- [Eye of the Tiger](#), by Survivor
- *You'll Never Walk Alone*. [Here](#) by Frank Sinatra, [here](#) by Elvis, and [here](#) by Andre Rieu.
- [Something's Coming](#), from *West Side Story*.
- [For What It's Worth](#), by Buffalo Springfield

For new songs in this genre (*which* genre?), Lynnette Gruenhut makes four marvelous suggestions, especially the last:

- [One Day](#), by Matisyahu (which could also go in the Israeli/Hebrew collection below)
- [I Can See Clearly Now](#), by Johnny Nash
- [Wind Beneath My Wings](#), by Bette Midler; and
- [We Go Together](#), from GREASE

Israeli/Hebrew Songs. And here is where we were in Hebrew/Israeli genre:

- [Yihiye Tov](#) by David Broza.
- [Shema Yisrael](#) by David Broza & Abraham Tal
- [Am Yisrael Chai](#)
- [תפילה לשלום חיילי צה"ל](#)

Contributions this week include another song/video suggested by Joanne Ben-Avi:

- [Yerushalayim Shel Zahav](#), sung here by IDF soldiers.

Great Signs and Wonders. Here is a new addition to this old edition:

[insert here]

Thank you all. Bless us all. Shabbat shalom. *B'yachad* (united together). יהיה טוב *Yihiyeh tov* (things will be good).

Louis Solomon, Parnas