

July 30, 2026

Dear Shearith Israel family,

Our Year of Allegiance. Tisha B'Av Shearith Israel was unique, as usual (figure that one out!). Our capacious Sanctuary was full to capacity Wednesday night, Rabbi Soloveichik's talk was very well attended, and Thursday morning saw more attendees and more participants in the *kinot* or lamentational liturgy than I can remember. I know it's not supposed to be such an uplifting day, but it was.

This past Shabbat, kiddush on Paved Paradise was, well, paradisaal. Dairy fare, with a special fruit (boo!) and dessert (yeah!) table. Our special community – here for *anyone* – had a most convivial time. But I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that kiddush sponsors make it possible. Consider sponsoring a kiddush in honor of a special occasion, in memory of a loved one, or just for the pleasure of fostering communal togetherness. You can sponsor [here](#). And join us for Shabbat as we enter August. Rosh Hoshana is tomorrow!

Turning the Other Cheek. One of the rare joys parents experience is overhearing a “good” conversation between their children. Here is a snippet, which occurred on Tisha B'Av:

LAS: Did you see that, in Eicha, it discusses turning the other cheek? It's in Chapter 3, verse 30, and long predates the New Testament (in Matthew and Luke). Eicha says [quoting, with a little reference to the text]:

תֵּן לַמַּכְהוֹלִי יֹשִׁבַּע בְּחֶרֶף.

Let him offer his cheek to the aggressor;
Let him be surfeited with mockery.

JAS: Nah, it doesn't mean what the Christians mean when they use that. They use it to be submissive and claim it as a goal. Here the verses (*pesukim*) make it clear that this is not the ideal; it is said only because Jews are in a subservient state. [And then starts quoting the Hebrew, again with a tiny bit of textual looking]:

טוֹב וְיַחֲלִי וְדוֹמָם לַתְּשׁוּעָת יְהוָה: {ס}

It is good to wait patiently
Till rescue comes from GOD.

טוֹב לַגֶּבֶר כִּי־יִשָּׂא עַל בְּנֻעָרָיו: {ס}

It is good for a man, when young,
To bear a yoke;

יֹשֵׁב בְּדָד וְיָדָם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו: {ס}

Let him sit alone and be patient,
When it is laid upon him.

יִתֵּן בְּעַפְרֹ פִּיהוּ אוֹלִי יֵשׁ תַּקְוָה: {ס}

Let him put his mouth to the dust—
There may yet be hope.

יִתֵּן לְמַכּוֹה לְחִי יִשָּׁבַע בְּחֶרֶף: {ס}

Let him offer his cheek to the aggressor;
Let him be surfeited with mockery.

כִּי לֹא יִזְנֶחַ לְעוֹלָם אָדָנִי: {ס}

For the Sovereign does not
Reject forever,

כִּי אִם־הוֹלֵךְ וְרַחֵם כְּרַב חֲסִדָּיו: {ס}

But first afflicts, then pardons
In abundant kindness.

The conversation continued back and forth for a bit, both interlocutors quoting verses in English and Hebrew with a facility and with insights that any parent anywhere, anytime, would have been deeply proud of.

For us mortals, it's an interesting question. Who has a view on the fundamental question of whether turning the other cheek is a good or bad thing in our religion and whether the metaphor in Eicha is being used in the same or a different way than it is being used in the New Testament? Ok, you misers, one point for each insight.

Cursed DST. 2022 marked the first time that I could find that one Chamber of what used to be thought of as our federal legislative branch passed the “Sunshine Act” seeking to make Daylight Savings Time a year-round phenomenon. It was the Senate, in 2022, and the bill died the natural death it should have. Earlier this month, however, the House passed its version of the despicable bill.

Reverend Edinger reminds us that, decades ago, our Congregation was vocal in opposing DST any time of the year. And yes, I know, we don't do politics. But is this a law that is so inimical to us that, well, we have to take a stand? Sleep experts need not weigh in; we know that you are opposed to DST. But is there anyone who likes the idea of perpetual daylight savings time?

Brachot Riddles. Trustee Avery Neumark wants our collective view on which blessings or brachot we say only once a year. Good question. It's a little tricky; let's assume Avery is counting on the fact that we are outside of Israel, so for example the blessing over the hearing of the shofar blasts would not count except in a year like this year where the first day of Rosh Hashana is on Shabbat.

So, who's got an answer? And thank you Avery for the bracha-teaser.

Name that Haftarah Tune. We are collecting tunes for the haftarot in roughly the first half of Sefer Devarim: **Devarim, Va'etchanan, Eikev** (this week's parasha), **Re'eh**, and **Shoftim**.

The **Haftarah for Parashat Eikev**, the second of the seven haftarot of consolation, is taken from Isaiah 49:14–51:3. The metaphor of a mother's care and concern for a child feature among the Almighty's promises. And, as Ritual Director Jay Harwitt notes, the last verse of the haftarah mentions

- [*The Sound of Music*](#)

MSS Andrew Druck hits more homeruns. For verse 16 of Chapter 49, with the phrase *On my hands have I engraved you*, Andrew suggests:

- [*Loves Me Like a Rock*](#), as sung by Paul Simon

For verse 3 of Chapter 51, and its reference to turning deserts into gardens, Andrew suggests:

- [*Here Comes the Sun*](#), as sung by the Beatles [timeless]
- [*Heading for the Light*](#), as sung by the Traveling Wilburys [what a great song]

My suggestion, given the initial metaphor of mother and child, is of course the great

- [*Mother and Child Reunion*](#), here by Paul Simon

Double Trouble; Double Blessings. The global Daf Yomi learning cycle is this week studying pages 87-93 of Tractate Chulin. Page 89b finishes Chapter Six of the Tractate, and we begin Chapter Seven, titled גִּיט הַנָּשִׂא, on page 89b as well. The new chapter is 29 double-sided pages, so let's discuss it next week. Here, we need to pause on some beautiful *agadata*, or homiletic stories, at the end of Chapter Six (page 89a).

In succession, the gemarra discusses our Patriarch Abraham in two contexts. In the first, Abraham likened himself to dust and ashes in attempting to dissuade the Almighty from destroying Sodom. In the second, Abraham refused to take anything, even a thread or a shoe strap, from the King of Sodom:

אָמַר רַבָּא: בְּשֹׁכֵר שְׂאֵמַר אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ "וְאֵנֹכִי עֹפֵר וְאַפֵּר", זָכוּ בְנָיו לְשֵׁתֵי מִצְוֹת: אֶפֶר כְּרֶה, וְעֹפֶר סוּטָה

Rava says: As reward for that which our Patriarch Abraham said: "And I am but dust [afar] and ashes" (Genesis 18:27), his children merited two mitzvot: The ashes of the red heifer (see Numbers, chapter 19) and the dust of the sota, i.e., dirt taken from the ground of the Tabernacle that is mixed into the water that examines whether or not a woman committed adultery (see Numbers 5:17).

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וְאָמַר רַבָּא: בְּשֹׁכֵר שְׂאֵמַר אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ
"אִם מִחוּט נֶעַד שְׂרוּךְ נֶעַל", זָכוּ בְנָיו לְשֵׁתֵי מִצְוֹת: לַחוּט שֶׁל תְּכֵלֶת, וְרִצּוּעָה שֶׁל תְּפִילִין

And Rava says [further]: As reward for that which our Patriarch Abraham said to the king of Sodom: "That I will not take a thread nor a shoe strap nor anything that is yours" (Genesis 14:23), distancing

himself from anything not rightfully his, his children merited two mitzvot: The thread of sky-blue wool worn on ritual fringes and the strap of phylacteries.

One does wonder why the Torah recites any couplets much less two of them: dust and ash, and thread and leather straps. Isn't the Torah given to an economy of words? So why two? You figure that out.

The homiletics, however, based on the double references, are beautiful. Abraham compares himself to ashes and dust (don't quibble over the order), so the Jewish People are gifted ashes for the Red Heifer to purify the entire Nation and dust for the Sota ceremony to save marriages, one at a time. Abraham then refuses to take even a thread or a leather strap from the King of Sodom – Abraham wanted the city saved, but not because Sodomites were exemplary in any respect other than their vileness. As a result, the Jewish People are gifted tzitzit and tefillin. These are two of the most powerful symbols we have in our religion. And when we think of them, we can think of Abraham and all he stands for.

In this, our ***Year of Allegiance***, let us couple our collective ***commitment*** with a prayer to The Almighty, ***Hatzlich'ana, help us succeed.***

Louis Solomon, Parnas