

Dear Shearith Israel family,

Our Year of Allegiance. Both August and Elul are underway. And you know what that means, to paraphrase our favorite camel [Hump Day commercial](#) (do you know what day it is?). It means that we open the lines for **Naming Our Year**; **Word of the Year**; **Phrase of the Year**; and what **Song Collection** we will undertake. We start this now so that people have a couple weeks to make suggestions and vote, and then finalists can be announced around Rosh Hashana time, which as I've said is basically tomorrow.

- **Naming our Year:**
 - In 2023-24, our year was called our **Year of Hope**.
 - In 2024-25, our year was called our **Year of Renewal**.
 - In 2025-26, our year has been called our **Year of Allegiance** (named by our own Bonnie Barest).
- **Word of the Year.** We have had inspired words for many years now. The most recent four years have seen the following:
 - **Here!** (our 2022-23 winner was Michael Schulder)
 - **B'yachad, or united, together** (our 2023-24 winner was Laury Frieber)
 - **Gratitude** (our 2024-25 winner was Caroline Kabla)
 - **Commitment** (our 2025-26 winner is Bob Starkand)
- **Phrase of the Year.** Here too there have been great phrases that have buoyed us:
 - **Kaminado kon buenos, or let's walk with good** (our 2022-23 winner was Laury Frieber – the only person to win each of Word of the Year and Phrase of the Year)
 - **Yihiyeh tov, or things will be good** (our 2023-24 winner was Jack Shenker)
 - **Hoshi'ana, or save us now** (our 2024-25 winner was Gabriella Styler)
 - **Hatzlich'ana, or sustain us now** (our 2025-26 winners are Meira Shedlo and Jonathan Eidelman)
- **Song Collections.** When it comes to tunes, we've collectively enjoyed too many great contests to list. We've collected seasonal greats – all four seasons can we found on Spotify – as well as long songs, short songs, GOAT songs, and others. In the past two years, we have inspired each other with song suggestions concerning the weekly parasha and, this year, the weekly haftarah. The Parashat effort included many of us; this year's haftarot effort, however, was a greater challenge. We had to rely on diehard Master Song Suggester Andrew Druck, invaluable help from Ritual Director Jay Harwitt, and a few noteworthy others. Finding haftarah fits was hard, and we should find a more accessible challenge for the coming year.

For each of these categories, think hard, think deep, think community, and let us hear from you. What's it to be for the coming year?

Dastardly DST. Well we finally have a dissent, this from Katherine Vieyra. Says she:

While I am not enamored with Daylight Savings Time, I am in favor of NOT changing our clocks twice a year! I'd rather stick with Standard Time year round, but I support Daylight Savings Time as opposed to clock changing.

What Katherine is saying is not crazy. When you give people rotten choices, it is harder to distinguish between the really unpalatable and the really really unpalatable. For the rest of us, I think we would like to [\[just\] call the whole thing off](#), as Ella Fitzgerald sang.

Lies vs Murder. Hayyim Obadyah reacts positively to Claude Nadaf's "great insight about distancing from falsehood." Still, says Hayyim,

I think we need also consider that, unlike a sin such as murder, falsehood is 'so easy' to just fall into with little or no thought.

It's a wise thought – and one the Talmud itself observes when it comes to sins that are more easily transgressed. Thank you, Hayyim.

Name that Haftarah Tune. We are now collecting song suggestions for the haftarot of the final parshiot of Sefer Devarim: **Ki Tetzei** (this week's), **Ki Tavo**, **Nitzavim-Vayelech**, **Ha'azinu**, and **V'Zot Ha'Bracha**. There will also be Shabbatot with special haftarot (**Rosh Hashana**, **Succot**, **Shemini Atzeret**).

The short **Haftarah for Parashat Ki Tetzei** is taken from Isaiah 54:1–10 and is the fifth of the seven haftarot of consolation. Andrew Druck, MSS, explains that, in the haftarah, "Isaiah's prophecy is for the return of G-d's everlasting love, kindness, and compassion for Israel (verses 7-10)". He therefore suggests the following songs:

- [Always](#), as sung by Frank Sinatra
- [Forever](#), as sung by the Beach Boys
- [For Your Precious Love](#), as sung by Jerry Butler & the Impressions

In describing the haftarah, words more beautiful than those in the Hertz Commentary are hard to come by:

[The haftarah's] message is the everlasting mercy of G-d. 'For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee.' This entails for the Israelites the sacred duty of imitating G-d's ways of lovingkindness, by loyal observance of the precepts of humanity and pity proclaimed in the [Parasha].

With that beautiful explanation, song suggestions this week must start with:

- [Our Love is Here to Stay](#), Ella Fitzgerald singing the incomparable Cole Porter:

*In time the Rockies may crumble
Gibraltar may tumble
They're only made of clay
But our love is here to stay*

Nat for Nothing. The global Daf Yomi learning cycle is this week studying pages 108-114 of Tractate Chulin. Until page 117b we remain in Chapter 8, studying the laws of milk and meat and more generally the welter of issues that arise when mixing milk and meat dishes, mixing fish and either milk or meat, how much absorption occurs from hot foods or from cold foods, into pots or pans that had not been used for a day, and what is the law concerning really sharp foods like radishes or onions.

I love two things about this week's topics:

First, we are between 1,600 and 2,000 years since these discussions were recorded. Yet the topics and approaches remain vitally and vibrantly with us, ever-presently, today. The legal principles that guided our ancestors in the laws of kashrut are still very largely followed. Yes, there have been developments. But the legal structure and presumptions are so very familiar to us. We are part of a great chain, a J-Continuum, even as it relates to the smallest details of mixing different foodstuffs. We are blessed to be even a small part of this community

Second, these pages again show Jewish law to be realistic about how far the law should go. About my favorite example in these pages is the great discussion of secondary and tertiary effects, affectionately abbreviated **Nat Bar Nat** (which really does sound like a name of a Sephardi being called to the Torah in our Synagogue).

The abbreviation arises as follows. On page 111b, the Talmud contains a dialogue between Rav and Shmuel. Hot fish was placed on a plate that had had hot meat on it. Can you thereafter eat the fish with dairy from that plate? Rav says no. Shmuel says yes.

Rav believes that the fish absorbed a meat taste. Shmuel thinks the fish is two steps removed from the meat -- first the meat is absorbed in the plate and then the meat in the plate is transferred to the fish. Shmuel thinks the connection between the fish and the meat is too tenuous under law for the mixture of fish and dairy to be considered a prohibited mixture of meat and dairy.

This situation is referred to by the Talmud as **Nat Bar Nat** - נותן טעם בר נתינת טעם or נתינת טעם בר נתינת טעם – “a second generation transfer of taste - literally, the imparting of taste the son of imparting of taste.” See the discussion by Rabbi Jachter (a former teacher of Yosef's) [here](#).

If you want to know the actual legal rule today, well, look it up. My point is that the Talmud includes an interesting and respectful discussion that includes the eminently sensible precept of “enough already.”

Shearith Israel Book Club: *Between the Wars: Jewish Characters in 1920s and 1930s American Literature*. Here, again, is the list of the books we will be reading and reporting on.

In terms of timing, first assignments ideally would be completed before we get together at the end of October. Shabbat lunch on Oct. 31 remains the thinking, and we are delighted to report that [Professor Shaina Trapedo](#) of Yeshiva University's Stern College is going to be joining us. Many of us heard her at Touro Synagogue in June. She was excellent.

Look at the remaining books, choose one, and join the fun (bolded ones are still available – and frankly include some of the greatest American novels of the Twentieth Century).

- *Hungry Hearts*, by Anzia Yezierska (Barbara Reiss)
- *The Professor's House*, by Willa Cather (Stan Towne)
- *Manhattan Transfer*, by John Dos Passos (Lou Solomon)
- *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Michael Schulder)
- *Mendel Marantz*, by David Freedman (Madelene Towne)
- *Arrowsmith*, by Sinclair Lewis (Francine Alfandary)
- *Bread Givers*, by Anzia Yezierska (Lou Solomon)
- *The Sun Also Rises*, by Ernest Hemingway (Rima Raynes)
- *Fifty Grand*, by Ernest Hemingway (short story in the collection *Men Without Women*) (Guy Reiss)
- *Dodsworth*, by Sinclair Lewis (Faith Fogelman)
- *Cimarron*, by Edna Ferber (Diane Sandoval)
- ***Jews Without Money*, by Michael Gold**
- *Old Mrs. Harris*, by Willa Cather (short story, published in *Obscure Destinies*) (Laury Frieber):
- ***A Cool Million*, by Nathanael West**
- *Call it Sleep*, by Henry Roth (Roger Mesznik)
- ***Absalom, Absalom*, by William Faulkner**
- ***The Education of Hyman Kaplan*, by Leo Rosten**
- *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*, by Delmore Schwartz (short story in a book by the same title) (Beth Goldman)
- ***The Web and the Rock*, by Thomas Wolfe**
- ***A Peculiar Treasure*, by Edna Ferber**
- ***The Day of the Locust*, by Nathanael West**
- ***You Can't Go Home Again*, by Thomas Wolfe**

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