

August 27, 2026

Dear Shearith Israel family,

Our Year of Allegiance. This coming week, we've got work to do. No, not the start of school, whether as pupil or teacher (good success to all who are). And not preparing, as we do in Elul, for the High Holidays; they will be upon us sooner than we want. Our business in the coming week is our annual, communal Naming Writes. Let's do it.

Four tasks face us: We need to name our upcoming year; find a consensus for our Word of the Year and Phrase of the Year; and try to come up with our next song challenge. All four need attention, though the suggestions below are excellent.

Naming our Year. After ***Year of Hope***, ***Year of Renewal***, and ***Year of Allegiance***, we have the following excellent suggestions for the coming year:

Irving Ruderman suggests:

- *Year of Progress*
- *Year of Advancing*
- *Year of Advancement*

Faith Fogelman also has inspired suggestions:

- *Year of Community (she knows my personal soft spot)*
- *Year of Moving Forward*
- *Year of Continuity*
- *Year of Friendship*
- *Year of Reflection (which Faith also suggests as a word of the year)*

Barbara Reiss likes:

- *Year of Elevation* (no doubt because she is focused on the elevator project that we hope to be rolling out soon).

Word of the Year. For context, recent Words of the Year have included: ***Here! B'yachad (or united together)***, ***Gratitude***, and ***Commitment***. For this coming year, consider the following suggestions:

Rabbi David Satlow of Yeshiva University suggests:

- *Stalwart*, a solid suggestion if ever there was one.

Barbara Reiss, continuing her elevator theme, suggests:

- *Uplift*

Faith Fogelman suggests:

- *Reflection*
- *Movement*
- *Inspiration*
- *Enhancement*

Phrase of the Year. Recent Phrases of the Year have included: *Kaminado kon buenos, or let's walk with good; Yihyeh tov, or things will be good; Hoshi'ana, or save us now; and Hatzlich'ana, or sustain us now.* For this coming year, consider the following suggestions:

Michael Gelman wants to “go for the trifecta” with:

- *Anenu b'yom korenu, עֲנֵנוּ בְיוֹם קִרְאָנוּ, or “Answer us on the day we call.”*

Michael's clever point is that for the past two years we have used each of the other two thirds of the song sung on Simchat Torah (not at Shearith Israel I don't think) that goes

אָנָּה ה', הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. אָנָּה ה', הַצְלִיחָה נָּא. אָנָּה ה', עֲנֵנוּ בְיוֹם קִרְאָנוּ.

The reality (well, my reality, anyway) is that our two prior years' phrases have been taken from parts of Psalm 118, verse 25, which we sing during Hallel. There we have both the first two phrases but not the third. But Rabbi Rohde finds the three-phraser in our liturgy, too (in our Tachanun prayers recited on Mondays and Thursdays). It's clever whether we recite it or not, so it's on the list.

Faith Fogelman has a great set of suggestions, with her own brief explanations:

- [*Accentuate the Positive*](#) (1944 song by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer [marvelously sung by Ella Fitzgerald and a personal LMS fave])
- *Bravery in a New World* (à la Aldous Huxley, 1932 Book - *Brave New World*) [which is very clever]

Song Collections. This is the most challenging of the undertakings; unlike the three above, song collections need to be supplemented and renewed. Moreover, we have done *many* categories before. Even my listing last week (all four Seasons, long songs, short songs, GOAT songs, Parasha songs, Haftarah songs) omitted many others such as greatest lyrics, greatest riffs, and literally a host of more transient or bespoke lists. So the field is crowded already. But the talent is present and supreme, so let's keep going:

Faith Fogelman courageously is first in the water. She suggests:

- *Current Events* – “Today I would submit [United We Stand](#) (1969, Brotherhood of Man) in opposition to the Mayor’s tax on pied-à-terre apartments” +
- *Personal Stories* – If something good has happened to you, [Joy to the World](#) (Three Dog Night) might be the submission. Faith thinks this may be risky, and maybe she’s right.
- *Related to an upcoming Jewish or national holiday* – “Many in September-October. Thanksgiving comes in November - [Let’s Get Together](#),” here by Hayley Mills.

Let’s keep thinking about this for the next few days and try to have a near-final list by then.

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

The Haftarah for Parashat Ki Tavo is taken from Isaiah 60:1–22. It is the sixth of seven haftarat of consolation.

Master Song Suggester Andrew Druck notes that, in this haftarah, “Isaiah speaks of G-d as a sun shining on Israel and Israel, in turn, as a light onto the nations (verses 1-5, 19-20), who will then serve Israel. In this climate, nations will give Israel material goods, and peace will come to the land.”

Andrew suggests:

- [You Are My Sunshine](#), “as sung by parents throughout the world to their children” [here is a too-slow version]
- [You Are the Sunshine of My Life](#), as sung by Stevie Wonder
- [Here Comes the Sun](#), as sung by The Beatles
- [Sunny Side of the Street](#) (here is the Billy Holiday rendition)
- [Peace Like a River](#), as sung by Paul Simon
- [It’s Good to be King](#), as sung by Tom Petty
- [Give Peace a Chance](#), as sung by John Lennon
- [Peaceful Easy Feeling](#), as sung by the Eagles

From my perspective, which agrees fully with Andrew’s, the haftarah is about light and the promise of Jerusalem. The first words of the haftarah are “Arise, shine, for your light has come.” With that introduction, what I think of is

- [Rise and Shine](#) (“and give G-d the glory, glory”), (though listening to the end of the song brings some mighty strange lyrics – I wonder if we ever sang it all the way through as kids).

Chicken Soup With Milk. And to think that *that* might have been the name of the timeless children’s book by Maurice Sandak, rather than *Chicken Soup With Rice*. The short story of how it *didn’t* work out like that animates one of the enduring greatnesses of our religion.

The global Daf Yomi learning cycle is this week studying pages 115-121 of Tractate Chulin. By page 117b we finish Chapter 8 and begin Chapter 9, which involves matters of ritual purity. The end of Chapter 8, in particular page 116a, involves the discussion of chicken and milk. It *is* fascinating, and I will explain why I think so.

We all know that R' Yossi HaGalili held that chicken was not “meat” for purposes of the prohibitions of not eating or cooking chicken and milk together. The great sage based that conclusion on the fact that the language used by the Torah to articulate the general prohibition is not to cook/boil an animal in its mother’s milk, and, well, fowl don’t give milk.

Now we also know that R' Yossi HaGalili was no slouch. He appears many times in the Talmud, and many of his opinions are authoritative. And there he was, guided by his past, his teachers, and his own acumen and study, concluding that chicken and milk were ok together. His, too, were the words of a living G-d.

What we tend to do – anyway, what I tend to do – is to say, well, he was outvoted, ok, and normative Judaism moved in a different direction. We also rightly say that our religion is so much richer for having had the benefit of this diversity of views, of respecting them, of not canceling those who espoused them, and indeed of continuing to tell the story of those in disagreement now nearly two millennia later. But in my own mind I telescope in time the whole debate and transition to uniformity so that it’s all happening basically instantaneously. It didn’t actually happen like that, and that is what is so interesting.

When this issue is narrated on page 116a, the Talmud tells a story of Levi eating at the house of an (unnamed) “bird hunter”, being served peacock in milk, and not objecting. When R' Yehuda HaNasi confronts Levi, asking why he didn’t object to the chicken and milk, Levi answers as follows:

אָמַר לֵיהּ: אַתְרֵיהּ דְּרַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן בֵּתִירָא הוּא, וְאִמְיָנָא: דְּרַשׁ לְהוּ כְּרַבִּי יוֹסִי הַגָּלִילִי, דְּאָמַר: יֵצֵא עוֹף שָׂאִין לֹא חֵלֵב
אִם

Levi said to him: It was in the locale of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira, and I said: Perhaps he taught them that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yossi HaGalili, who said that the phrase “in its mother’s milk” serves to exclude a bird, which does not have mother’s milk. If so, I could not prohibit it to them, and I certainly could not excommunicate them for following their ruling.

This is fascinating. If you look up when R' Yehuda ben Beteira lived, we learn that he lived about two generations *after* R' Yossi HaGalili and about two generations *after* R' Yehuda HaNasi. So for *at least* two generations, Jews of a certain locale were cooking and eating chicken and milk together, and others were going to eat at their houses and not storming out. Now I get it; two generations isn’t such a long time in the grand arc of the J-Continuum. Still, the practice was done by very learned and observant people and tolerated by very learned and observant people. Isn’t this a marvelous story and an inspiration to how we should conduct ourselves today?

Shearith Israel Book Club II: *Between the Wars: Jewish Characters in 1920s and 1930s American Literature*. Here is the list of the books we will be reading and reporting on. There are only three books left without any readers (bolded). Sign up now, and be a part of this fun community enterprise:

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

Shabbat Lunch (Oct. 31) With Professor Shaina Trapedo. For Book Club II members, Professor Trapedo, of Yeshiva University's Stern College, will be joining us for lunch on Shabbat, October 31. Sign up will begin soon, but in the meantime please save the date.

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