

September 10, 2026

Dear Shearith Israel family,

Our (Waning) Year of Allegiance. With Rosh Hashana 5787 beginning tomorrow night, we bid farewell to 5786 and greet the new year with restless anticipation (a marvelous phrase Satre used – not for this, alas). Rabbi Soloveichik gave inspiring talks on Shabbat on the impending holidays, and Rabbi Rohde's piece in last week's Shabbat handout is beautiful, even if a strong magnifying glass is needed to read it.

I can't improve on their approaches. Each fearlessly embraced that it is the time of year to talk about the scary topic of time, what is left of it, what we do with it, how our thoughts and actions can sanctify or pollute it. Personally, I would like to add that the **cosmic do-over** that we are blessed to experience each Rosh Hashana really could not have been accomplished by either the Almighty or human beings alone. It needed *both* the Almighty and the Jewish people themselves, through our Sages, for the following reason.

One needs to be out of time to treat time as our religion does on Rosh Hashana, that is, both circularly *and* linearly. It's genius. Circularly because the new year do-over allows us to be in the same psychic position as we might have been before but not make the exact same errors and manifest the exact same failings as we did before. And linearly because, once we overcome the weaknesses that brought about the earlier errors and failings, we can move forward, individually and communally. The mechanism of action is exactly what a link does as part of a greater chain. It is circular and linear, and it is the perfect description of the link each and every one of us plays in the Great J-Continuum. In this regard you might consider again the discussion (five years ago, [9/15/21](#)) of Penrose's masterful *Cycles of Time*.

I could have avoided all this yammer, I know, by simply reminding us of the great song (lyrics and tune) by Bobby Sherman, [Easy Come Easy Go](#). It kinda says it all. Shana tova to all.

And the Finalists Are: We have four open Naming Writes, and we will announce winners next week after a final round of voting on the following finalists:

Naming our Year. From the largest field of candidates we've ever had (>15!), the final voting is among the following top three:

- *Year of Community*
- *Year of Elevation*
- *Year of Purpose*

In casting your final vote (you can rank them, but we aren't going to perform any sophisticated algorithms to choose the winner), consider the thoughtful and, indeed, beautiful approach that Shabbat minyan stalwart Dr. Susan Lobel articulated to me this past Shabbat. This year, we are all sensitive to the fact that Rosh Hashana begins on the evening of 9/11 and, indeed on the 25th anniversary of that tragic day. What Susan says goes deeper, though, asking that perhaps we choose a name for our coming year that will animate our reaching out to others, in ways personal and

communal, emotional and charitable. Thank you, Susan, for giving real purpose to our fun naming exercise.

Word of the Year. Our three finalists here are:

- *Stalwart*
- *Uplift*
- *Together*

Phrase of the Year. Our three finalists here are:

- *Anenu b'yom korenu, אָנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קֹרְאָנוּ, or Answer us on the day we call.*
- *Accentuate the Positive*
- *Bravery in a New World*

Song Suggestions. Here are the three finalists:

- *Current Events*
- *Related to an upcoming Jewish or national holiday*
- *Back to particularly fun groupings, which can change every couple of months*

But I also want to add for our consideration a late but great suggestion, offered by Beverly Druck, wife of Master Song Suggester Andrew Druck. Beverly suggests that we use the weekly Torah parasha as a jumping off point but that we focus on particular individuals to provide the song inspiration rather than the broader story itself. We tried that for a couple of weeks when we were doing the parshiot two years ago. I think it could work well, but it will take some thought and that irreplaceable commodity we have so little of: time. However, cast your votes; let's see what everyone thinks.

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

This Shabbat being Rosh Hashana, we have the rare treat of reading the story of Hannah and the birth of the Prophet Samuel. It is a beautiful haftarah, one that most of us can actually read and absorb in Synagogue since we are sitting in leisurely if not prolonged attendance.

The Haftarah for the first day of Rosh Hashana is taken from 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10. MSS Andrew Druck has a lively set of suggestions capturing the mood:

- [*My Prayer*](#), as sung by the Platters
- [*I Say a Little Prayer*](#), as sung by Dionne Warwick
- [*Wishin' and Hopin'*](#), as sung by Dusty Springfield
- [*Letter to You*](#), as sung by Bruce Springsteen
- [*It's a Boy*](#), as sung by the Who (from *Tommy*)

A Time to Give. Susan Lobel's thoughts expressed above – that the confluence of the new Jewish year and the 25th anniversary of 9/11 should prompt us collectively to give charitably – could not be more timely for us as a Congregation. We are now collecting essential funds to operate this great institution, since annual dues make up maybe 30% of our budget. We do not have a public appeal during Kippur but in recent years have used our Hatanim Luncheon in the Fall to locate one of the only two times a year we reach out to the entire Congregation for our general welfare. And this year, there is an even greater need for additional charitable support; we are also trying to raise another \$1 million to fund the crucially needed elevator that will sit in the lot a/k/a Paved Paradise and that will permit access not just to the women's balcony in the Sanctuary but the Levy Auditorium as well. The Stanton family is, with extraordinary generosity, going halves with us, so that means we have to raise \$500k plus our usual annual needs.

This is truly our time to give. It is therefore not a coincidence that, fundamental to this week's Daf Yomi learning, and to the Tenth Chapter of Tractate Chulin itself, is the profoundly Jewish concept of digging deep to help institutions and others we care about.

The global Daf Yomi learning cycle is this week studying pages 129-135 of Tractate Chulin. On page 130a we begin the Tenth Chapter of the Tractate, called *הַזְרוֹעַ וְהַלְחִיץ*, which refers to the foreleg and jaw of an animal and which, together with a third body part (the maw or part of the stomach), comprise the three parts of an animal that are to be given to Priests as part of what they need to subsist on. The rule is captured in Devarim 18:3. Even in the first Mishna in the Chapter we learn that this gifting is not about the sacrificial service; indeed, sacrificial offerings are exempt from this requirement. *Every* type of transaction should include a charitable aspect. Every one teaches our Talmud. Indeed, the three body parts are called *matanot*, or gifts, in the Talmud.

As the gemarra proceeds in Chapter 10, the exact meets and bounds of this legal rule of *matanot* are not crystal clear from the Talmud, which is interesting in and of itself. But what *is* clear is where the Talmud takes this discussion. By page 130b we learn that these gifts are analogous to the crucially important charity that every Jew must give, for example, by leaving the corner of one's field for the poor (*peya*). The Sages adumbrate that even the poor must help those less fortunate.

It is hard to imagine a more important teaching for us today, this week, this month, as we move into Rosh Hashana and then to Kippur, Succot, Simchat Torah, and our Hatanim celebration. Our community is in real financial need. The general needs of this time of year are nearly tripled because of the imperative of getting our young and elderly to the basement and to the second floor. If you are able to help, please, dig as deep as your circumstances permit.

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

Shanah tova to all, k'tiva v'chatima tova.

Louis Solomon, Parnas