



Rosh Hodesh Tamuz

Sunday, June 29, 2025 @ 11:00 am

Program Facilitator: Judy Rohtbart

Agenda

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Introductions and Opening Blessing

Introduce yourself! We invite you to use your first name and your mother's first name. It doesn't matter if your mother isn't/wasn't Jewish.

Blessings:

Commentary by LilyFish Gomberg:

The reference to children in the blessing can apply to biological or adopted children, and it can also apply to anyone we nurture and teach within the community, the next generation of Jews we collectively hope to inspire.

The prayer is intended to be inclusive, speaking to our shared responsibility in helping to shape the future of the Jewish community.

In Sanhedrin 99b, Reish Lakish says, "Anyone who teaches someone else's child Torah is regarded by the Torah as though they have made them." R. Elazar adds that it is as though the teacher has "made" the child in terms of Torah, highlighting the importance of the role of teaching and mentorship in Jewish life.

May it be Your will, my God and God of my ancestors, to be gracious to me and to all my family and to give us, and all Israel, a good and long life. Remember us with goodness and blessing, and grant us salvation and mercy. Grant us abundant blessing, and fortify the places we call home. May Your Presence dwell among us as we gather here today. May we be blessed with wise and learned disciples and children, lovers of God who stand in awe of You, people who speak truth and spread holiness. May those we nurture light the world with Torah and good deeds.

Hear the prayers I utter now in the name of our mothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah. May Your light, reflected in these candles, surround us always. And let us say, Amen.

*Barukh atah Adonai
Eloheinu melekh ha'olam
shehechyanu vekiyemanu
vehigi'anu lazman hazeh*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהַחַיִּים וְקִיָּמָנוּ
וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵן הַזֶּה

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, sovereign of the universe
who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season

The Daughters of Zelofhad

Tamuz enters the most intensive period of the Hebrew calendar.

A month that contains the longest, hottest days of the year; Tamuz literally means “heating.” Historically, many tragic events in this month; the breaching of the ancient Temple walls, Adam and Eve’s exile from the Garden. **Our focus will turn to a redemptive story.**

In the month of Tamuz, we read the story of the **daughters of Tzelofchad** (Numbers 27). Tzelofchad died in the wilderness without sons. At the time, Israelite inheritance laws only allowed sons to inherit land. Without a male heir, a family’s property — and its name — could be lost. His five daughters — **Machlah, Noa, Hoglah, Milkah, and Tirtzah** — are named in the text, which is significant. The Torah often leaves women unnamed, but here, their names are recorded and remembered. This signals the importance of their role and their story.

The daughters brought their case before Moses, the high priest, the tribal leaders, and the whole community. They argued that their father’s name should not disappear from his clan just because he had no sons. They asked to inherit his share of land in the promised land. Moses brought their question to G!d, who ruled in their favor: **“The daughters of Tzelofchad speak rightly. You shall surely give them a hereditary holding among their father’s kin” (Numbers 27:7).** This changed the law to allow daughters to inherit if there were no sons.

This took place not long after the Korach rebellion, when a group’s challenge to authority led to disaster. The daughters of Tzelofchad also challenged the system — but they did so with clarity, respect, and strength. And unlike Korach, they were heard.

Later, in **Numbers 36**, tribal leaders from Menasheh raised a concern: if the daughters married men from other tribes, their land would be transferred out of the tribe. In response, G!d instructed that while the daughters could inherit, they must marry within their tribe to keep the land in Menasheh. The daughters complied and married their cousins within the tribe.

This story marks **an early example of legal reform in the Torah**, prompted by the courage of individuals to speak up. It also reflects how personal stories can shape communal law — and how naming, memory, and justice are deeply connected.



Discuss

What's a time you witnessed or experienced something unjust?

Did you say anything? Why or why not?

Do you have a sense of your own power?

What gives you that power — or what holds it back?

Whose names do we keep?

Especially in the context of marriage or gender — how do we think about changing names vs. keeping them?

How do names shape identity?

The daughters of Tzelofchad acted after Korach's rebellion.

What's the difference between dissent that threatens and dissent that transforms?

How does bravery show up differently in different situations?



To close our Rosh Hodesh circle, we turn to a contemporary voice of prophetic courage — **Amanda Gorman**. Like the daughters of Tzelofhad, she reminds us that when one woman speaks, she does not speak alone. That bravery is contagious. That when we make space for each other's voices, especially those most often left out, we rise together.

We Rise by Amanda Gorman (1/2)

Today, everyone's eyes
Are on us as we rise.
Today is the day women
Are paving the way,
Speaking our truth to power.
In this hour, it is our duty
to find the brave beauty
In rooting for other women
So they too know we are not victims,
We are victors, the greatest predictors
of progress. We press for change,
A new dawn drawn into the open
By women whose silence is broken.

We push on and act on
Our responsibility to bring visibility
To the most vulnerable:
To bring freedom to those who didn't have a choice,
To bring volume to those who are using their voice.

We Rise by Amanda Gorman (2/2)

We clear a woman's way,
We don't fear the day
She steps into the light
Because we are with her
Every step of the fight.

There's a lot at stake, but making
A difference always takes great courage.
So we encourage women who dare to
stare
Fear square in its face,
Women who've always shown
That when one woman stands up
She is never alone.

We know that when she steps up to right
a wrong,
She will fight to bring others along
To the network, into the conversation,
Working together to change
communities
And nations for generations, our world
Made all the stronger the longer
Women are able to sit at the table.

It is her strength, her story, and her spirit
Which inspires other vital voices
to speak up when they hear it.

So let it be said that light will be shed
When our world is led by leaders ahead
of the headlines, the voices
Who are first on the frontline,
These women who stand up,
knowing the wind
Not by where it is, but where it is blowing,
Leading worlds not by how society is
But where change is going.

We all leap forward when one woman tries,
When she defies with her rallying cries.
Here lies, but does not rest, the best
Of tested women who call us all to rise,
Speaking the truth in this finest hour:
That to their own power,
every single woman is entitled.
But it's how they empower others
That makes women's voices so vital.



What We Want By Linda Pastan

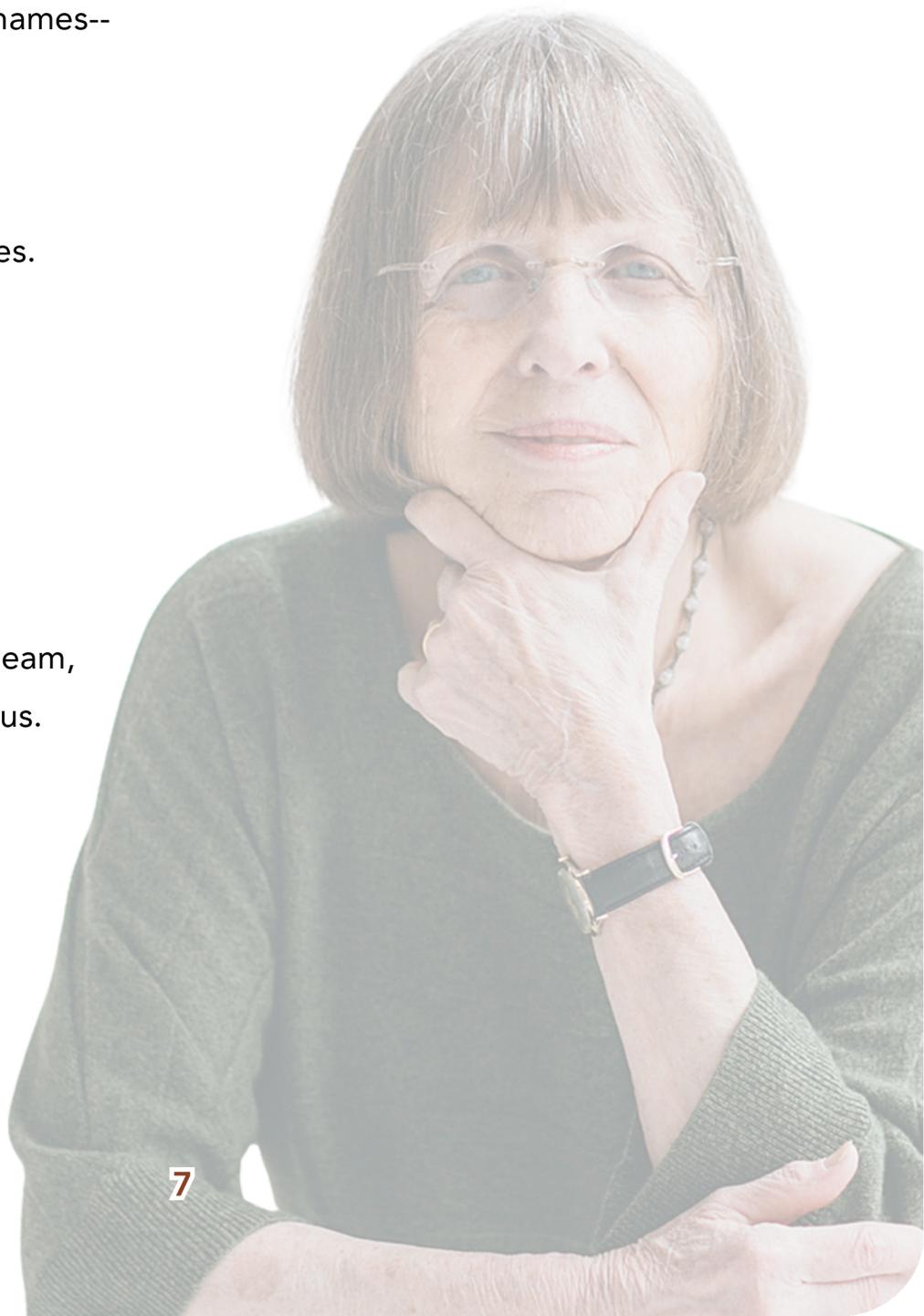
What we want
is never simple.

We move among the things
we thought we wanted:
a face, a room, an open book
and these things bear our names--
now they want us.

But what we want appears
in dreams, wearing disguises.

We fall past,
holding out our arms
and in the morning
our arms ache.

We don't remember the dream,
but the dream remembers us.
It is there all day
as an animal is there
under the table,
as the stars are there
even in full sun.





Time to Join or Renew Your Membership!

Synagogue membership sustains our sacred community — providing the resources we need to gather for Shabbat, teach our children, support each other through life’s milestones, and live our Jewish values in the world. **Your participation makes it all possible.**

Join our congregation or renew your membership at Society Hill Synagogue for the 5786/2025-2026 year by clicking below, and start the new year sweetly with High Holiday services, meals, and celebrations!

societyhillsynagogue.org/membership



Young Friends (20s-30s): Brews & Schmooze at Yards Brewing Co.

Thursday, July 17 @ 6:30 pm • Yards Brewing Co. (500 Spring Garden Street)

Whether you’re a craft beer aficionado or just looking for chill summer vibes, join us for Brews & Schmooze at Yards Brewing Company!

It’s a great way to meet new people, catch up with friends, and unwind mid-week in a warm and welcoming community for singles and couples.

societyhillsynagogue.org/young-friends



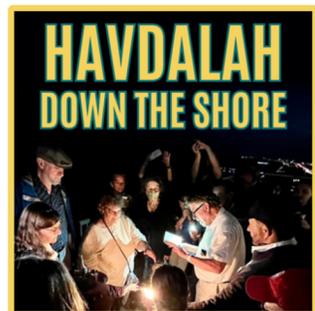
Triple Chai (Ages 54+): Lunch and *La Traviata* Simulcast

Wednesday, July 23 @ 11:30 am

Join us for another wonderful Triple Chai outing! We’ll gather for lunch at 11:30 am at the **Amsale Cafe** (4817 Walnut Street), then head to Cinemark University City for a **1:00 pm** live simulcast of *La Traviata* from the Metropolitan Opera.

La Traviata (“The Fallen Woman”) is one of Verdi’s most beloved operas — a stirring tale of love and loss, set to a soaring score that has captivated audiences for generations. This afternoon is not to be missed!

societyhillsynagogue.org/triple-chai



Havdalah Down the Shore

Saturday, August 23 @ 6:30 pm (Service @ 8:30 pm)

Dan and Dana Feinberg are graciously hosting our congregation's Havdalah Down the Shore this summer, so come together for this special evening! We will meet at **6:30 pm** for a light potluck dairy meal, proceed to the beach for our **8:30 pm** lay-led Havdalah service, and return for dessert.

To join us, RSVP by **August 10** to **Judy Lalli**, and she will provide you with the address and note your contribution of dairy food items or beverages.

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