

Oseh Shalom 2025–2026 Torah Fund Theme

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Choosing the Torah Fund theme is a thoughtful, multi-step process. This year, we did the following:

Step 1: The current Torah Fund team (Marilyn Berkowitz, Shelley Szwalbenest and me) met with Julia Loeb, WLCJ International President, Rabbi Ellen, WLCJ Executive Director, and Lisa Paule, Torah Fund Director, to discuss possible theme ideas. We look for meaningful themes that are easy to pronounce!

Step 2: Our Torah Fund Advisory Council joined our group and narrowed down the suggested list to three alternatives.

Step 3: At the next Torah Fund Cabinet, I presented the three possibilities. The Cabinet had a lively discussion followed by a vote to set the theme.

Like our 2024–2025 campaign, *Am Yisrael Chai* (“The People of Israel Live”), we wanted to choose a meaningful theme for this campaign year. With an almost unanimous vote, the Torah Fund Cabinet selected this year’s theme: *Oseh Shalom* (“Maker of Peace”). We look forward to working with all of you on this campaign. Many prayers contain the words *Oseh Shalom*. These words from the Book of Job conclude several memorable prayers such as *Birkat Hamazon*, *Kaddish*, and the *Amidah*. The words were even set to music; the beloved tune we all know was composed by Israeli musician Nurit Hirsch in 1969. But have you ever really thought about the prayer’s meaning?

Beyond being a petition to God, *Oseh Shalom* suggests we actively work for peace in our lives, our communities, and for the state of Israel. In challenging times, a positive perspective encourages action rather than passive despair. Ways to work towards peace include using empathy to see the “divine spark” in others and building bridges to seek common ground and understanding. We can find personal peace by creating a sense of calm, comforting the bereaved, and accepting help from others so they feel the joy in doing good and then bring healing to themselves.

The key word—*Shalom*—commonly translated as “peace,” brings to mind the absence of conflict and war. But in the Torah, and in modern conversational Hebrew, the word’s root *shin-lamed-mem* (שְׁלָמָם) generally refers to *personal* wholeness, peace, and well-being. When we feel tranquil, we are open to wishing that state of mind on others.

With Torah Fund, we have the special opportunity to support our students at the five world-wide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher Jewish learning. Your caring donation provides scholarships and programming to train our future clergy, educators, scholars, and lay leaders to keep advancing the cause of *shalom*. Every donation supports the continuation of our movement, and we thank you for your support.

Oseh Shalom reminds us that peace is possible—even in times of darkness. May the One who creates peace help you realize your peace, and peace for those you love, for Israel and for all people.