

The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

What does the Word of the Year say about us?

Translated by Janine Muller Sherr

Pay attention to the following sentence: The Oxford English dictionary has chosen the term “rage bait” as the Word of the Year for 2025. This is a term related to social media content that is designed to spark shock and rage and thus to garner higher online circulation. You might not be aware of this term but you have surely come across such provocative annoying and distressing posts.

Meanwhile, the Webster Dictionary chose the word “slop” as its Word of the Year. The complete term is “pig slop”. This term relates to low-quality digital content that is AI-generated. This refers to content that is of inferior quality – and often completely fake – that goes viral. Are you familiar with this type of content? We are being swamped by this trash.

Another leading language website, “dictionary”, chose the word “6-7”, which is not even a word but a number. If you’re not familiar with it, it’s perfectly fine. Any attempt to explain this term will be awkward – essentially, it is a meaningless slang

that has become popularized by the TikTok youth.

But the Cambridge Dictionary has chosen the most disturbing word of all: “parasocial” which is a one-sided bond people form with famous personalities or even with a bot, even though they have never met them or, in the case of a bot, they don’t exist in reality. This refers to a relationship developed with an AI, and the word was chosen because it illustrates the blurring between human and digital connections.

What do you think about these word choices? We can certainly conclude (without consulting AI) that all of these words point to the same disturbing phenomenon: that our world has become loud, tech-centered, detached, and artificial. If this is the direction in which we’re heading, what will the Word of the Year be in 2026? Will anyone even bother to choose one and who would be interested?

But there is a role for us to play in all of this. While these were the words chosen for the secular year ending in December, the Academy of the Hebrew language determined, by an overwhelming majority, that the Word of the Year for 5785 was the word CHATUFIM – “hostages”, followed closely by the words “courage”, “responsibility”, and “home” – words that express

solidarity and mutual responsibility.
What will be Israel's Word of the Year
for 2026? With all the digital garbage
and rage baits circulating online, this
will be our challenge.

I will end with our own eternal words
that will never be outdated. As we do
as Shabbat approaches and arrives -
SHABBAT SHALOM UMOVORACH!

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they can receive Sivan Rahav-Meir's
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