

Counting our Days by Rabbi Jen Tobenstein

On my last visit to Temple Israel, we were on the cusp of a new Jewish year, and we reflected together on what it meant to mark that time. We took a spiritual accounting of the year that had passed and dedicated ourselves to a new - or renewed - ideal. Since then, we may have made strides in that direction, or missteps, or we may have taken a different course. I'm now returning to Manchester at the start of the new secular year, and it may be time for a reset. So let us revisit the idea of the passage of time and what it means to take the opportunity to begin again.

King David wrote in the Book of Psalms: "Teach us to number our days, that we may attain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12) But what does it really mean to "number our days"? Does the act of counting them itself lead to wisdom?

An alternate translation of the verse can read: "Teach us to count our days rightly" - and this is a clearer opportunity. When we determine what is right for our individual circumstances, for our families and livelihoods and communities and passions, we can then count our days in ways that will enrich our hearts.

Last month in South Korea, lawmakers voted to standardize the way the government counts a person's age. For decades South Koreans have used three different ways to count their ages. The more traditional form is that they are a year old at birth and then count up every New Year's Day. In some contexts, they simply subtract their birth year from the current

year. And for many legal purposes they follow the standard of the rest of the world, starting from zero and adding a year on every birthday. When the different systems collided, confusion ensued, and it was not surprising that the majority of citizens supported adopting a national standard. What resonated for me when I read about the multiple systems, was how the different ways of marking time, each with their history and purpose, offered citizens different opportunities to "count their days rightly." It reminded me of the Talmudic teaching about four different 'New Years' on the Jewish calendar. While one has been historically dominant (Rosh Hashanah that we celebrate every autumn), each of the other New Year's also marked a meaningful point of reflection for our ancestors. So too does each New Year we recognize today mark an opportunity for renewal.

The great 20th century philosopher, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel z"l, taught: "Judaism is a *religion of time* aiming at the sanctification of time...There are no two hours alike... Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of the year. (*The Sabbath*)"

In the year ahead, may we all be able to count our days rightly. And may the sanctuaries in time that we build be filled with wisdom and blessing.

Temple Israel Manchester proudly presents our
January Visiting Scholar
Rabbi Jen Tobenstein

Topic: The Arc of the Moral Universe: How We Bend It Towards Justice
A Jewish Perspective in Honor of MLK Jr. Day

Please join us for Shabbats, Sustenance and Shiur

Jan 6 - Shabbat & Family Dinner - 6:00pm

Jan 7 - Shabbat followed by lunch and learn with Rabbi Jen - 10:00am



RSVPs are required



*RSVP links will be sent via email. If you do not have email, call Christine at 603.622.6171 to register.



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- Kiddush Krew – Renee Brenner, Monique Shaffer, Merle Paltrow, Carol Pressman, Carol Sternberg & David Winthrop
- Ruth Chevion for her wonderful stories about her family's escape from the Holocaust to America
- Temple Israel Book Club Leaders - Ken Cohn, Aida Koocher and Benay Birch
- Marc Stober for his collaboration on musical services

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He Came to Her in a Vision by Ruth Chevion

Marcus Hausknecht had been dead for fifteen years when he came to his daughter Herta in a vision.

"He told me we should all hide," Herta announced urgently to the assembled family "he told me they are already on their way. He said we should all hide."

It was early morning, just past dawn. *Aktionen* never took place this early. Besides, where were they supposed to hide? They had a tiny hovel in the smaller of the two Lvov ghettos.

"They are coming. You will see. It was not a dream. I was not sleeping. He spoke to me. It was just a few minutes ago. I saw him. My father spoke to me."

"Go hide if you want. We are having a quiet moment here together, and nothing is going to happen for at least several hours. We know their schedule."

"I'm going to hide in the cellar. I'm going to hide." She pushed the trap door aside and lowered herself down into the cellar and hid.

Not five minutes later, they were there: three uniformed Gestapo searching the place for people to grab. They grabbed one aunt who had no work papers. Then one of the Gestapos pointed to the trap door. "What's down there?" He barked.

Everyone froze.

At that moment, Herta's mother, Susha Hausknecht, got a huge projectile nosebleed. Blood spurted out of her nose halfway across the room. Did some blood get on a uniform?

The trap door was forgotten.

Herta was saved. Herta was my mother. She did not have work papers.

Why do I tell you this unbelievable story anyway? What's the point? I know it's interesting that things like this happened, but the entertainment value is not enough.

If you truly believe that this really happened, unembellished, just as my mother told it, then isn't it some proof of a sixth or even a seventh sense? That can give us a lifesaving message? And that the challenge is to believe it when it kicks in? And then to act on it as my mother did in this incident? As to the other people in this story, the aunt was later released. She said she would never speak of what she saw there, and she never did.

Marcus Hausknecht, for all I know, gathered up his entire life's store of merit to make that brief appearance to warn his daughter of impending danger and tell her what to do. He never appeared a second time, not before and not after.

Susha's projectile nosebleed speaks to me of the power of love. Her love mixed with fear to make a kind of power cocktail that blew up and out of her nose. Isn't that actually what happened? We all know at some level that love can make miracles. It's just rare to see it so graphically illustrated as what happened in the ghetto that day.



Marcus Hausknecht



Today, it is estimated there are more than 5 million book club members in the United States. Many clubs have more than 10 members. Temple Israel's is one of them. We've had as many as 22 people attend our in-person book clubs, which because of Covid, we've only had twice. We've had several authors moderate zoom discussions, as well as Rabbi Gary, with between 14-25 participants. Our usual zoom meetings have 8-12 people. *We have had some outstanding sessions.*

In February 2023 we will be celebrating **three years** of literary enrichment & fun with our wonderful friends & congregants.

A few books are under consideration for our next discussion on March 15th, 2023. They are listed below:

- "People Love Dead Jews" by Dara Horn (Yipes-if this isn't an attention getter, what is!)
- "Dispatches from Pluto" by Richard Grant
- "The Jew in the Lotus" by Rodger Kamenetz
- "The Silent Patient" by Alex Michaelides

"The Giver of Stars" by Jojo Moyes

"Demon Copperhead" by Barbara King Solver

So, how do we decide which books to read? Aida, Benay, and I come across what we think may be valuable, and worthwhile books, and we delegate which books to read amongst the three of us. We then come to a consensus. Also, other book club members come across books which they then recommend. Over the years, we've had a group of faithful people who enjoy our zoom book club discussions. Now we meet quarterly. **IT HAS WORKED OUT SO FAR, SO GOOD!**

I invite anyone reading this to suggest any book they've read or heard about and think it would be valuable for us to discuss. We love newcomers, so please feel free to participate with us, at least once or twice, to see if you like our group.

We hope the holiday season was a happy and safe one for everyone.

Shalom Peace Shalom,
The Temple Israel Bookmeisters-Aida, Benay, and Ken



January 2023

8 Tevet to Shevet 75783



Jan 1 - Max Stober
 Jan 2 - Philip Borenstein
 Jan 2 - Seth Guttman
 Jan 3 - Jennifer Aldrich
 Jan 5 - Michelle Kelman
 Jan 5 - Hannah Stober
 Jan 6 - Paula Fredriksen
 Jan 7 - Paula Winer-Veale
 Jan 9 - Aida Koocher

Jan 10 - Golan Kilchevsky
 Jan 10- Paul Schill
 Jan 11 - Rani Paltrow-McCole
 Jan 12 - Debbie Manning
 Jan 14- Monique Baskin
 Jan 18 - Renee Brener
 Jan 19 - Peter Hallock
 Jan 19 - Nadav Matthews

Jan 19 - Mitchell Weinberg
 Jan 21 - Nathaniel Davidow
 Jan 23 - Ruth Chevion
 Jan 24 - Emily Frydman Verbun
 Jan 24 - Rachel Spierer
 Jan 25 - Michael Welch
 Jan 28 - Joy Sydney
 Jan 30 - Samuel Daron Bannerman Lew

There are no anniversaries this month

JANUARY CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

EVERY WEDNESDAY – MORNING MINYANS AT 7:00AM

FRIDAYS

6	Visiting Scholar – 6:00pm Family Shabbat & dinner with Rabbi Jen Tobenstein. RSVP by Jan 2* Light Candles at 4:08pm
13	Light Candles at 4:15pm
20	Light Candles at 4:24pm
27	Light Candles at 4:33pm

SATURDAYS

7	Visiting Scholar – 10:00am Shabbat, kiddush and learning with Rabbi Jen Tobenstein. RSVP by Jan 2* Parshas Vayechi
14	Parshas Shemos
21	10:00am Shabbat service Parshas Vaera
28	Parshas Bo

SUNDAYS

8	Sunday Funday 9:30am For info contact Liz Sommers familyeducator@outlook.com
15	
22	AED/CPR training – 10:00am Led by Rick Notkin for info contact progun38@verizon.net
28	Kibbitz & Cooking – 10:00am Location TBD

*RSVP links will be sent via email. If you do not have email, call Christine at 603.622.6171 to register.



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- Yom Tov Challah Board - \$25
- Challah Knife - \$20
- Candlesticks - \$25.
- Hamsa - \$25
- Blue Enameled Mezuzahs - \$30

Contact Carol at 603.623.7752 or carolshn@myfairpoint.net

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