

Tevet / Shevat

January 2024

Congregation Beth Israel

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From the Cantor's Desk:

Happy New Year! January 1 is not a significant day in the Jewish calendar, but, of course, we live here in America, where it is a national holiday and to some a religious holiday. We change the year number, have to remember to write 2024 on documents and checks (those of us who still write checks!), and many of us make resolutions to make changes in our habits. In thinking about a message for this month, it struck me how arbitrary the time for counting and celebrating the new year is, which led me to look into how it came to be.

In the Hebrew calendar, we change the year number at Rosh Hashanah, an autumn holiday that the rabbis believe coincides with creation of the world. It happens also, to be the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. Not only do we change the year numbers then, but Rosh Hashana is also our spiritual new year, a time of self-reflection and resolution. We learn from the Mishnah (the earliest commentary on our Torah), that there are three other “new years” in the Jewish calendar. The new year for tithing of fruit trees is the 15th of Shevat – Tu B’shevat. Since we no longer bring offerings of fruit to the temple or the priestly class and most of us do not cultivate trees, even, Tu B’shevat (which falls on January 25 in 2024) has become a day to celebrate the bounties of nature – a kind of Jewish Earth Day. The new year for counting the year of a king’s reign (probably will never be relevant again for us) is the first of Nisan. First of Nisan is also the beginning of the year for determining the order of our festivals. Nisan – often falling in March or April – is called the first month in the Torah and falls in the spring. The general consensus regarding the new year for the tithing of livestock is the first of Elul, the sixth month, although there were dissenting views that though this should be the first of Tishrei, the seventh month. The new year for animal tithes day has also all but disappeared from our calendar, although some Jews have started celebrating our domesticated animals and pets on the first of Elul. (Personally, I celebrate my pet every day!) (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1)

It may seem odd that the Jewish year changes its number on the first day of the 7th month. We are all much more familiar with the Gregorian calendar that we use in our secular lives where we change the year number on the first day of the first month – January. I was surprised to learn that the Gregorian calendar that we follow in the United States today was only officially adopted in the American Colonies in 1752.

Prior to that, England followed the Julian calendar (that had a leap year every 3 years instead of every 4 and so by 1752 was 11 days ahead of the Gregorian calendar and the season!). At that time New Year was celebrated on March 25 (and in some places on December 25). Documents from before 1752 in America often were double dated with the Julian date and the Gregorian date to avoid confusion. The March year beginning also explains some of the names of the months – September being the 7th month, October the 8th, November the 9th and December the 10th. So celebrating the New Year on January 1 is not necessarily a function of the Gregorian or Julian calendar and in various places, like in the Hebrew calendar, other days of significance were often chosen as the New Year. So how did we get to where we are?

(... continued on page 2)

Some attribute our celebrating the new year from January to the Roman emperor Numa, who thought it more appropriate to celebrate during the month that was named after the Roman god Janus, god of beginnings, rather than Mars, god of war. Julius Caesar retained January as the first month when he revised the calendar in the first century BCE, although it was still not universal as authorities of various places tried to retain other more religiously significant dates, such as the fall or spring equinox, the winter solstice or the Chinese lunar month falling in January/February still celebrated in traditional Chinese communities. Pope Gregory changed the calendar again in 1562 to what we now use as our secular calendar, although it was not adopted in non-Catholic countries at that time.

I was thinking about having this secular New Year celebration in the heart of our Northern Hemispheric winter. Days are short. Lack of light has a depressing effect on people, in some cases, severe negative impact. It's cold outside and it takes real effort to get up and go out into bitter wind or cold rain or sleet on a grey day. Isn't this a strange time to celebrate a new year and exhort ourselves to adopt better habits? Wouldn't spring feel more like a time of renewal and celebration?

On further reflection, it seems to me that we can embrace ALL of our new years. At Rosh Hashana as the sweltering summer heat gives way to the lovely days of fall, we can take time to reflect on what we have and the kind of people we want to be. We can also add a number to the Hebrew year count. Then when it seems most cold and dark, we need to remind ourselves that we need to live through our dark times and reach out to others to give warmth and support and receive support for our own resolutions. Let us celebrate counting 2024 as we did 5784 – another chance for new beginnings and the date our society has adopted to signify a beginning. May celebrating this new year help bring us out of the cold and dark, help us set goals and give us hope to achieve to our next milestones.

January Presidents Message **Stu Perlmutter**

As we celebrate our 117th year of providing a Jewish presence in Lebanon County, we must rise to the challenge of recent antisemitism by gathering in our house of worship unafraid and secure as we are surrounded by our congregants.

Semi- Annual Congregation Meeting

Join us on Monday, January 22nd at 7PM for the Semi-Annual Congregational meeting. It's important that you join us and share your thoughts and listen to the discussions for the upcoming year at CBI.

OFFICE ERROR

Our apologies for a mistake made in our December bulletin's yearzeit list:
Correction: Dr. Murray Grosky— Brother of Sandra Smith

WELCOME!! NEWEST MEMBERS

- Allan & Arlene Smith— Carlisle, PA

Yahrzeits

<u>Tevet</u>	<u>Jan</u>	
21	2	Marthe Pleet— Mother of David Pleet and Grandmother of Tracy Pleet Troain & Jesse Pleet
21	2	Jesse Rich— Husband of Ethel Rich and Father of Warren Rich
25	6	Myer Levinson— Grandfather of Dr. Philip Levinson
25	6	Bernadine R. Hermansky— Mother of Bernadine Shattls
26	7	Gregory Levitz— Nephew of Sara Schneider
26	7	Barbara Collins— Mother of Stacey Knarr and Grandmother of Jacob Collins
27	8	Samuel Clark— Father of Donald Clark & Dr. Joseph Clark
<u>Shevat</u>	<u>Jan</u>	
2	12	Abe Smith— Father of Harold Smith
4	14	Sidney A. Levitz— Brother of Sara Schneider
5	15	Regina Kantor Kimmel— Aunt of Wynne Kantor & Dr. Thomas Kantor
7	17	Anna David— Mother-in-Law of David Pleet and Grandmother of Jesse Pleet & Tracy Pleet Troain
8	18	Joseph David— Father-in-Law of David Pleet and Grandfather of Jesse Pleet & Tracy Pleet Troain
9	19	Sarah Yespy— Aunt of Sandra Howard
12	22	Dorothy Abel— Mother of Debby Abel and Cousin of Joanne Bennetch & Frada Roseff
14	24	Carol Kaplan— Mother of Steven Kaplan & Pamela Kaplan
14	24	James S. Klein— Father of Harold Klein
15	25	Beatrice Zivic— Mother of Rabbi Louis Zivic
16	26	Karl Greiner Rohrback— Father of Linda Siegel and Grandfather of David Siegel & Daniel Siegel
16	26	Esther Clark— Mother of Donald Clark & Dr. Joseph Clark
16	26	Jerry Collins— Father of Stacey Knarr
18	28	Harry Wexler— Father of Dr. Barry Wexler
19	29	Esther Levinson— Mother of Dr. Philip Levinson
20	30	Norman Magdule— Brother of Robert Magdule and Nephew of Zelda Magdule
20	30	Florence Gorenefsky— Mother of Mollie Bronstein

Our thanks for Remembering
Beth Israel in December

Yahrzeit:

Debbie Kessler	Lucille Baron	David Pleet
Jesse Pleet, ESQ	Ethel Rich	Bernadine Shattls

Esther & Sam Clark Youth Activities Fund

Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Clark

BULLETIN DEADLINE for FEBRUARY: January 15th

**President of the Month: Stuart Perlmutter
Next President:**

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's hangout 1PM-4PM <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3	4	5 CL 4:31 PM 7:30PM Service/ Hybrid	6 9:30AM Service/ Hybrid
7 9AM Minyan/ Hybrid Movie in the Lounge at 1PM	8	9	10	11 7:15AM Minyan/ Hybrid	12 CL 4:38 PM 7:30PM Service/ Hybrid	13 9:30AM Service/ Hybrid
14 9AM Minyan/ Hybrid	15 BULLETIN DEADLINE	16	17 Book Club 7PM via zoom	18 7:30AM Minyan/ Hybrid Adult Ed 7PM	19 CL 4:46 PM 7:30PM Service/ Hybrid Sisterhood Shabbat	20 9:30AM Service/ Hybrid
21 9AM Minyan/ Hybrid	22 SEMI- ANNUAL BOARD MEETING 7PM	23	24	25 7:30AM Minyan/ Hybrid Celebration of the tree's and nature for Tu B'Shevat	26 CL 4:54 PM 7:30PM Service/ Hybrid	27 9:30AM Service/ Hybrid
28 9AM Minyan/ Hybrid	29	30	31			

Let's Celebrate !!

the Birthdays & Anniversaries in January!



Diane Griffiths

Zac Weiss

Andrew Fidler

Ted Cetron

**Raymond & Margi
Wolfson**

Denise Dickinson

Henry Wells

Judith Clark

Margi Wolfson

Aviyo Ramos

Bernie Shattls



BOOK CLUB Next Meeting: **Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 7:30 PM via ZOOM.**

Cantor Marilyn will lead a discussion of "All the Devils are Here" by Louise Penny. "The 16th novel by #1 bestselling author Louise Penny finds Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Surete du Quebec investigating a sinister plot in the City of Light."

! JANUARY EVENTS !



- January 1—1-4 pm New Years Hangout at CBI - games, food & company. **RSVP by Dec 30th**
- January 7—1 pm Movie in the Lounge
- January 11—Thursday morning service at 7:15 am for Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat
- January 17 —Book Club - The Devils are All Here
- January 18— 7PM Adult Education discussion
- January 19—7:30 pm Sisterhood Shabbat
- January 25 —Tu B'Shvat - Come celebrate trees and nature!

HADASSAH

In December **Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America**, sent a letter to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) denouncing its unconscionable failure to demand assurances about and access to the hostages Hamas kidnapped and has abused and illegally held for over 60 days, and demanding the ICRC immediately visit the hostages to assess their condition.

It is appalling that the ICRC has left those kidnapped by Hamas to languish without the care and intervention the Red Cross affords all other detainees around the world,” said **Hadassah National President Rhoda Smolow**. “From one humanitarian organization to another, we implore the ICRC to take action to demand an end to the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of the hostages, transfer much-needed medication and food to them, and put them in contact with their families.

The International Committee of the Red Cross states its mandate and mission clearly as “an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence.” The organization’s goals state that it “aims to secure humane treatment and conditions of detention for all detainees, regardless of the reasons for their arrest and detention” and seeks “to alleviate the suffering of their families, particularly by restoring communication between detainees and their relatives.”

Yet, the ICRC has blatantly ignored the hostages abducted from Israel into Gaza, calling into question its integrity.

Hadassah hospitals serve as a beacon of hope for the region, with healthcare professionals who are Muslim, Jewish and Christian, Israeli and Palestinian, working alongside one another to provide care for patients of all races, religions and nationalities.

Hadassah urges its members to reach out to their members of Congress asking for support for Israel.

SISTERHOOD NEWS

Please join us for Sisterhood Shabbat on Friday evening, January 19. Sisterhood members will lead much of the service. Many thanks to Liz Feller-Ballot who is coordinating this.

NOTE FROM LIZ: It is once again time for our Annual Sisterhood Shabbat in which we Sisterhood members lead various segments of the Friday night service, including portions provided by Women's League, our parent organization. The date is Friday, January 19, 2024.
AND WE NEED YOU!

This year's theme is "Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh ba'Zeh" – We are all responsible for one another. As in recent years, this will be a HYBRID event. Although it is most meaningful to be there in person, you can still participate via ZOOM. And, as in recent years, if you agree to participate I will email you an advance copy of your assigned reading as well as a cue sheet so you know exactly where you come it. Again, I'll emcee to keep things moving smoothly. This year's celebration will be special with our own Sisterhood member, Cantor Marilyn Okoshi, as Spiritual Leader.

If you are able to take a reading, please email, text, or phone me, and I will get back to you in plenty of time for you to feel fully prepared.

And of course, if you choose not to do a reading, you can still participate simply by attending the service. We are looking forward to an evening of worship, song, and fellowship.

Thanks in advance.

Liz Feller-Ballot

elizmark@aol.com

570-357-2830

Coming soon—soup sale and Purim Shalech monos baskets!

If you would like to join Sisterhood, please contact Linda Siegel at 717-274-1197.

Mailed section only

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