

THE TEMPLE TIMES

January 2025 | Tevet / Shevat 5785 | Vol. 15.5

Temple Beth El
UTICA, NY



President's Message

Marsha Silverman

As I am composing this message, Joe, Andi, and Rabbi Geier are busily preparing for the Community Chanukah Celebration at the JCC! As of last count there will be 70+ attendees!

What a wonderful way to begin Chanukah 5785 with the entire community coming together to light the Chanukiah, play games and enjoy a delicious meal. Stay tuned for the wrap up in the next issue of the Temple Times!

We are planning to start a special monthly Birthday Oneg to celebrate on Erev Shabbat. The first one will be on January 24th. Watch for the date each month so we can all celebrate together for your birthday.

HELP! We could use your assistance. We would like to notify people when they are having a yahrzeit for a family member. When you see the

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yahrzeits in the Times and know someone related to that person or a friend, please call the office (315-724-4751 or email-tbeutica@gmail.com) with their contact information. If the person is out of town, we will offer to place a special stone on their head or foot stone for a donation. Thanks in advance for your help.

It is never too late to attend a class with Rabbi. Check out the offerings in this issue and if you have another idea, please let him know. (315) 272-1755.

I hope 2025 and beyond brings everyone health and happiness.

Marsha

Rabbi's Message

Rabbi Gustavo Geier

There is a word that, personally, I find very unsettling. That word is "to normalize." It's what happens when we get used to something, even something bad—we incorporate it into our daily lives as if it were neutral and habitual. It loses its character of being "something bad."

Of course, this also happens with good things. We get used to the idea that good things are natural, and we "suffer" when we no longer have them.

In the Land of Israel, sadly, people have almost become accustomed to the state of war. They wake up, have breakfast, prepare for work or school. The alarm sounds, they run to the shelters. The moment of danger "ends," and they return to their routines, knowing full well that this could happen again—multiple times a day or a week.

From the comfort of our homes, in a country



where we live in peace—albeit facing new forms of violence that don't directly affect us here in Utica—can we truly understand what the people in Israel are going through?

One of the reports about events in Israel shared the words of a woman, Hadas Mizrahi. She is the widow of the late officer Baruch Mizrahi, who was killed in a Hamas attack. "The redemption of prisoners is important, but I'm here to cry out and say that my husband was murdered by those released in the Gilad Shalit deal (on June 25, 2006, Palestinian militants carried out a cross-border raid via tunnels near the Israeli border and captured Gilad Shalit. Hamas held him captive for over five years until his release on October 18, 2011, as part of a prisoner exchange). Deals like these are wrong! These are demons, and the State of Israel must never surrender or release terrorists; this rewards terrorism."

On the other hand, I read about a "brave" rabbi from our movement in Argentina, who strongly condemned the targeted killings Israel has carried out against Hamas members—especially those of high rank who were

involved in the massacre of October 7th. He argued that Israel was acting as judge and executioner, which he claimed went against the values of justice held by the People of Israel. Surely, many of you stand with Mrs. Mizrahi, while others may agree with the rabbi.

So, what does our tradition say about this?

The Talmud, a cornerstone of our legislation comprised of hundreds of rabbinical debates on questions raised by the Torah, teaches us that one should never study Torah from a single teacher. If we did, we'd have a singular and narrow vision of things. Wisdom lies in diversity, in learning from multiple teachers, and in enriching ourselves with various sources and perspectives. This teaches us that Judaism rarely has a single, definitive view on any issue—much less on such controversial topics as taking justice into one's own hands.

Let's go back to Genesis. After God created the heavens and the earth, He created man and woman, who gave birth to Cain and Abel. Cain killed Abel, and God rebuked him, saying, "Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Interestingly, the Jewish exegetical tradition notes that the term "blood" is written in the plural form, "bloods," to teach us that whoever takes a life doesn't just kill a single person but also destroys all their potential descendants.

Cain acknowledges his wrongdoing and the severity of his punishment, saying, "Whoever finds me will kill me." God responds, "Whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." And He places a mark on Cain to ensure no one would kill him (Genesis 4:15).

In this passage, we find the Bible's first objection to taking justice into one's own hands or to vengeance. God marks Cain to prevent

others from killing him, symbolizing that justice is administered by God, the ultimate authority—not by individuals acting autonomously.

A bit further into Genesis (Chapter 34), we encounter one of the most disturbing stories in the Bible. The son of the prince of Shechem kidnaps and violates (or seduces—it's not entirely clear) Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. Two of Jacob's sons, Shimon and Levi, are consumed by rage and seek vengeance. They devise a cunning and deceitful plan, ultimately killing all the men in Shechem to avenge their sister and defend the family's honor.

Later, near the end of Genesis (Chapter 49), when Jacob lies on his deathbed and bestows blessings upon his children, Shimon and Levi receive more of a rebuke than a blessing. Jacob says: "Their swords are weapons of violence. Let me not enter their council; let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstrung oxen as they pleased. Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel!"

Jacob feels compelled to tell his sons they acted inappropriately. They should not have taken justice into their own hands, for their hands became stained with blood. Rashi, one of the great Jewish exegetes of the 11th century, comments: "The act of killing is a stolen role in your hands; it does not belong to you." In other words, they sought justice through a means that was not theirs to wield, lowering themselves to the level of the violent by using their methods—something that goes against the ethical teachings of the Jewish tradition.

According to the Talmud (Gittin 57b), the

hallmark of the Jewish people is the word, not violence. The pursuit of justice must be through dialogue, not physical force. Violence and blows are the tools of those who lack words: babies and the brutish. As a society, we must rely on dialogue, not force. While violence may yield immediate results, words bring about profound change.

Another story from the Torah: a man, a priest named Pinchas, takes justice into his own hands. Here, the situation becomes more complex because God rewards him. The story is found in the Book of Numbers (25:1-13), where it is written that the Israelites, during their journey in the wilderness, began to consort with Moabite women—an act prohibited multiple times in the Bible.

Pinchas, in his anger and religious zeal, sees an Israelite man lying with a Midianite woman and kills them both with a spear. The story continues, stating that this act (which led other Israelites to stop consorting with the Moabite women) appeased God's anger over the transgressions of the Israelites. As a result, God gave Pinchas a "Brit Shalom" (a covenant of peace).

If we stop here, it might seem that God condones and even rewards taking justice into one's own hands. However, the Talmud (Sanhedrin 82a), which delves deeper into this story, emphasizes that Pinchas did not consult a rabbinical court before acting. It further instructs that if anyone were to ask a rabbinical court for permission to punish transgressors in this way, the court must tell them not to act as Pinchas did.

Moreover, scribes, when writing the Torah letter by letter, write one of the letters in "Shalom" (peace) in this passage as broken. This signifies that peace can never be complete

when achieved through violence.

Additionally, Pinchas's name, when written after this story, is inscribed with a smaller yud (the Hebrew letter equivalent to "Y" in English). The sages teach that violence—even when justifiable—diminishes the yud within us, symbolizing the presence of God and Judaism (Yahadut). Thus, God's presence and our own spiritual essence are diminished when we resort to violence.

It is crucial not to confuse "self-defense" with "taking justice into our own hands." Jewish tradition holds that if someone is being attacked, they have an obligation to defend themselves. If someone injures an attacker during the crime, that action is justified. However, after the fact, it is no longer self-defense; it becomes a crime.

Taking justice into one's own hands is not justice—it is vengeance. We may defend ourselves, but we must not appoint ourselves as judges, meting out punishment through violence.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 102b) warns: "One who seeks vengeance destroys his own house" Every time we take justice into our own hands, the divine image within us is diminished, and our collective home—our society—is further eroded. The Bible commands us: "Justice, justice, you shall pursue." Why does the Torah repeat the word "justice"? Wouldn't it be sufficient to say, "Justice, you shall pursue"? The rabbis deduce from this duplication that 1) the ends must be just, and 2) the means must also be just. We

Shabbat Services

Friday Evening: 5:30 pm

Saturday Morning: 9:30 am

Join us at Temple or on Zoom

cannot combat injustice through illegitimate means; we cannot promote justice or end violence by perpetrating more violence ourselves. Justice must never be pursued through our own hands, but neither can we passively wait for it to arrive.

The Torah teaches that injustice defiles and corrupts the land and commands us to pursue justice. As a society, our efforts must focus on transforming our reality, establishing courts of justice that reflect our highest ideals as human beings. Furthermore, we must understand that there will never be true justice without social justice. Punitive justice is merely a temporary solution; social justice is the long-term answer.

At the heart of the Torah lies its most famous verse (Leviticus 19:18): "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." However, that same verse begins with: "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge." This is perhaps the most difficult and challenging commandment in the entire Bible. Our love for our neighbor must overcome our anger and resentment, preventing us from seeking vengeance.

Our love for our neighbor—and for ourselves—must keep us from transforming from victims into perpetrators. This love should teach us that behind every "criminal," whether young or old, there is likely a human being who has suffered greatly due to social injustices, marginalization, and abandonment. Justice can only exist where law prevails, and law can only thrive where there is love. Without love, justice cannot be applied correctly.

It is clear that Israel's actions against Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran have nothing to do with vengeance or taking justice into its own hands. It is not the impulsive reaction of an individual striking back.

The legitimate defense of the State of Israel is a response to years of attacks, suicide bombings, and shootings targeting civilians. Just in the past year, tens of thousands of missiles have been launched from Gaza, Yemen, and Iran toward Israel. Thousands of Israelis have been displaced for over a year due to the danger of these attacks. If there haven't been more deaths this past year, it is because Israel invests millions in infrastructure to protect and support its population.

The sovereign response of a nation cannot be considered taking justice into its own hands— especially when dealing with murderers who, for years, have perpetrated heinous acts against the security and well-being of the State of Israel.

Perhaps I must concede that my cousin, who lives in Israel, was right. After many political debates and discussions about the differing perspectives on the conflict with the Arab people, he would silence me with this: "Ultimately, to truly understand the daily reality and form a more accurate judgment, you'd need to live here, in our Land of Israel."

I wish you all a happy and more favorable 2025 in which we can work together for a better world, starting with a cohesive Community and a more vibrant Congregation.

Rabbi Gustavo Geier

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Donations can be made online: www.tbeutica.org/donate

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- Gloria Schaeffer
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- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: Rhealu Greene my dear friend

- Marian Freeman

In Memory of: Art Wasserman

- Audrey Lewis

In Memory of: Saphira B. Linden

- Rabbi Ethan Bair (her son)

In Memory of: Elinor Lampert, My dear cousin

- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: Harvey Arlen

- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: Heather Abrams

- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: My loving Parents and Grandparents

- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: Mollie Wertheim my special friend

- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: Steven Hochberg

- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: Sharon Cohen my special cousin of Sarasota FL.

- Sherry Cooperman

In Honor of: Marsha Silverman for all her kindness

- Sherry Cooperman

For a Speedy Recovery: Sara Silverman

- Mel and Judy Oster

THE CEMETERY FUND

In Memory of: Four first cousins, Rhealu Greene, Rita Manning, Jessica Many and Gelu Sitrin Greenebaum

- Sherry Cooperman

In Memory of: Irving Feldman

- Charles Manning

In Memory of: Isabel Manning

- Warren J. Manning



CEMETERY NEWS: A MESSAGE FROM THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE

This is NOT an easy topic to discuss or think about, however it is very important. The Cemetery Committee would like you to think about funeral plans for yourself, your spouse, other family members or a friend.

If you do, it will be more helpful for everyone left behind. Your family or friend will be so relieved when they know what the person wants.

Please let the Temple and the Funeral Director (of your choosing) know what you and your family have decided. Temple strives to help families at this difficult time. The more details we know the better it is for the ones left behind.

There is a Questionnaire for you to review and complete. It may help you to ask the necessary questions.

**Thank you,
The Cemetery Committee**

**GUESS WHAT
THE THIRD TIME WAS
NOT THE CHARM SO HERE
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IF THIS IS WRONG I GIVE UP.



CEMETERY QUESTIONNAIRE

Temple Beth El, Jonathan Lodge, House of Israel, Sharie Teffilah, Mason Road

PREPARE AND PLAN

Name: _____

Hebrew Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Family Contact: _____ Phone#: _____

Do you have a Funeral Director: (circle) YES NO

If YES , Who is it or Name or Organization _____

Do you have a Plot in one of the 5 Temple Beth El's Cemetery's? (circle) YES NO

Which Cemetery: _____

Do you know your Section? _____ Plot? _____ Grave#? _____

Please share anything you would like us to know.



We need your help to locate family & friends

Temple Beth El is trying to locate family members or friends of loved ones who have a Yahrzeit during the month. The list is always in the bulletin and on the web.

FOR EXAMPLE:

These are the Yahrzeits observed during the week of January 11 to 17, 2025 – 11 to 17 Tevet 5785
 These will be read from the pulpit on Friday January 10, 2025

Barney Abelson*	Minnie Gusoff*	Robert Markson	Hyman Sitrin*
Arthur S. Bonnett*	Stuart Greene*	Max Nozik	Enid Savett
Reba Abelove*	Hyman Fialko*	Eva Pollicove	Benjamin Targer*
Louis Cramer*	Irving Seldin*	Morris Rothenburg*	Barnet Trolin*
Samuel Cohen*	Edward F. Jacobson*	Rabbi S. Jacobs*	Lawrence A. Tumposky*
Robert Ellis*	Bertha Glick Krohngold*	Rabbi A H. Dolgoff*	Arline (Osna) Trapanick*
Else Elias	Betty Kowalsky*	Sarah Danzig*	Florence Weitzman*
Dorothy Friedlander*	Israel Levinson*	Jeanette Weiss Schwartz*	Bertha Yetra*
Joseph Galinsky*	Esther Myers	Harry Schnier*	Julia Yust*
Mendel Golding			

If you know how to contact any of the families or friends of anyone on this list or any list, we want to invite them to join us for services on Friday at 5:30 PM or Saturday at 9:00 AM at 1607 Genesee St., to say Mourners Kaddish. If they live outside of the area, they are welcome to ZOOM*.

Any information you have will help us to locate a family member or friend. You can email us at tbeutica@gmail.com or call the office at 315 724 4751 (if we aren't in the office, please leave a message).

In addition we are offering to place a special stone on the loved one's headstone, for a donation of \$10.00. You can mail a check to 1607 Genesee St, Utica NY 13501 or go to our website tbeutica.org and make your donation through the link Donate and then ZEFFY. There is no charge for this.

*if you want to ZOOM email Marsha Silverman at beauboxer@aol.com she will give you the link password.

IN ADDITION EVERY YEAR, JUST BEFORE THE HIGH HOLY DAYS WE ARRANGE FOR HEAD AND FOOT STONES TO BE CLEANED FOR A VERY REASONABLE PRICE. CONTACT THE TEMPLE OR EMAIL US AND WE WILL SCHEDULE THE CLEANING FOR YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS' STONES.

SIMCHA GRAMS February

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS	Date	FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES	Date
Lisa Zeidner	03	Gary and Lisa Philipson	2/7/1987
Marsey Rosenblum	07		
Tara Jonas	08		
Roz Lemel	08		
Adam Oster	08		
Charles Manning	13		
Victor Pearlman	16		
Susie Zeidner	16		
Elise Feiner	17		
Jerome Socolof	18		
Shona Rosenblum	19		
Norman Neslin	21		
Elaine Brown	22		
Abbe Nathan Gross	23		
Judy Nathan Schomer	23		
Joshua Foote	24		
Bob Stern	29		



CELEBRATE YOUR SIMCHAS WITH TEMPLE BETH EL

Please call the temple office at 315-724-4751 or mail a check to add a birthday, anniversary, or another special celebration to our list of simchas.

Deadline: 15th of the month. Cost \$1.50 ea.

If submitting **by mail**, include the name and date of your simcha(s) as you wish it to appear on the simcha gram, as well as your telephone number and a check made out to the temple.

Mail to: Rae Rosenfeld, 3008 Oneida St, Sauquoit, NY, 13456

TEMPLE CALENDAR & CLASSES

Class enrollment is now open! Contact us for more information

JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 New Year's Day TBE No RS 2025 Offices Closed	2 TBE Torah Class 3:00 PM TBE Torah Class 5:30 PM	3 TBE Zoom Shabbat Services 5:30	4 TBE Zoom Shabbat Services 9:30 AM
5	6 TBE Talmud Torah 3:30 PM TBE Conversion Class 4:30 PM	7 TBE Beginner Hebrew Class 3:30 PM TBE Board Meeting 7:00 PM	8 TBE Intermediate No TBE RS	9 TBE Torah Class 3:00 PM TBE Torah Class 5:30 PM	10 TBE Zoom Shabbat Services 5:30	11 TBE Zoom Shabbat Services 9:30 AM
12	13 TBE Talmud Torah 3:30 PM TBE Conversion Class 4:30 PM	14 TBE Beginner Hebrew Class 3:30 PM	15 TBE Intermediate Hebrew Class 2:30 No TBE RS	16 TBE Torah Class 3:00 PM TBE Torah Class 5:30 PM	17 TBE Zoom Shabbat Services 5:30	18 TBE Zoom Shabbat Services 9:30 AM
19	20 Martin Luther King Day TBE Talmud Torah 3:30 PM TBE Conversion Class 4:30 PM	21 TBE Beginner Hebrew Class 3:30 PM	22 TBE Intermediate Hebrew Class 2:30 No TBE RS	23 TBE Torah Class 3:00 PM TBE Torah Class 5:30 PM	24 TBE Hybrid Shabbat Services 5:30	25 TBE Hybrid Shabbat Services 9:30 AM
26	27 TBE Talmud Torah 3:30 PM TBE Conversion Class 4:30 PM	28 TBE Beginner Hebrew Class 3:30 PM	29 TBE Intermediate Hebrew Class 2:30 TBE RS 4:00 PM	30 TBE Torah Class 3:00 PM TBE Torah Class 5:30 PM	31 TBE Hybrid Shabbat Services 5:30	



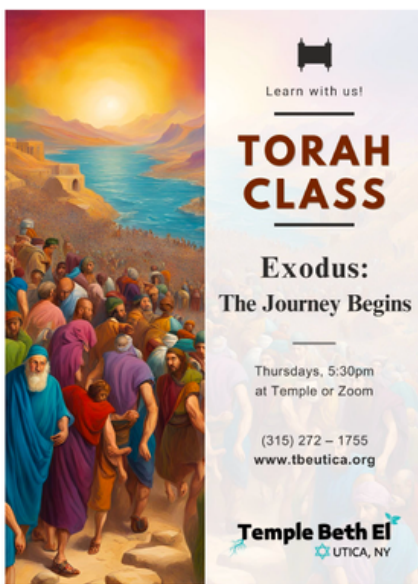
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Yahrzeits

Yahrzeits observed during the week of January 4 to 10, 2025 – 4 to 10 Tevet 5785

These will be read from the pulpit on Friday January 3, 2025

Meir Abelow Family*	Howard Feiner	Eunice G. Kahn*	Dorothy E. Smith*
Augusta Abelow*	Abraham S. Goldman*	Sina Kowalsky	Samuel Silverman*
Sarah Boyer*	Harriet Goldberg*	Harris Lazarus*	Sol Schneider*
Max W. Caplan*	Jennie Goldstone*	Leopold Lewus*	Harold Schecter*
Meyer J. Cohen*	Helen K. Jacobs*	Hannah Leah Lyons*	Charles Schecter
Sylvia M. Cone*	Barney Krohn*	Faye Norwalk*	Raymond Wolfe*
Jacob H. Ekstein*	Sarah R. Kowalsky*	Sylvia B. Philipson*	David Whitestone*
Rebecca C Friedlander*	Bella Kohn*	Gerald Leonard Richelson*	Anne Whitestone*
Eli Freeman*	Ethel S. Kowalsky*	A. Philip Rosen*	

Yahrzeits observed during the week of January 11 to 17, 2025 – 11 to 17 Tevet 5785

These will be read from the pulpit on Friday January 10, 2025

Barney Abelson*	Minnie Gusoff*	Robert Markson	Hyman Sitrin*
Arthur S. Bonnett*	Stuart Greene*	Max Nozik	Enid Savett
Reba Abelow*	Hyman Fialko*	Eva Pollicove	Benjamin Targer*
Louis Cramer*	Irving Seldin*	Morris Rothenburg*	Barnet Trolin*
Samuel Cohen*	Edward F. Jacobson*	Rabbi S. Jacobs*	Lawrence A. Tumposky*
Robert Ellis*	Bertha Glick Krohngold*	Rabbi A H. Dolgoff*	Arline (Osna) Trapanick*
Else Elias	Betty Kowalsky*	Sarah Danzig*	Florence Weitzman*
Dorothy Friedlander*	Israel Levinson*	Jeanette Weiss Schwartz*	Bertha Yetra*
Joseph Galinsky*	Esther Myers	Harry Schnier*	Julia Yust*
Mendel Golding			

Yahrzeits observed during the week of January 18 to 24, 2025 – 18 to 24 Tevet 5785

These will be read from the pulpit on Friday January 17, 2025

Harris Berger*	Ella L. Eidelhoch*	Adrienne Gail Kroll*	Esther R. Ornest*
Barnet Berlin*	Minnie G. Frank*	Jennie Kamino*	David M. Philipson*
Zeld Berkowitz*	Hyman Freeman*	Betty Kamino Kowalsky*	Moses Rosenthal*
Sarah Berger*	Jacob Goldstone*	Leo Lenchner*	Jacob Schneider*
Joseph Berson	Flora Glick*	Sara Reba Levinson	Esther B. Sanzel
Hattie Bloom	Sara Greenburg	Roseleine Levine	William T. Sitrin
Samuel L. Baker*	Ronald Grossman	Judson Leve*	Dorothy Movsh Smith
Bella Cramer	Edward W' Jacobson*	Esther Levine	Sara Smith*
Sara Ida Comins*	Hyman L. Jacobson*	Sarah R. Nusbaum*	Ruth Weitzman*
Anna E. Demsky	Pearl Kushner	Pearl G. Nathan*	Samuel Zavotsky*

Yahrzeits observed during the week of January 25 to 31, 2025 – 25 Tevet to 2 Shevet 5785

These will be read from the pulpit on Friday January 24, 2025

David Arlen*	Sara Gennis*	Nathan Kowalsky*	Samuel J. Smith*
Anna H. Bernstein*	Myron Leonard Goldstone*	Philip A. Lewis*	Jacob Sitrin*
Morris Baker*	Anna Sarah Grossman*	Max Levine	Florence R. Sitrin*
David Berger*	Pincus Grossman	Edith Lorig*	Karen Silverman*
Leonard Bartnick*	Emma Jacobson*	Joseph S. Mintzer*	Samuel Tumposky*
Mary Sherline Blum	Joshua M. Kaplan	Samuel M. Marmelstein*	Yetta Wolfe*
Jacob Coleman*	Jacob Krohngold*	Herman Philipson*	Morris Woloshin*
Shaina Damsky*	Helen Kaminkowitz*	Charles Richards	Charles Weinstein
Robert Ellis*	Bernard Kowalsky*	Sophie Rubin	Bernice Weiss*
Louis Freedman*	Barnet Kirshtein*	Milton Richards*	Joseph A. Yetra*

YAHREZITS

Yahrzeits observed during the week of February 1 to 7, 2025 – 3 to 9 Shevet 5785
 These will be read from the pulpit on Friday January 31, 2025

Anne Alderman*	Harry Kamino*	Ethel G. Philipson*	Louis J. Toffler*
Max Brooks*	Anna Schneider Kossof*	Lena Rosenthal*	Meyer Taylor*
Henry Berger*	Fanny Lindey*	Alice Levine Rosen	Anna E. Tumposky*
David L. Cohen*	Adelaide G. Lumberg*	Edward I. Shapiro*	Rose Taylor*
Ida Cramer*	Sarah Levine*	Saria Singer*	Louis Wineburgh*
Frances Winnick Cohen	Helen Levy	Charles Sumberg*	Eliyucum Wineburgh*
Dorothy Dumain*	Milton S. Manning*	Anna Schwartz*	Samuel J. Wolfe*
Regina C. Friedlander*	Ruth Movsh*	Edward Smith*	Anna L. Wolfe*
Charles Finer	George Nusbaum*	Hinda Tumposky*	Hyman Wertheim
Jewel Friedlander*	Milton M. Osber*	Elka Targer*	Sarah Wolf*
Elaine Goldstone	Max J. Philipson*	Rachel Toffler*	

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY JANUARY 20, 2025





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