

The Florence Melton Adult Mini-School
Rhythms of Jewish Living
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#1 (Orientation) A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven:

What is “Jewish Time”?

Key Idea: Jewish time is both *cyclical* and *linear*. In the Rhythms curriculum, we explore the dimensions of time in both the long term (life cycle) and the shorter term (the rites and rituals applicable to the day, week, month and year, including daily activities, the structure of the week around Shabbat, and the progression of the festivals during the year). In this Orientation session, we will examine some texts having to do with Jewish perceptions of time.

Our discussion of the texts:

Text 1 – *Kohelet* (Ecclesiastes), a/k/a “Turn, Turn, Turn” by Pete Seeger. What do you notice about the pairing of the contrasted activities? Why are activities called “purposes”? In what relationship do the contrasted activities stand with regard to one another? Looking closely, are there any pairings that surprise you? Why?

Text 2 – Yehuda Amichai, “A Man in His Life.” Amichai says he disagrees with *Kohelet*. Why?

Text 3 – Abraham Joshua Heschel, “The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man.” Heschel asserts that Judaism exalts time rather than place. In what respects does this contrast with the way many of us have been taught to look at place?



