



July 31 - August 1, 2026

יח אב תשפ"ו

Candle Lighting 7:55 PM

Parashat Ekev עקב

Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25 עקב

Stone - p 980

Hertz - p 780

Etz Hayim - p 1037

Haftarah - Isaiah 49:14-51:3 ישעיהו

Second Week of Consolation

Stone - p 1197

Hertz - p 794

Etz Hayim - p 1056

Kiddush following services is
sponsored by the congregation

Shabbat ends 8:54 PM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director -
traditionalcong@gmail.com

WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT SERVICES

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

Shabbat - 9:30 AM

Board of Directors:

Governance Committee:

Florence Schachter, Chair

Marty Levy, Vice-Chair

Ken Bohm, Ellis Frohman, Ron Green,

Dina Rinder, Mindy Strauss

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President

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We welcome new members!

If you or someone you know would like to receive
membership information,
please contact our office at 314-576-5230
or traditionalcong@gmail.com

On This Week's Parashah - Ekev

One of the primary distinctions between the first paragraph of the Shema (recorded in last week's Torah reading) and the second paragraph (in this week's) is the latter's reference to reward for observance.

What is the role of reward in Jewish life? It seems to be a mixed bag. On one hand, the belief that G-d rewards righteous behavior and punishes transgression is one of the 13 fundamental tenets of our faith. On the other hand, we are implored to be "like a servant who serves his master not for the sake of reward" (Ethics of the Fathers 1:3).

There are numerous verses promising benefit for obedience, counterbalanced by an abundance of ethical writings (particularly emphasized in Chassidic teaching) disparaging reward as shallow and superficial.

So if G-d wants us to "perform the true service simply because it is true" (as Maimonides puts it), why does He distract us with promises of recompense? Is it proper to give someone an incentive if it's essentially not in his or her best interest?

We tend to perceive reward as an affirmation of achievement, but perhaps its primary purpose is not our benefit at all...But perhaps we have it backwards. We tend to perceive reward as a motivation to serve or an affirmation of achievement, but perhaps its primary purpose is not our benefit at all; perhaps rewarding us is gratifying to G-d.

Chassidic teaching emphasizes that all of creation, including our divine service, is designed for G-d's interests. That includes reward. Rewarding us serves G-d; it is what He wants. A parent longs to give to his child. A husband's desire to shower his wife with presents is even stronger than her enthusiasm for the gifts, for a material object certainly cannot capture the intensity of their relationship. It is an expression of his appreciation, and she delights him far more by receiving and enjoying it than she benefits from its practical use.

It can be hard to accept gifts, sometimes even earned rewards. It's awkward. Yet refusal can be insulting. How odd: one suggests that another retain his property, and the donor is hurt, even offended. By accepting the present, one enables the benefactor to express himself, to actualize his needs.

G-d is the essence of good, and it is the instinct of the good to do good. Rewarding is G-d's nature (albeit a nature He chose to assume), the way He expresses Himself. If we shut ourselves off from this aspect of G-d, we (as it were) stifle Him.

So do good because it is your duty, and accept the reward with equal obedience; it too is part of your divine service.

**Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Baruch Epstein**

Rabbi Epstein is a Chabad-Lubavitch emissary to Illinois, and serves as the rabbi of Congregation Bais Menachem.

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION



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5787**

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Ruth Rabbah 11:7

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Orders must be received by August 10, 2026

Questions? Contact Marian - 314-576-5230 or traditionalcong@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!!



Join us for our
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



Thursday, 8/13/2026

7:00 PM



in the Jewish Heritage Center

- *Highlights of the past year**
- *Share your thoughts**
- *Get answers to your questions**
- *Vote for our slate of officers**

*(One vote per family. Associate Members are welcome
to attend, but are not eligible to vote.)*

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