



April 14, 2018

כט ניסן תשע"ח

***Shabbat Erev Rosh Chodesh***

***Parashat Shmini*** - Leviticus 9:1—11:47 שמיני

Stone – p 588    Hertz – p 443    Etz Hayim – p 630

***Haftarah*** – I Samuel 20:18-42

Stone – p 1207    Hertz – p 948    Etz Hayim – p 1216

*A D'var Torah on Parashat Shmini*

will be presented by

Dr. Martin Bell

Kiddush following services is sponsored by Sisterhood

***Minchah***—7:00 PM

***Seudah Sh'lishit***

***Shabbat Ends***—8:17 PM

## **TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION**

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

Rabbi Ephraim Zimand z"l, Emeritus

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director – tradcong@sbcglobal.net

### **DAILY SERVICE TIMES**

Shabbat—9:00 AM & 7:00 PM

Sunday—8:30 AM

Monday –Friday—7:00 AM & 6:30 PM

### **Board of Directors:**

Kenneth H. Bohm, President

Steve Bell, Executive Vice President

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President

Marty Levy, Ritual Vice President

Florence Schachter, Education Vice President

Elaine Farkas, Membership Vice President

(Open) Administrative Vice President

Steve Roufa, Building & Grounds Vice President

Chris Brown, Fundraising Vice President

Lori Tesser, Treasurer

Mimi Levy, Secretary

Christy Brick, Sisterhood Representative

### **Past Presidents**

Jerry Chervitz, Alan Rosenberg, Phil Brick, Boaz Roth

### **Members at Large:**

Sid Bennett

Shelah Feldman

Bill Gold

Ari Levy

Carol Max

Steven Puro

Dina Rinder

Iris Salsman

Jerry Tullman

Jeff Weisman

Justin Zeid

*Traditional Congregation welcomes new members. If someone you know would like to receive membership information, please contact*

## On This Week's Torah Portion – Shemini

Fire plays a prominent role in this week's *parashah*. It is a sign that Gd has accepted Aharon's service, as it says: *And a fire went forth from before Hashem and consumed the burnt offering and the fats upon the Altar; all the people saw, sang praises, and fell upon their faces. (9:24)*

It also plays a major role in the tragic deaths of Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, and the Torah uses the same language a mere two verses later to describe what happens:

*A fire went forth from before Hashem and consumed them, and they died before Hashem. (10:2)*

The sin of Nadav and Avihu, as described in verse 10:1 was that they brought *alien fire* before Hashem. So fire is the beginning of Nadav and Avihu's saga, and unfortunately it is the end as well. They were burned the same way that the offerings were burned – by a Divine fire.

This Divine fire occurs in a number of other places in Torah. At the beginning of Moshe Rabbeinu's mission Gd appears to him as a fire burning in a thorn bush, but which did not consume the bush. Perhaps the "fire" in this case was a numinous, celestial glow – Moshe was granted a glimpse into the finest levels of creation and perceived it as glowing. And at the end of the mission, in the song of *HaAzinu*, Moshe describes Torah itself as *eshdat*, "a fiery Torah." Most of us don't see the Torah as fire, but most of us don't have Moshe Rabbeinu's level of perception.

When the people *did* rise to this level of perception, they perceived Gd as going before the camp in a pillar of fire (at night) that "lit up the way before them." And at the Revelation, Gd came down on the earth in a dark cloud with thunder and lightning and fire.

Abarbanel brings a number of other instances where the Divine, celestial realm is perceived as fiery: *I saw ... flaming fire with a brightness around it, and from its midst ... in the midst of the fire (Yechezkel 1:4); His throne was of fiery flames, its wheels blazing fire ... A stream of fire was blazing forth from before Him. (Daniel 7:9-10)*. In addition, in one of Isaiah's visions, his "impure lips" are purified by touching them with a glowing coal from the fire in his vision. So fire has a purifying effect as well. The Zohar tells us that the real, celestial Torah is written with black fire on white fire. Lastly, the first thing that Gd created was light, according to the interpretation that *Bereishit bara Elokim* (the first words of Torah) mean "When Gd began to create."

Abarbanel comments:

*Since Gd's 'appearances' are prepared with fire, fire was also present in the Tabernacle and the Temples to symbolize that the Divine Presence, the glory of Gd, and His myriad "holy, heavenly hosts" were present. This is why the people bowed down to the fire: because it represented the Divine Presence.*

In line with our attempt to go beyond mere symbolism in the Temple ritual, let's see if fire has a deeper reality to it than merely a symbol. Let's start with some Physics. Modern physics, specifically Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, has shown that space-time, rather than just being the stage upon which all the activity of nature plays out, is a dynamic participant in the activity of nature. At some time, several billion years ago, space-time and its contents appeared, compressed into an unimaginably small radius. All the matter and energy in the universe was in the form of radiant energy at an extremely elevated temperature. The first act of creation evidently was, "Let there be light."

We can look at this from another angle entirely. We have discussed on a number of occasions that all of creation is a complex mode of vibration of a single, unified field. Although on the surface we see concrete objects, we know that those objects are made of molecules, atoms, subatomic particles. Those elementary particles are nothing other than vibrations of this unified field, and the interactions between particles are simply different vibrations of the same field. Everything is the unified field expressing itself as vibrations, in the same way that the ocean expresses itself as waves. The waves are not different from the ocean; they are just an active value of the ocean. In the same way, on the subtlest level all of creation is just vibration, which in some traditions is described as a glow, or a fire.

So, in analogy to the physics, we find the Divine fire at the beginning of creation, and we find Divine fire at the subtlest level of creation as an ongoing reality. Since our Tradition tells us that every man, woman and child was able to perceive at this level at Mt. Sinai and at the splitting of the sea, even if only temporarily, it is obviously within human capability to have this level of perception. My belief is that the Temple ritual was designed to raise the consciousness of everyone who participated in it, and that the Divine Fire that "came down" onto the Altar was in fact a result of the Temple ritual; the details of the connection may have to wait for the establishment of the Third Temple to be elucidated.

***Shabbat Shalom!***  
**Rafi Rabinoff**



## “Big Differences in How History May Be Taught: The Immigration Act of 1924”

A Knosh & Knowledge  
Brunch Program  
with Dr. Warren Solomon

### Presenter: Dr. Warren Solomon

Dr. Solomon is a native of UCity and taught in various schools in the St. Louis area as well as Missouri University College of Education. He will focus on the Immigration Act of 1924—a timely topic even today—as an example of differences in the way history may be taught.

Join us for a delicious brunch and a thought-provoking discussion.

**When:** Sunday, April 15, 2018  
Brunch begins at 9:30 AM  
Presentation at 10:30

**Where:** Social Hall

**RSVP:** By April 9 [angelatradcong@yahoo.com](mailto:angelatradcong@yahoo.com) or 314-576-5230

**Suggested donation:** \$6/person

RSVPs are very much appreciated so we can ensure plenty of food for all!  
*Thank you from the Adult Education Committee*

Traditional Congregation 12437 Ladue Road, St Louis MO 63141  
314-576-5230 [tradcong@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tradcong@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.traditional-congregation.org](http://www.traditional-congregation.org)



Save the Date!



**Sunday, April 22**

**12:00pm** Unity Walk - Congregation Temple Israel  
to Congregation Shaare Emeth

**12:30pm** Community Celebration at  
Congregation Shaare Emeth

[jccstl.com/Israel](http://jccstl.com/Israel)  
[#STLwalks4Israel](https://twitter.com/STLwalks4Israel)

*Program generously funded by The Lubin-Green Foundation, a  
supporting foundation of The Jewish Federation of St. Louis*



Traditional Congregation is a participating congregation in the Israel at 70 Walk. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact our representative, Ophira Melnick, at [ophiramelnick@gmail.com](mailto:ophiramelnick@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, April 12      **General Board Meeting, 7:30 PM.** All members are welcome to attend.

Sunday, April 15      **Knosh & Knowledge Brunch: “Big Differences in How History May Be Taught: The Immigration Act of 1924” with Dr. Warren Solomon.** Dr. Solomon is a native of UCity and taught in various schools in the St. Louis area as well as Missouri University College of Education. Join us for brunch beginning at 9:30 AM, and Dr. Solomon’s presentation at 10:30 AM, where he will focus on the Immigration Act of 1924—a timely topic even today—as an example of differences in the way history may be taught. *Please RSVP by April 9:* angelatradcong@yahoo.com , 314-576-5230 or online at [www.traditional-congregation.org](http://www.traditional-congregation.org) (suggested donation is \$6/person at the door)

Sunday, April 15      **St Louis Yom Hashoah Commemoration, 4:00 PM,** United Hebrew Congregation: #WeRemember: “To honor the past and protect our future”

Sunday, April 22      **Israel @ 70 Walk.** Join the St. Louis Jewish community as we walk, parade and celebrate Israel’s 70th Anniversary in grand style. Park at Temple Israel as we walk together, starting at 12pm, ending at Congregation Shaare Emeth where entertainment, food (for purchase), and fun activities await starting at 1pm. Shuttle buses will return you to your car any-time during the day. If you prefer to not walk, join us at Shaare Emeth after the walk. Traditional’s representative for this program is Ophira Melnick; for more information please contact her at: [ophiramelnick@gmail.com](mailto:ophiramelnick@gmail.com)

Sunday, April 29      **Florence Gaponoff Mother’s Day Gift Bag Assembly Day, 10:15 AM.** Volunteers needed to assemble gift bags for women in shelters. Please come help whenever you can between 10:15 and 1:00 PM. Also, please continue to drop off personal care items in the wicker bin near the office right up until assembly day. Thank you!

**We’re looking for...YOU**—to sponsor a Kiddush! Call Marian, 314-576-5230 to reserve your date. Not ready to sponsor but would like to contribute to offset our Kiddush costs? It’s easy to do—you can mail your donation to Traditional (note: Kiddush Fund in memo) or donate online at <https://www.traditional-congregation.org/donate> and select Kiddush Fund Donation. Thank you!



Visit our website [www.traditional-congregation.org](http://www.traditional-congregation.org)

## PRAYER

Of all good gifts that the Lord lets fall,

*Is not silence the best of all?*

The deep, sweet hush when the song is closed,

*And every sound but a voiceless ghost;*

And every sigh, as we listening leant,

*A breathless quiet of vast content?*

The laughs we laughed have a purer ring

*With but their memory echoing;*

So of all good gifts that the Lord lets fall,

*Is not silence the best of all?*

***James Whitcomb Riley***

## THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.

***Peter F. Drucker***