



July 15, 2017

כאתמוז תשע"ז

Parashat Pinchas – Numbers 25:10-30:1 פִּינְחָס

Stone – p 876 Hertz – p 686 Etz Hayim – p 918

Haftarah – Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

Stone – p 1192 Hertz – p 710 Etz Hayim – p 968

Kiddush is sponsored by Sisterhood

Talmud Class—6:30 PM

Minchah – 7:45 PM

Seudah Sh'lishit

Shabbat Ends – 9:07 PM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon – Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com
Rabbi Ephraim Zimand, Emeritus – ravzim@yahoo.com
Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director – tradcong@sbcglobal.net

DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Shabbat—9:00 AM & 8:00 PM
Sunday—9:00 AM
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday—7:00 AM & 6:45 PM
Wednesday & Friday—7:00 AM

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
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Chris Brown, Fundraising Vice President
Lori Tesser, Treasurer
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Christy Brick, Sisterhood Representative

Members at Large:

Sid Bennett
Bill Gold
Tobie Hupert
Ari Levy
Carol Max
Steven Puro
Dina Rinder
Iris Salsman
Jerry Tullman
Mark Weinstein
Justin Zeid

Traditional Congregation welcomes new members. If someone you know would like to receive membership information, please contact Membership VP Elaine Farkas at 954-558-1159.

On This Week's Torah Portion—Pinchas

In our *parashah* we find the story of the daughters of Tzelofchad and their request to inherit their father's portion of the Land of Israel. Many interpret this as a breakthrough in women's rights, or as a testimony to the daughters' courage in standing up to the male hierarchy (Moshe, Aharon and the elders of Israel), or to their love of the Land of Israel. Ramchal, as you might expect, takes a completely different approach.

The decree to die in the desert [RAR: after the sin of the spies, in parashat Shelach] therefore affected only the men of the generation [RAR: because the women all loved the Land of Israel and therefore were not guilty in the incident of the spies], and given that a man without his wife is only half a person, tumah attained only a partial grasp upon the generation that left Egypt.

In addition to the women of that generation, there were two male survivors as well, Yehoshua and Caleb. ... Yehoshua and Caleb would serve as witnesses to the fact that the demise of the others was not a result of the force of tumah present in the desert, rather as a result of their own sins. Tumah is subservient to kedusha and is only able to gain strength in the presence of sin – Yehoshua and Caleb were living testimony to this fact.

We have discussed the meaning of *kedusha* [holiness] and *tumah* [impurity], but I'd like to take another look at what I think Ramchal is saying here. The Source of *kedusha* is Gd. Gd is a unique whole, a Unity that is not composed of parts. It may not be correct to say that Gd is completely integrated, but Gd is certainly not dis-integrated. And the closer we come to Gd, the more integrated we find creation to be. I think this is a good definition of *kedusha* – it is a state of integration of life, where all parts work together harmoniously to produce a greater whole. Certainly those people who display greater holiness live a more integrated and harmonious life.

Tumah, on the other hand, is that which causes dis-integration, the opposite of *kedusha*. We have discussed in the past that there is a relation between *tumah* and the Divine attribute of justice, *din*. *Din* provides boundaries for the outflow of Divine energy so that it can nourish creation rather than overwhelming it. It is only when *din* becomes too harsh and rigid that it becomes *tumah* and ceases to nourish life.

Ramchal goes on to state that *Tumah ... is only able to gain strength in the presence of sin... .* In other words, sin turns *din* into *tumah*. How can we understand this? First, what is sin? There are several words for sin in Hebrew, basically corresponding to different levels of intentionality involved in the action, but the common factor among them is that the action contravenes Gd's Will. Our tradition tells us that Gd's Will is the expansion of happiness, and that this happiness is actualized as closeness with Gd. Closeness with Gd means a higher level of integration of life, more *kedusha*, less *tumah*. If we sin, we weaken *kedusha* and strengthen *tumah* just in the very act of sinning.

I think there is another level in which sin and *tumah* are related. Our Sages tell us that sin leaves a stain on the soul. This "stain" is actually a deformity of some kind which actually affects our thinking and action. On a physiological level, I think we can understand the process this way – since Gd's Will stems from that Intelligence which created and maintains the entire universe, it is very difficult to oppose Gd's Will – it is equivalent to opposing a rushing river, which leaves us battered, bruised, exhausted and no further upstream than we started. This battering of the physiology also affects our ability to project useful thoughts and proper actions.

A simple example may help illustrate this point. Most of us have played with a Slinky® at some time in our lives. It works because of how flexible it is. However, most of us have also pulled on a Slinky® too hard, at which point it no longer slinks – it has become stiff and unresponsive. The human body works in a similar way – if we overload our system it becomes stiff and unresponsive – we no longer respond to inputs, we react to perceived threats, generally in a maladaptive way. Our system bears the scars of that particular overload as deep-rooted stresses and strains, which prevent the system from operating properly and adaptively.

I think the soul also operates on a similar principle. When we perform action in opposition to Gd's Will, our soul is pulled away from Gd. This is exactly *opposite* to the direction the soul wants to go and leaves a residue of stress and strain, so to speak, in the soul. Perhaps this is what our Sages refer to as a "stain." Just as the stress and strain deposited in the body detract from its ability to function properly, so the deformations of the soul prevent it from doing its job, which is to draw closer to Gd and thereby increase the *kedusha* in the world. In other words, *sin brings more sin in its wake* (*Pirke Avot* IV:2). The more distorted our soul is, the more off-kilter our thoughts are, and the more likely we are to commit further sins and we get into a vicious cycle. *Tumah* gains entrance through our sins, and grows stronger because of them, and the result is disintegration of life.

Fortunately, there is a way out of this vicious cycle. Gd gave human beings free will, and therefore the ability to sin, but He also gave us the ability to do *t'shuvah*, to return to Him and thereby abandon the path of sin. By connecting with the infinite Source of *kedusha*, we straighten out the kinks in our soul and fortify ourselves to meet future challenges. It's a process of course, not something instantaneous. The sooner we start, the better off we will be!

Shabbat Shalom!
Rafi Rabinoff

Mark Your Calendar... for a Calendar Meeting!



Monday, July 17
7:15 PM

Open to all who would like to schedule an event on our calendar. Event and committee chairpersons and Board VPs are particularly encouraged to attend, as is anyone who has a program/fundraising/educational idea for the 2017/2018 year.

Refreshments will be served!

Please RSVP to Marian or 314-576-5230.

If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to schedule a program on the calendar, please contact Marian prior to July 17.

DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER...


Last call to participate in Sisterhood's Yizkor Memorial Booklet. Please send in your listing with payment to TradCong Sisterhood ASAP.



Let us know you'd like to be included in our congregational Rosh Hashanah greeting card. Deadline is August 14.

Order your lulav and etrog!
5% discount on all paid orders received
by August 10.
Last day to order is August 31



 Get your Cards tix for August 22 vs. Padres, only a few are left!
Dinner and the game in a suite, just \$60/person. Order before they're gone!!

Last but not least—
Please remember to pay your shul financial obligations during the summer months. We need and appreciate your generous support!!

Thank You for your Support!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, July 17 **Calendar Meeting**, 7:15 PM. Get your event/program on our 2017-2018 calendar. Have a program you'd like to see us do? Get it on our calendar! Open to all, refreshments provided. Questions/RSVP to Marian, 314-576-5230, tradcong@sbcglobal.net.

Mon/Tues, July 31-Aug 1 **Tisha B'Av**, service times to be announced including chanting of Eichah.

Shabbat, August 5 **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Rabbi Seth & Marian Gordon** in honor of their 30th anniversary. All are invited.

Tuesday, August 22 **Cardinals Game & Dinner**, see below. Only a handful of tickets remain, so don't wait to order!

The Jewish Federation has once again provided a grant to congregational rabbis to be used for emergency financial needs of congregants. If you are in need of funds, please contact Rabbi Gordon in confidence at Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com or 314-576-5230.

*A Gift from the STL Jewish Light through the JCA Charitable Foundation: If you are 65 or older and do not have the means to receive the Jewish Light, you are eligible for a **free**, one-year subscription to the Jewish Light. Three ways to sign up: Go to www.stljewishlight.com/jcagrnt, or call them at 314-743-3660, or contact Marian for registration help, 314-576-5230.*

Get your tickets now—Only a few seats are still available!

Tuesday, August 22 TradCong goes to the ballgame! Cards vs. Padres, 7:15 PM. Enjoy the game from your seat in a luxury suite, plus dinner from Kohn's! This is a \$155 value—yours for just \$60/person! Tickets are going fast, **only a handful are still available**, first-come, first-serve, don't wait to order!! Send your check for \$60/person to TradCong, 12437 Ladue Rd, 63141; or order online at www.traditional-congregation.org.

You can help underwrite Traditional night at Busch Stadium!

Managers	\$5,000 and up	(includes 10 tickets)
Pitchers	\$1,000-4,999	(includes 4 tickets)
Catchers	\$750-999	(includes 2 tickets)
First Base	\$500-749	(includes 2 tickets)
Second Base	\$200-499	(includes 1 ticket)
Third Base	\$100-199	



To join the team, please contact Jerry Chervitz, 314-574-0456. Thank you for your support!



Visit our website www.traditional-congregation.org

PRAYER

A land of brooks and fountains
That spring out of valleys and hills.

*Beware lest you forget your Almighty God,
And forsake His commandments*

When you have eaten and are satisfied,
And have built houses, and dwelled in them.

*Beware, lest your heart be lifted up,
And you forget your Almighty*

And you say in your hearts:
“My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth.”

*You shall remember your Almighty God,
For it is He that has given you the power to succeed.*

Yours, God, is the greatness and the power,
and the glory and the victory and the majesty.

*Both riches and honor come from You,
And You rule over all;*

In your hand is strength and might;

And in Your hand is the power to prosper all.

Unknown

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I'll try again tomorrow."

Maryanne Radmacher