



June 9, 2018

כו סיון תשע"ח

**Parashat Shelach** – Numbers 13:1-15:41 שלח

Stone – p 798

Hertz – p 623

Etz Hayim – p 840

**Hafarah** – Joshua 2:1-24 יהושע ב:א-כד

Stone – p 1184

Hertz – p 635

Etz Hayim – p 857

Dessert kiddush is sponsored by  
Mel & Louise Saltzman  
in honor of their 45th anniversary

**Talmud Class**—6:30 PM

**Minchah** – 7:45 PM

**Seudah Sh'lishit**

**Shabbat Ends** – 9:06 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**

Friday—7:00 AM & 6:30 PM

Shabbat—9:00 AM & 7:45 PM

Sunday—8:30 AM

Monday—Thursday 7:00 AM & **6:45 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, Cyndee Levy

### **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 Membership VP Elaine Farkas at 954-558-1159.*

## On This Week's Torah Portion—Shelach

*If a person should act highhandedly, whether a native or a convert, he has blasphemed Gd – that person shall be cut off [kareit] from among his people, for he scorned the word of Gd and violated His commandment; that person will surely be cut off, for his sin is upon him. (16:30-31)*

If you have always wondered what being "cut off" means, you are not alone. The greatest of the commentators down through the ages have pondered this question, because the answer is by no means clear from Torah itself, and apparently there was no clear-cut Rabbinic tradition that has come down to us about it, either orally or in the Talmud.

Abarbanel notes that there are some hints in Torah. Generally the word *nefesh*/soul is used when discussing *kareit*. This would seem to indicate that *kareit* is a kind of spiritual punishment, a distancing of the soul from its source in Gd. This inference is somewhat undercut by the fact that *nefesh* is often used to mean an individual, and in any event, the *nefesh* is generally taken to be the most outer aspect of the soul, even found in animals, not the inner essence, the *neshamah*, which is unique to human beings. Furthermore, the association of *kareit* and *nefesh* is not completely consistent – sometimes *ish* / "a man" is used, which refers more to the physical aspect of a person.

The upshot of all this is that there appear to be both spiritual and physical aspects to *kareit*. In fact, *kareit* is sometimes translated "spiritual excision." The physical aspects generally involve premature death and/or childlessness. The spiritual aspect is less clearly defined, but involves the soul's inability to enjoy the bliss of closeness to Gd.

There are two other aspects of *kareit* that are not dealt with in the passages R. Kasnett has chosen. First, a sin offering, which is almost always brought for an *inadvertent* transgression, is only brought for those transgressions for which the punishment is *kareit* if one "act[s] highhandedly." We may slaughter an animal (and in most cases the meat is eaten by a *kohen*) and put the blood on the altar, but clearly this is no mere feast. The whole point of a sin offering is that the inadvertent transgressor, due to lack of mindfulness, has become distanced to Gd. The procedure of the sin offering is designed to reconnect the individual with Gd, partly by his having to bring the offering, and presumably, partly by the subtle rectifications that the specific procedure creates. This fact would argue that the result of the person's transgressing on purpose, namely *kareit*, is some kind of stronger distancing from Gd that cannot be rectified simply by bringing a goat to the Temple and letting the *kohanim* offer it.

Second, *kareit* is often spoken of in terms of being cut off "from among his people," as in our verse from the Torah. So there is a communal aspect to *kareit* as well. Perhaps this is why many explanations of *kareit* have to do with dying without issue. To the extent that our children and descendants remain in the community, then our DNA remains in the community. If, for whatever reason, they don't, then our unique DNA line is lost. If each one of us has a specific role to play in unfolding Gd's plan for history, then to some extent that will be encoded in the DNA. For example, my role is *not* to be a visual artist, as anyone who has seen my feeble attempts at drawing will attest. Whatever in the DNA gives one the talent for art, I don't have (it all went to my sister, who has passed it on to her daughters). Were I to have died childless, the artistic ability of the Jewish people might be enhanced, but the other aspects in which I do have a role to play would be weakened. In this sense, *kareit* is not only a punishment for the individual; it is a punishment for the community as well.

Here is Abarbanel's take:

*His main point is that every example of kareit ... contains both a physical and a spiritual element. ... The phrase "that person shall surely be cut off" is a translation of the words hikaret tikaret. This double wording indicates that both the body and soul will be cut off. The transgressor dies before what would normally be expected naturally; the soul separates from the body and enters the World of Souls. There it is kept distant from the Divine Presence, unlike those who merit eternal life. ... However, this is not a complete and total separation, as every soul has an intrinsic, inextinguishable existence ... Kareit, however, is still a painful punishment for the soul. When the punishment is complete, it then returns to enjoy the pleasure of the Divine Presence.*

Sin is part of a vicious cycle that involves both body and soul. It is the nature of both body and soul to go after greater and greater happiness. The soul finds its greatest happiness in closeness to Gd, which is essentially in the inward direction. The body finds its happiness in the objects of the senses, which are in the outward direction. There are certain actions that the body can take (*mitzvot*) that bring pleasure to the soul, whether or not they bring pleasure to the body. There are other actions that the body can take that further distance the soul from Gd. The further we are from Gd, unfortunately, the more likely we are to violate His Will, either inadvertently or because the centrifugal pull of the body is too strong for us. Thus our actions either lead to greater purity, greater closeness to Gd, and a greater level of intuition of His Will, and thus we come closer and closer to Gd as time goes on. Sin causes the opposite. *Kareit*-bearing sins are particularly egregious, and cause a great distancing from Gd, necessitating a direct purification of the soul in the World of Souls, without the negative pull of the body. Fortunately the Torah provides guidelines for assessing our actions, so that we can choose wisely and come steadily closer to Gd, which is the ultimate purpose of our existence.

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



Annual Barbeque

and

Congregational Meeting



Join us on Thursday, June 14 at 5:30 PM for a  
pre-meeting BBQ—burgers, dogs

and all the fixings!

(veggie option available)

\$15/person—paid RSVPs by June 7.

Minchah/Arvit 6:45 PM

Annual Meeting to vote on our

Board of Directors

follows at 7:30 PM.

Your vote is important!



## Schmooze & Games

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

7:15 PM

Traditional Congregation Social Hall

Schmooze with us and play some board games, bridge or mah jong, or work on needlecrafts.

Please bring cards and games, or your knitting/crocheting/needlework projects.

Light refreshments will be provided.

There is no charge; please RSVP to Dina at [dinarinder@icloud.com](mailto:dinarinder@icloud.com) so we'll know how many people plan to attend. Look forward to seeing you there!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, June 14    **Annual Congregation Meeting and BBQ.** Enjoy good ole' STL BBQ beginning at 5:30, then come show your support and vote for our Board of Directors at our Annual Meeting at 7:30. BBQ is \$15/person, paid **RSVPs by 6/7** please, 314-576-5230 or tradcong@sbcglobal.net

Shabbat, June 23    **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Marvin & Muriel Beckerman** in honor of their birthdays and 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary.

Wednesday, June 27    **Schmooze & Games**, 7:15 PM. Come play with us! Bring your board games, mah jongg, cards, etc. for a fun and relaxing evening. Light snacks provided, no charge to attend. For more info, contact Dina Rinder, dinarinder@icloud.com

Shabbat, June 30    **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by the children and grandchildren of Joe & Florence Schachter** in honor of their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Please support our Capital Campaign!!** Have you ordered your brick pavers yet?? **Introductory prices expire on June 15**—don't be left out, send in your orders! Please give generously and help us pave the way to our future!!

**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. **Available summer dates are: June 16, July 7, 14, 21 and 28, and August 4.** Thank you!



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

## PRAYER

I watched them tearing down a building,  
A gang of men in a busy town

*With a yo-heave-ho a lusty yell, they swung a beam  
and the side wall fell.*

I asked the foreman: "Are these men skilled,  
The kind you would hire if you wanted to build?"

*He laughed and said,  
"Why, no, indeed! Just common labor is all I need.  
They can easily wreck in a day or two  
what builders have taken years to do."*

Which of these roles have I tried today?  
Am I a builder who works with care,  
measuring life by the rule and square, shaping my deeds  
by a well-made plan, patiently doing the best I can?

*Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,  
content with the labor of tearing down?*

*G. K. Chesterton*

## THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

We arrived at the land to which you sent us, and indeed it flows  
with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

*Bamidbar 13:37*