



TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

12437 Ladue Rd, St Louis MO 63141

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Affiliated with the

Union for Traditional Judaism

Rabbi Seth D Gordon

Rabbi Ephraim I Zimand, Emeritus

Shabbat Bulletin

June 3, 2017

ט סיון תשע"ז

Parashat Naso - Numbers 4:21-7:89 נשא

Stone - p 748 Hertz - p 586 Etz Hayim - p 791

Haftarah - Judges 13:2-25 שופטים יג: ב-כה

Stone - p 1181 Hertz - p 602 Etz Hayim - p 813

Kiddush following services is sponsored by Sisterhood

No Talmud Class ; Minchah - 7:45 PM; Seudah Sh'lishit; Shabbat Ends - 9:02 PM

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DAILY SERVICE TIMES—week of 6/3

Shabbat—9:00 AM & 7:45 PM Sunday—9:00 AM

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday—7:00 AM and **6:45 PM** Wednesday & Friday—7:00 AM

Board of Directors:

Kenneth H. Bohm, President

Steve Bell, Executive Vice President

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Chris Brown, Fundraising Vice President

Lori Tesser, Treasurer

Mimi Levy, Secretary

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—Naso

Our *parashah* contains the passage about the *nazir*, someone who takes a special vow to abstain from all products of the grapevine, from coming into contact with the dead and from cutting or grooming the hair. All three of these restrictions serve to isolate the vower from normal social interactions, and certainly from certain physical pleasures. They also raise the vower to a higher level of holiness.

Ramchal writes:

The Torah chooses this verb [l'haflī] which means "to separate," although in context it also means "to utter clearly"] because by taking this vow a person becomes separated from the mundane – the fact that physical man is able to subdue his physical inclinations in order to draw himself closer to Hashem is in fact a wonder. On a deeper level the choice of this word indicates the nazir having risen to the highest spheres of kedusha referred to as nifla'ot [from the same root as l'haflī]. The word nazir also is from the word neizer which means a crown – by taking this vow upon himself a person attains the highest levels of kedusha – keter (crown) in the spiritual realms.

I would like to take a look at the concept of separateness, because it can have some very different connotations. On the surface level, as we discussed last week, we all seem to be separate individuals. We interact with one another of course, but as individuals, rather than as connected entities.

There is another kind of separation; one that I think is more closely connected to *kedusha* and to the *nazir*. When we perceive an object, there are three aspects to this perception. There is the perceiver, the subject, that is, us. There is the object of perception, the "that." And uniting the two is the process of perception. The assumption is that the perceiver and the object are separate, as we mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Now suppose we begin to perceive the object at finer and finer levels. If we are perceiving a sound, it might get fainter. If we are perceiving a visual object, it might get more transparent. We still have the separation between the subject and the object, but now the object is losing its rigid boundaries. Taking this process to its logical conclusion, now imagine that the object has been completely refined away. Now we are left with the subject, but no object of awareness. This is a completely different state of consciousness than what we are normally used to. It is characterized by lack of boundaries, because there are no objects of perception. The perceiver is aware, but is not aware of any specific thing. Since there are no boundaries in this state of awareness, it is beyond space, time and change. It is completely transcendental to the entire cosmos.

This transcendence is another level of separation, and I think it is more in line with what Ramchal is talking about. The transcendent is absolutely separate from the created world, the world of boundaries. The *nazir* makes a vow to embody this separation during the period of his vow by "subdu[ing] his physical inclinations in order to draw himself closer to Hashem." In other words, by reflecting Gd's transcendental nature in his own experience, the *nazir* is able to fulfill the command "you shall walk in His ways" and thereby come closer to Gd.

We know, however, that Gd is intimately involved with the workings of His creation – it is not on autopilot. How can this be? Let's take our original model of perception a little further. We know that in virtually any form of human endeavor, the way to stabilize any gains we have made is through repetition. In the same way, if we want to stabilize the experience of transcendence, we need to repeat this experience many times. When we do, the transcendence coexists in our awareness along with the awareness of boundaries – in fact, we associate ourselves with the transcendence, rather than with the boundaries of our body, or mind, or personality, as we normally do absent this experience. Thus we remain transcendent and unchanging, while at the same time acting in the world. We become even closer to Gd – separate but involved in the world.

I believe there is another level yet. Torah tells us that Gd is all that actually exists – *ayn od milvado* (Deut. 4:35). This means that the separation between Gd and creation is actually only a reality from the level of creation; from the level of Gd no separation *ever* existed. In terms of human perception, I think there is an analogy to this. At first, when transcendence is established on the level of the mind, our perceptions remain as they were before. The subject, the "I" that we identify with, is unbounded, but the objects of perception are still just different boundaries. As time goes by, we can begin to perceive subtler and subtler levels of the objects of perception, in much the same process of refinement that led to our mind's becoming associated with the transcendent. In this state, both the subject and the object have attained infinite status, and there is almost a continuum of the same transcendent reality that encompasses both subjective and objective values of life.

I say "almost a continuum" because, in the final analysis, we are of course not Gd. Gd is the ultimate reality; we get a glimpse of this ultimate reality when both we and the objects of our perception are evaluated as unbounded. There is, however, some separation, however slight, between the perceiver and the perceived, in order for us to be able to experience this ultimate reality within our finite body.

Just like, at first glance, Gd is perceived as separate from creation, but is later seen to be pervading all creation, so as our level of perception increases, our separation from creation as a finite individual is gradually dissolved into a unity of all creation, subjective and objective. The initial separation of the *nazir* from some objects of sensory desire matures into an almost total separation of the individuality from any boundaries whatsoever, but an integration of all boundaries into one overarching unity. I think this is the highest level of *kedusha* that one can strive for.

Shabbat Shalom!
Rafi Rabinoff

UPCOMING EVENTS

Minchah/Arvit services will begin at 6:45 PM through the end of July. As always, we need your support to ensure a minyan.

Sunday, June 4 Doubleheader softball games: TradCong vs B'nai Amoona @10:20 AM; vs. Kol Rinah @11:40 AM. Both at JCCA field #2. Come out and support our team!

Through June 13 Rabbi & Marian Gordon will be out of the office. Angela will be here most mornings from 9:15 AM—12:00 PM.

Shabbat, June 10 **Kiddush sponsored by Mel & Bettina Weinberg** in honor of Mel's upcoming 75th birthday

Thursday, June 15 **Annual Congregational Meeting**, 7:30 PM

Get your tickets now!

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 quickly, 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 **NEW** website www.traditional-congregation.org



PRAYER

The blessing of the Holy One is peace.

Peace, peace upon far and near, says God.

And the work of justice shall be peace; and the effect of justice,
tranquility and assurance forever.

If there is no justice there is no peace.

Mercy and truth are met together; Justice and peace have
kissed each other.

If there is integrity in the heart,

There will be beauty in the character,

If there is beauty in the character

There will be love in the home.

If there is love in the home,

There will be order in the nation,

If there is order in the nation,

There will be peace in the world.

*To care for one another ardently, actively, is a way of
worshipping God, and a way of loving God.*

Adapted

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

If you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends,
you talk to your enemies.

Moshe Dayan