



October 21, 2017

א כשון תשע"ח

ראש חודש

Parashat No'ach - Genesis 6:9-11:32 נח

Stone – p 30 Hertz – p 26 Etz Hayim – p 41

Maffir Rosh Chodesh – Numbers 28:9-15

Stone – p 890 Hertz – p 695 Etz Hayim - p 930

Haftarah – Isaiah 66:1-24 ישעיהו סו

Stone – p 1208 Hertz – p 944 Etz Hayim - p 1220

Kiddush luncheon prepared by A&B Catering
in appreciation for Traditional's continued support

Talmud Class—4:30 PM

Minchah—5:45 PM

Seudah Sh'lishit

Shabbat Ends—6:58 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 & 5:45 PM

Sunday—**8:30 AM & 5:45 PM**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday—7:00 AM & 6:30 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

Elaine Farkas, Membership Vice President

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Lori Tesser, Treasurer

Mimi Levy, Secretary

Christy Brick, Sisterhood Representative

Members at Large:

Sid Bennett

Shelah Feldman

Bill Gold

Tobie Hupert

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—Noach

Bereshit 6:9-11:32

Come, let us descend and there confuse their language, that they should not understand one another's language. And Gd dispersed them from there over the face of the earth... (11:7-8)

The story of the Tower of Babel is a bit of a coda to the story of the Flood. It has several similarities, including the fact that the whole of humanity has again gone against Gd's Will, but the punishment is much more benign – instead of complete destruction, humans have their languages "confused" and they are scattered all over the world, which is what they were trying to prevent by building their Tower in the first place. Abarbanel asks in what way the punishment fits the crime:

The Talmud relates that it was the generation's intention to ascend into the sky and fight against Gd Himself in the heavenly domain (Sanhedrin 109a). How could they agree to something so ridiculous and clearly impossible? Gd's reaction should have been derisive laughter, not dispersal and multiple languages.

And if they were demonstrating a fundamental heresy and a denial of Gd's omnipotence, then the punishment is actually inadequate. Their fate should have been destruction, like that of the generation of the Flood.

He answers that while the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersal were both steeped in materiality, the generation of the Flood had gotten to such a state of depravity that they had affected even the animals ("for all flesh had perverted its way" – all flesh and not just human beings). Further, not only were their actions perverted, but even their thoughts were "only evil all the time," and if the thoughts are perverted, there is little hope that behavior can be changed. Therefore Gd had no alternative but to wipe everything out and start over with Noach. In the case of the latter generation, Gd was able to nip things in the bud, so to speak, before they got to a state where destruction was the only choice. So far, so good. But why confuse the languages? Why dispersal?

Here Abarbanel makes a very interesting point. He points out that the dispersion/exile that was the Tower generation's punishment was also the punishment of Adam and Kayin. Adam was in the Garden of Eden, a perfect place for spiritual development. All his material needs were taken care of – in the language of the Sages, a legion of angels fed him and took care of all he needed. Instead of using the opportunity, Adam chose to follow his eyes ("... it was good to look at...") and his heart ("... and desirable as a means to wisdom..." Gen 3:6) and was banished from the Garden. Incidentally, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was focused on distinctions, and distinctions are the realm of the intellect. Adam substituted his intellect for Gd's Will, with disastrous consequences.

In the case of Kayin and Hevel (Cain and Abel) we have a situation where a farmer (Kayin), who is a tool-user (plow, scythe, flail, winnowing fan), fought with a shepherd (Hevel), which Abarbanel identifies as a more natural lifestyle (that of the Patriarchs), divorced from the urban, technological society of Kayin. Kayin too is ousted from his home and forced to become a nomad. Here a technological lifestyle, where humans use their intellect to manipulate the laws of nature, is contrasted to a "natural" lifestyle, where humans ostensibly just "go with the flow."

Finally, the generation of the dispersion was perhaps the ultimate (for the time) urban, technological society. They didn't build from naturally occurring stone; rather they made their own "stones" by making bricks. As in the case of Adam and Kayin, they put their intellect to the service of their material desires and the result was they were separated from their environment.

Let's return to the intellect. The intellect is what distinguishes between one thing and another. As we have noted in previous weeks, the Hebrew word for intellect is *binah*, which comes from the root *bein*, "between." Thus the intellect is a function of, and can only operate in, the world of boundaries – that is, the material world (where we are taking "material" in its broadest sense here, to include the very subtlest levels of manifest creation). The Creation is sometimes called the "World of Division" – perhaps it could just as well be called the "World of Dispersion." We need the intellect to function in this world – it is necessary to distinguish between different items in creation – food vs. poison for example.

Nevertheless, beyond all the divisions of the material world, there is a level of pure, absolute silence, an absolute unity, not composed of parts. In physics we call this the unified field, and from it come all the particles of the universe and the forces between them. Since there are no divisions in this world, it is impenetrable to the intellect, yet the prophets avow that one can experience it. The practical question every human being since Adam has faced is whether we are going to attach ourselves to Unity and live a life that expresses that Unity, or whether we are going to identify with duality and the intellect. So far it appears that very few people in history have made the former choice.

Technology is intellect-driven action writ large. When we identify ourselves as "tool makers" we identify ourselves as people who use our intellect to control the laws of nature to our own purposes. But since our intellect is limited, such a life is virtually guaranteed to be full of mistakes and unintended consequences. I think what Abarbanel is telling us is that it is better to let the intellect be subservient to our inner Unity, the Unity that is at the basis of all cosmic processes. Then all our action will be in accord with natural law, mistake-free, and we can again have angels waiting on us hand and foot.

Shabbat Shalom! Rafi Rabinoff

Join us for Schmooze and Games!

When
Wednesday, October 25, 2017
7:15 PM

Where
Traditional Congregation
Social Hall

Open to all those looking to schmooze or 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,
just come and bring your friends!**



**Last chance—
registration closes on October 23!!**

St Louis Community Israel Bonds Program

hosted by Traditional Congregation

Sunday, October 29, 2017 11:00 AM*
Clayton Plaza Hotel 7750 Carondelet Avenue

Guests of Honor
Rabbi Mike & Selina Rovinsky



Guest Speaker
Ari Zoldan
CEO, Quantum Networks

Sumptuous VAAD-supervised Hot & Cold Buffet
Couvert \$55/person (not tax-deductible)

Register online at www.traditional-congregation.org
or send payment of \$55/person by 10/16 to
Traditional Congregation
12437 Ladue Rd, St Louis MO 63141
314-576-5230

*Registration opens at 10:15 AM

The purchase of an Israel Bond is encouraged
This is the *only* Israel Bonds program in Missouri -
thank you for your support!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Reminder: Evening *minyanim* is now *Arvit* only at 6:30 PM, and *Shacharit* on Sunday mornings is now at **8:30 AM**.

Wednesday, October 25 **Schmooze & Games**, 7:15 PM. Board games, cards, mah jongg, refreshments and schmoozing with friends—join us! No charge, just bring your games and come for fun!

Thursday, October 26 **General Board Meeting**, 7:30 PM.

Shabbat, October 28 **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by the family of Maurice Goffstein** in honor of his 97th birthday.

Sunday, October 29 **Israel Bonds Program at the Clayton Plaza Hotel**. Join us to support Israel and honor our guests, Rabbi Mike & Selina Epstein Rovinsky. Featured speaker is media & tech expert Ari Zoldan. Just \$55/person, includes a lavish hot & cold brunch. **LAST CHANCE TO RSVP IS MONDAY, 10/23**. Doors open at 10:15 AM for registration, program begins at 11:00 AM.

Friday, November 3 **First Fridays are back!!!** Join us for Kabbalat Shabbat services at 5:45 PM, followed by a delicious Shabbat dinner at 6:30 PM. \$18/person, no charge for kids 5 & under. Paid RSVP's by check to 12437 Ladue Rd, 63141 or register online at www.traditional-congregation.org by 10/30.

Wednesday, November 8 “Sneak a Peek at Mirowitz,” 7-9 PM. A series of hands-on workshops about the science of learning for parents/grandparents. More info and registration at <https://mirowitz.org/admissions/sneak-a-peek-2017> or 314-576-6177

Sunday, November 12 **“Jewish War Veterans: Past, Present, and Future,” a Knosh & Knowledge Program**. Dennis Cohen, Commander of Jewish War Veterans St. Louis, will facilitate an engaging discussion on the history and current role of JWV. Meet other veterans spanning World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. They will share how they maintained a Jewish identity while in the military service. Join us for a delicious kosher brunch at 9:45 AM (suggested donation \$6.00 per person) followed by the talk at 10:45. To register contact Marian, 314-576-5230 or tradcong@sbcglobal.net or visit <http://www.traditional-congregation.org/>



Visit our website www.traditional-congregation.org

PRAYER

For our children and our children's children,
For our neighbors and their children,

*For the trees and forests gracing our planet,
and for all of the earth's creatures,
let us choose life, that we and our descendants
may live.*

Let us walk more and drive less.
Let us recycle more and waste less.
Let us conserve more and destroy less.

*Let us dedicate more energy to cultivating our own
communities, more time advocating for ecological
sustainability and justice, and more attention to
nourishing our own souls.*

May we find the courage to slow our lives so that we
may cherish the simple pleasures in life:

*Sharing Shabbat with our family, taking a walk in the
woods, planting a garden; reaching out to those in
need; meditating upon the goodness of life.*

May each and every moment become an opportunity for
holiness as we seek to cleave to the Holy One and bring our
lives into harmony with the great Tree-of-Life.

*Today we chose life
That we and our descendants may live.
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
(COEJL)*

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord G-D made them all.

Cecil Frances Alexander