



May 11, 2019

ו אייר תשע"ט

21st Day of Omer

Parashat Kedoshim קדושים - Leviticus 19:1 - 20:27
Stone – p 656 Hertz – p 497 Etz Hayim—p 693

Haffarah – Amos 9:7-15 עמוס ט:ז-טו
Stone – p 1173 Hertz – p 509 Etz Hayim—p 706

Kiddush is sponsored by Sisterhood

Talmud Class – 6:15 PM

Minchah – 7:30 PM

Seudah Sh'lishit is sponsored by Steve Pessin
in memory of his mother, Miriam Pessin

Shabbat Ends – 8:43 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 & 7:30 PM Sunday —8:30 AM

Monday—Friday—7:00 AM & 6:30 PM

Board of Directors:

Elaine Farkas, President

Paul Tesser, Executive Vice President

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Jerry Tullman

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*Traditional Congregation welcomes new members. If someone you know
would like to receive membership information, please contact
Marian Gordon at 314-576-5230*

On This Week's Torah Portion – Kedoshim

Do not place [lit: "give"] a stumbling block before the blind, and you shall fear your Gd, I am Hashem. (19:14)

All Israel are responsible for one another. (Talmud, Shavuot 39a)

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (19:18)

Those who love to read the Bible literally and only literally will have a lot of trouble with the stumbling block quote. Why, in the magnificent Word of Gd, do we need to have such a seemingly simple and straightforward command on a relatively trivial issue? Does anybody really go around tripping blind people for laughs?

Fortunately, the Rabbis recognized a metaphor for what it is, and expanded the meaning of our commandment.

R. Goldin identifies three such levels of expansion:

1. Do not mislead someone. If someone is "blind" to some aspect of reality, do not cause him to take action that will lead to his harm. Do not give him advice that will cause him to lose money.
2. Do not help someone sin. Even if he knows what he is doing (i.e. is not "blind") do not help him to sin. He is obviously "blind" to the deleterious effects of sin on his soul.
3. Do not create an environment that would encourage or lead another to sin.

The first is a rather obvious extension, but it is the other two that I would like to consider. Why is helping somebody else to sin itself a sin? What are the parameters of this sin? R. Goldin goes in some depth into some of the *halachic* considerations behind the sin of the "stumbling block before the blind."

One important issue that our Sages have debated is whether or not one is culpable if the sinner could perform the sin on his own. The example given is a nazirite asks you for a bottle of wine. If he can get the wine himself (you, he and the wine are all on the "same side of the river"), you can give it to him. Presumably the reason is you are not really abetting him in his sin, you are simply helping him do something he could do without your help. The onus is totally on him. If, however, you and the wine are in one place and he is in another, and the wine is inaccessible to him ("opposite sides of the river"), then if you get him the wine somehow, the onus of the "stumbling block" is on you.

R. Goldin also mentions a more contemporary application of this debate: someone in the business of outreach to unaffiliated Jews wants to invite someone to his home to experience Shabbat. The person lives too far away to walk, and it is clear that they will drive on Shabbat, which is a serious transgression. Yet the experience of Shabbat in an observant home can have a profound, positive affect on the person. Is it permitted to invite him? As stated, the answer is "no," because we will be taking some of the onus of the person's sin on ourselves. On the other hand, if we have an extra bedroom and we offer to host the person over Shabbat, then if he declines and drives, we have done our best and we are not liable for placing a stumbling block – indeed we have *removed* a potential stumbling block! Not everyone accepts this leniency however.

What is the basic difference behind these two approaches to the stumbling block? R. Goldin writes:

A critical, unspoken issue emerges as central to the rabbinic discussion: Is [the "stumbling block"] an "other-directed" or "self-directed" prohibition? Am I enjoined from aiding another in his violation of the law in order to prevent him from sinning or because even indirect participation in a sinful act is detrimental to me?

... What is the law, the rabbis ask, if the individual can act without my assistance? What if others will help him upon my refusal? If the mitzvah's purpose is to prevent the "other" from sinning, the prohibition against rendering assistance should not apply. This individual will sin whether or not I aid him. If, however, the "stumbling block" is self-directed, I should be prohibited from rendering assistance even if the sin will occur without my help.

I would like to take R. Goldin's distinction a bit deeper. A basic principle of Rabbinic thought is that the people of Israel is like one body; each individual member of the nation is like a limb of that body. In other words, although we appear to be separate individuals on the surface, on a deeper level we are connected. Or, looked at from the direction of the unified level, we are all one entity, and our individuality is simply an expression of that unified whole.

This view comports well with the view of modern physics that all forms and phenomena in creation are simply patterns of vibration of an underlying, unbounded Unified Field. So too, even if we include the non-physical realm, the ultimate reality of life is that there is one unified Being, and all of the manifold diversity we see around us is nothing other than expressions of that Being. Sin occurs when one part of the Whole, which perceives itself to be separate and independent, acts in a way that is detrimental to the Whole. Thus, Torah tells us that we must rebuke our neighbor when we see him contravening the Torah's laws, and certainly we must not aid him!

Is this "other-directed" or "self-directed"? On the view that the other and myself are really one, the question makes less sense. If you sin, it hurts me, because we are two parts of the same body, the same entity. If I aid and abet your sin, I am going to suffer for it. The sin of the stumbling block is teaching us a great lesson – that everyone is responsible for everyone else, because everyone is responsible for himself! Furthermore, we must love our neighbor as our self, because, at the deepest level, he *is* our self. Maybe what Torah demands is that we rise to a level of consciousness where this ultimate Unity becomes the living reality on the level of our perception.

Shabbat Shalom!

Rafi Rabinoff

Games

feel free to play



throughout the night



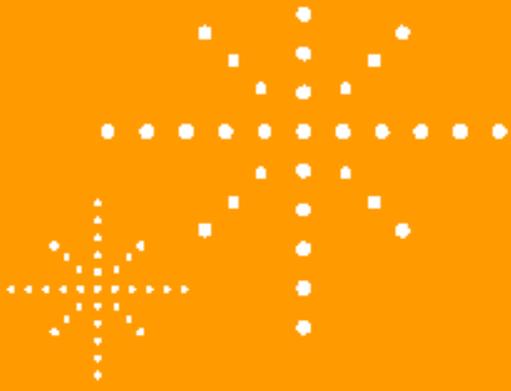
**WEDNESDAY
MAY 29
7:00 PM**

SCHMOOZE & GAMES

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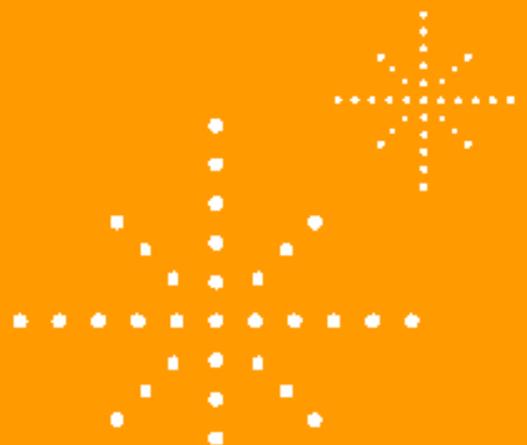


Graduation
Shabbat
June 1, 2019

Services begin at
9:00 AM

20
19

Kiddush sponsored
by parents &
grandparents of the
Class of 2019



UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, May 17 18th Annual Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance "Ride to Remember." TradCong's very own Ridin' Rabbi Gordon will be riding! All monies raised go to supporting the STL Holocaust Museum & Learning Center.

<https://www.ride2remember.com/>

Sunday, May 19 "The Joy of Intimacy: Putting the WOW into relationships and keeping it there!" Brunch & Lecture with Rabbi Manis Friedman. The Hilton Frontenac, 12:00 - 2:30pm. The Joy of Intimacy is a fascinating look at what makes a healthy relationship healthy, what allows two individual people to unite as one. Rabbi Manis Friedman is a scholar who brings ancient wisdom and modern wit to help us weave our way through life living intentionally, and more meaningfully. Kosher dietary laws observed. Suggested donation \$18. RSVP required: www.JoyByManis.com (*Rabbi & Marian are on the Host Committee—we hope you'll join us!*)

Sunday, May 26 Jewish War Veterans Memorial Day Service, Jewish Federation Building, 11:00 AM The community is invited to attend and honor those in our community who gave their lives in service to our country.

Wednesday, May 29 **Schmooze & Games**, 7:00 PM in the Jewish Heritage Center. Come to play, come to schmooze. Lights snacks provided; bring your own board games or use ours. For more info: dinarinder@icloud.com

Motzei Shabbat, June 8 **West County Tikkun Leil Shavuot** hosted at Traditional Congregation. Minchah services begin at 6:15 PM; community welcome at 7:00 PM. An evening of prayer, learning, community, noshing and schmoozing—join us for all or part. Register at <https://www.bnaiamoona.com/westcountyshavuot2019#> or call Amy Maupin, 314-576-9990, ext. 131.

Sunday-Monday, June 9-10 **Shavuot**. Services begin each morning at 9:00 AM. On Monday, we will read *Megilot Ruth* and *Yizkor* will be recited.

If you've not yet made a Capital Campaign donation—it's not too late. Please communicate your donation or send your payment to the office. Thank you for your support!

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 help offset our Kiddush costs? It's easy —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!

www.traditional-congregation.org

PRAYER

Judaism teaches the unity of the human race.

We all have one parent, one God has created us.

Judaism commands: "Love your companion as yourself," and declares this command of all-embracing love to be the fundamental principle of the Jewish religion.

Judaism therefore forbids animosity, envy, or unkindness towards anyone of whatsoever race, nationality or religion.

Judaism demands consideration for the life, health, powers and possessions of one's neighbor.

It therefore forbids injuring fellow human beings by force or cunning, or in any other manner depriving them of their property.

Judaism commands holding other people's honor as sacred as one's own.

It therefore forbids degrading them by evil reports, vexing them with ridicule or mortifying them.

Judaism commands the practice of charity towards all, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, nursing the sick, comforting those that mourn.

It therefore forbids limiting our care to ourselves and our families, or withholding sympathy when our neighbors suffer.

Judaism commands truthfulness; our yea shall be yea; our nay, nay.

It therefore forbids the distortion of truth and deceit and condemns hypocrisy.

Judaism commands walking unobtrusively with God and modestly among people.

It therefore, forbids self-conceit, arrogance, and disparagement of the merits of others.

Judaism commands the promotion of the welfare of all people.

It therefore forbids indifference to the needs of others.

Judaism commands sanctification of the name of God through righteous living.

It bids us exert ourselves to hasten the time in which all people shall be united in the love of God and the love of one another.

Unknown

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin as self-neglect.

William Shakespeare