



July 22, 2017

כח תמוז תשע"ז

Parashat Matot-Masei – Numbers 30:2-36:13 מסעי-מטות
Stone – p 900 Hertz – p 702 Etz Hayim - p 941

Haftarah – Jeremiah 2:4-28, 3:4
(2nd of The Three Weeks)
Stone – p 1193 Hertz – p 725 Etz Hayim – p 973

Kiddush is sponsored by Sisterhood

Talmud Class—6:30 PM
Minchah – 7:45 PM
Seudah Sh'lishit
Shabbat Ends – 9:03 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 & 7:45 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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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—Matot-Masei

Our parashah contains a passage which delineates the boundaries of the Land of Israel – the Land in which our nation's destiny and mission are to be realized. These boundaries serve as a physical demarcation between "our" Land and the lands of others, and they also demarcate the boundaries within which all the agricultural mitzvot are obligatory. Thus, it is a spiritual boundary as well as a political one. Perhaps this is not surprising – since the boundaries are specified in our eternal Torah, we would expect that their significance transcends ephemeral political considerations.

Ramchal emphasizes the spiritual nature of the boundary:

In the spiritual realms we find kedusha and tumah and a boundary separating them to prevent tumah from entering the realm of kedusha. Similarly, Eretz Yisrael is a place of kedusha and the areas outside the borders of Eretz Yisrael represent tumah – there was a necessity to set up boundaries there as well. These "boundaries" are spiritual aspects of Hashem's attribute of strength used to prevent tumah from encroaching on the kedusha.

He continues:

These spiritual lights have the power to deflect tumah and safeguard kedusha. Although they act as a boundary against infiltration of tumah, they do not prevent the kedusha contained within these borders from spreading at the appropriate time. In the future the borders of Eretz Yisrael will be extended as the kedusha will totally overpower tumah and spread beyond these borders.

A physicist reading these quotes will probably have two thoughts: open systems vs closed systems and the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and semi-permeable membranes. Allow me to explain.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics is the law of entropy. It states that in a closed system, entropy, or lack of structure, increases. This can be seen as an increase in tumah, which we have been theorizing is a sign of, or the force of, disintegration or decay. Our first quote appears to be telling us that the Land of Israel is a small island of growth and evolution in a vast sea of decay and disintegration, and the only way to maintain its own integrity is by having unassailable boundaries.

The second quote actually turns the first on its head. It describes the boundary as being not solid, but permeable only to kedusha. The kedusha of Eretz Yisrael can get out, but the tumah of the rest of the world cannot get in. This is called a semi permeable membrane – the filter in your reverse-osmosis water purifier is of this type. Now a semi permeable membrane, which lets certain molecules through, but retains others behind it, actually has the effect of decreasing entropy – after some time the concentration of the retained molecule is higher on one side of the membrane than on the other, relative to the molecule that is allowed through.

Perhaps the analogy is breaking down because we are thinking of tumah and kedusha as things, rather than as states. If we think of kedusha as a state of greater integration, for example, then we can well conceive of a kind of ordering “field effect” which goes beyond the boundaries that contain the kedusha and push back the tumah, or entropy. Thus we find, for example, that certain of the agricultural laws that technically apply only within Eretz Yisrael (e.g. tithing of agricultural produce), were extended Rabbinically to certain of the surrounding areas (in what is now Syria, or what used to be Syria).

These mitzvot at once reflect the increased kedusha of the nearby lands, and serve as a mechanism to increase that kedusha by having the inhabitants perform action in accordance with Gd's Will. In other words, there is apparently a kind of tipping point in the degree of orderliness in an environment, beyond which further growth of orderliness is supported and sustained. But if one goes far enough away from the source of kedusha, the tumah is too strong, and we cannot sustain the full regimen of mitzvot. In fact, since the destruction of the Temple and the removal of its purifying and ordering influence, only some 277 of the 613 mitzvot can be performed – fewer than half!

I might also point out that the Rabbis decreed that all lands outside of Eretz Yisrael are considered tamei. Ostensibly this is because in other places people are not careful to mark the graves of their dead, so people may acquire tumah by accidentally walking over an unmarked grave. I think the subtext here is that outside of Eretz Yisrael there is an inherent level of entropy, disorderliness, that cannot really be overcome, except perhaps in isolated environments (such as a synagogue) where there is intense focus on kedusha.

In the Messianic age however, “the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael will expand” and carry the kedusha of Eretz Yisrael with it. Our mission is to prepare the way by creating pockets of order and harmony as best we can in whatever environment we find ourselves, and no matter what challenges we face from the forces of tumah. We can do this best by contacting the field of perfect order deep within ourselves, and bringing that value into our daily lives.

Shabbat Shalom!
Rafi Rabinoff

**“Shaving Israel” and
Nusach Hari B’nai Zion–Israel Committee**

Invites you for a special presentation by:

Sergeant Boruch Smason

Date: Thursday, August 3rd

Time: 7:30pm

Place: Nusach Hari B’nai Zion (lower level)

650 North Price Road, St. Louis, MO 63132

Boruch was born and raised in St. Louis. He made Aliyah in 2015 and volunteered to serve in the **Israel Defense Force**. **Boruch** recently completed his IDF training in the Special Forces. He will share his story and experiences with us.



EVENT IS FREE - COME JOIN US!

Please RSVP at: mganel@earthlink.net

For questions call: Rachel Miller at (314) 579-9653 or Meira Ganel at (314) 374-7176

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



Sold Out!

August 22, Cards vs. Padres
THANK YOU, TRADCONG!
There are still opportunities to
sponsor the game; please



send your donation to 12437 Ladue Rd, 63141. *Thank you!!*

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

Tisha B'Av

Monday, July 31: 8:00 PM *Minchah*
8:15 PM *Arvit*
8:30 Chanting of *Eichah*

Tuesday, August 1: 7:00 AM *Shacharit* (without *tallit & tefillin*);
7:00 PM *Minchah/Arvit with tallit & tefillin*

Thursday, August 3 Shaving Israel invites everyone to a special presentation by Sergeant Boruch Smason, 7:30 PM at Nusach Hari. Boruch was born and raised in St Louis. He made aliyah in 2015 and served in the Israel Defense Forces. He recently completed his Special Forces training, and will share his story and experiences. No charge, RSVP to: mganel@earthlink.net

Shabbat, August 5 **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by The Schwartz & Gordon Families** in honor of Rabbi & Marian's 30th anniversary. All are invited.

Tuesday, August 22 **Cardinals Game & Dinner, SOLD OUT!!**

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/jcagrants, or call them at 314-743-3660, or contact Marian for registration help, 314-576-5230.*

Tuesday, August 22

TradCong goes to the ballgame!
WE'RE SOLD OUT!!

You can help still underwrite Traditional night at Busch Stadium!
All donations will be acknowledged in a future newsletter.



To join the team, please contact Jerry Chervitz, 314-574-0456. *Thank you*



Visit our website www.traditional-congregation.org

PRAYER

The Jewish people were the first to whom
there was revealed the truth that
there is only One God in the world,

That He is the God of all nations and all peoples,

And that He is interested in the welfare and happiness
of *all* of them.

*Israelites and Moabites may be enemies
of one another just as fire and water appear to be*

But One God created both of them,

*And one does not have more privileges in the world
than the other.*

What is it that Israelites and Moabites have in common?

*They are both children of the One God,
and He is their parent.*

Simon Greenberg

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

An ego trip is something
that never gets you anywhere.

Suzan L. Wiener