



November 25, 2017

ז כסלו תשע"ח

Parashat Vayetze ויצא Genesis 28:10-32:3

Stone - p 144 Hertz - p 106 Etz Hayim - p 166

Haftarah Hosea הושע 12:13-14:10

Stone - p 1140 Hertz - p 118 Etz Hayim - p 189

Kiddush luncheon is sponsored by
Marty & Linda Bell
in honor of the birthdays of their children,
Adam & Jenny Bell

Talmud Class—3:00 PM

Minchah—4:10 PM

Seudah Sh'lishit

Shabbat Ends—5:24 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 & 4:10 PM

Sunday—8:30 AM

Monday -Thursday—7:00 AM & 6:30 PM (**Thurs 11/23 @ 8:30 AM**)

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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Members at Large:

Sid Bennett

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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—Vayetze

And Ya'akov loved Rachel more than Leah (miLeah) ... (29:30)

The whole family situation of Ya'akov and his wives raises a multitude of questions, and here Abarbanel takes a minority opinion on some of its aspects. But let's first fill in some of the back-story from the Midrash. Lavan had two daughters. The older one was Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. When Ya'akov arrived in Haran, he immediately met and fell in love with Rachel. When we are speaking of people of the spiritual level of Ya'akov and Rachel, "falling in love" does not mean swooning from a massive hormone rush – it means recognizing one's partner in his/her life's mission. Ya'akov agrees to work for 7 years for the right to marry Rachel. At the end of the 7 years, having become thoroughly acquainted with Lavan's lying, thieving ways, and suspecting, rightly, that he was going to switch Leah for Rachel, Ya'akov and Rachel decide to "password-protect" their first night together. However, when Rachel sees Lavan's plans unfolding, she thinks of her sister's humiliation, and giving up (she thought) any chance to marry Ya'akov, gives Leah the password. Ya'akov and Leah consummate their marriage, Lavan then gives him Rachel as a second wife and they all live happily ever after. Not.

There are several serious issues with this story. First, and perhaps most serious, our Sages tell us that the Patriarchs observed the entire Torah, even the Rabbinic hedges around the Torah's explicit commandments. But the Torah forbids marrying two sisters while they're both alive (even if the first one is divorced). How could Ya'akov have married these two sisters? Some of the "standard" explanations are that since the Torah had not yet been given, exceptions could be made based on the perceived spiritual need (the Patriarchs all being on a very high spiritual level, they were allowed to make such determinations), and that all the rules did not apply outside the Land of Israel. Thus Ya'akov could marry two sisters in Charan, but Rachel died when they came back to the Land of Israel so that he would not be in violation of the prohibition.

Further questions: Ya'akov had prophetic abilities. How could he not know that Lavan had given him Leah and not Rachel, password or no password? Or did he sense that he was with the right woman, just not the one he *thought* was right? And in that case, why did he insist on marrying Rachel too? And why did Leah describe herself as "hated" – did Ya'akov really *hate* her?

Abarbanel takes the minority view that Ya'akov did hate Leah, at least initially. Hatred can be shown on various levels – through action, through speech and through thought. When Leah bore her first son, she named him Reuven, from the root "to see" – behavior is obvious for all to see. Her second son she named Shimon from the root "to hear" (as in *Shema Yisrael...*) – speech is heard. Speech is a more subtle form of behavior. Finally, the third son is named Levi, from the root "to accompany, join" – *Ya'akov* names this son, indicating that his thoughts were now more positively inclined towards Leah. Additionally, Abarbanel translates the verse we quoted using the prefix *mi* in the literal sense, as "from" – Ya'akov loved Rachel *from* Leah. That is, in contrast to his aversion to Leah, he loved Rachel all the more. I might add that others have translated *mi* as *from*, but interpret that it was *from / because of* Rachel's care and concern for Leah's humiliation, and her self-sacrifice to prevent it, that aroused Ya'akov's love for her. Leah's estimation that he hated her was perhaps only by contrast to the way he loved Rachel – not that it was any the less painful.

We are still left with the questions of why Ya'akov didn't know he was with Leah, and how, if he followed the entire Torah, he could have permitted himself to marry two sisters. I think by extending Abarbanel's 3 levels of action to one other level we can gain an insight into both issues. In order of increasing subtlety, we act, we speak and we think. But from where do thoughts arise? We experience that thoughts come spontaneously from inside us – a constant stream of thoughts in fact.

We have analyzed in the past that just as physicists are closing in on a unified field, of which the entire creation is an expression, so consciousness has a level in which all the laws of nature reside, and this level of consciousness is accessible to us by allowing our conscious mind to relax to its state of minimum excitation. With repeated experience of this level of consciousness, we accustom ourselves to be able to think thoughts consciously from their source. When one can think from this level, one is attuned to the Will of Gd, because one is thinking from the most basic level of creation. Thus Ya'akov was able to intuit Torah – which is the Will of Gd in the language of human beings – before it was given. He was also able to intuit when the Will of Gd required a deviation from Torah, as in the case of his two wives.

Some 200+ years later, Ya'akov's descendents had lost the ability to think at such subtle levels, and with it, the ability to live life in accordance with Gd's Will in a spontaneous manner. Gd therefore had to reveal His Will explicitly, and leave it to the Sages of each generation to approach Ya'akov's level as closely as possible, and thereby interpret Gd's Will for the use of the people. Since nobody nowadays is able to think at the level from which Torah was revealed, we do not have the right to deviate from its teachings – even a prophet who teaches that it is OK to violate Torah is not heeded. Even if someone were at Ya'akov's level, the atmosphere is so polluted by the general violation of the Divine Will that clear perception of it is not fully possible. We believe that at some point Gd will send Mashiach, who will restore our spiritual level of the whole world to a point where everyone lives Torah spontaneously, and we all enjoy Heaven on Earth, may it come speedily in our day.

Shabbat Shalom! Rafi Rabinoff

Time to Register!!



FIRST FRIDAYS ARE BACK!!



Friday, November 3, 2017
and
Friday, December 8, 2017

5:45 PM—Kabbalat Shabbat Service
6:30 PM—Delicious, kosher, full-course dinner

RSVP:
tradcong@sbcglobal.net or 314-576-5230

\$18/person
No charge for first-time guests/kids under 6!

Experience the warmth of
Traditional Congregation!

VODKA & Latkes

A Chanukah Celebration!!

Saturday night, 12/16 7:00 PM

Raise a glass, *chop* a latke!
There'll be other food to
enjoy and non-alcoholic
beverages as well.

Entertainment!

Bring your chanukiot so we can
light together

\$20/person

RSVP to :

tradcong@sbcglobal.net or 314-576-5230 or
online: www.traditional-congregation.org

**Did we mention
there'll be vodka??**



COLUMN A

2nd Annual

CHINESE DINNER AND MOVIE!!

Monday, December 25

5:00 PM Dinner

(meat & veggie options)

7:15 PM Movie

(title tba)

COLUMN B

\$20/age 14 and up

\$10/kids 6-14 years old

No charge/kids under 6

COLUMN C

RSVP by 12/15:

tradcong@sbcglobal.net

314-576-5230

Online: [www.traditional-
congregation.org](http://www.traditional-congregation.org)

Practice using your chopsticks and get the popcorn ready!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday-Friday Nov 23-24 **Office will be closed.** *Shacharit* on 11/23 is at 8:30 AM.

Shabbat, November 25 **Kiddush sponsored by Marty & Linda Bell** in honor of the birthdays of their children, Adam & Jenny Bell.

Sunday, Dec. 3 JSU Annual Gala and completion of *Torah of Unity*. 5:00 PM, JCC Staenberg Complex. For more info or to register: gala@jsustl.org or jsustl.org.

Friday, December 8 **First Friday**—enjoy Kabbalat Shabbat and a delicious full-course Shabbat dinner with your Traditional family. Bring your friends! \$18/person; no charge for first-time visitors to TradCong and kids under 6. RSVP by 12/2, 314-576-5230 or tradcong@sbcglobal.net.

Motzei Shabbat, December 16 **Vodka & Latkes: A Chanukah Celebration!** Raise a glass and *chap* a latke (or three)! Enjoy yummy treats, beverages (with and without alcohol), and entertainment! All for just \$20/person. 7:00 PM, bring your chanukiot so we can light together. RSVP: tradcong@sbcglobal.net, 314-576-5230 or www.traditional-congregation.org

Monday, December 25 **Chinese Dinner & A Movie!** Looking for something to do on December 25th? Problem solved!! Join us at 5:00 PM for a delicious Chinese dinner (meat and veggie options available), followed by a movie (title TBA) at 7:15. \$20/age 14 & up; \$10/kids 6-13 year old; no charge/kids under 6. RSVP by 12/15: tradcong@sbcglobal.net, 314-576-5230 or www.traditional-congregation.org

Hanukkah Hugs JF&CS and Jewish Women's Philanthropy are helping families in need of financial assistance to provide Hanukkah gifts for their children. **TradCong is a drop-off location—please bring NEW, UN-wrapped toys, books, gifts or gift cards for kids newborn to age 18** and place them in the collection bin in our lobby. Thank you! And shop easier, shop smarter by making your purchase at www.smile.Amazon.com and choosing Traditional Congregation as the charity you support—no legwork involved, your Hanukkah Hugs gifts can be shipped directly to TradCong, and TradCong receives a donation from Amazon as well! Win, win!!



Visit our website www.traditional-congregation.org

PRAYER

We are not poor if we love something, someone, humanity maybe –
and have faith that we will somewhere, sometime be satisfied,
though we know not how.

*We may even feel that our sorrow is but a school
to teach us the virtues of sympathy and gentleness
that will avail us hereafter, though we know not where.*

We may not always be on the highway that leads us to this hilltop,
but we have seen the lighted road stretching on and on.
Sometimes, we even fancied that we saw
the windows of the castle aglow.

*We have hastened our steps to be in time for the feast,
and taken counsel of our courage lest we falter and fall on the way.*

May we keep this vision of the castle ever before our eyes,
and a belief in our hearts that the journey is worthwhile.
May the castle and the glow in the windows
always be reality, and never illusion.

*Max Ehrmann
(adapted)*

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Who of us is mature enough for offspring
before the offspring themselves arrive?
The value of marriage is not that the adults produce children
but that the children produce adults.

Peter De Vries