



September 19, 2020

א תשרי תשפ"א

## ***ROSH HASHANAH 5781***

ראש השנה

Candle Lighting:

Friday, September 18 6:47 PM

*Motzei Shabbat*, September 19 After 7:47 PM

*Yom Tov* ends: Sunday, September, 7:47 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—until further notice**

Sunday—8:30 AM

Tuesday—6:30 PM

Thursday—7:00 AM

*Shabbat*—9:30 AM

### **Board of Directors:**

Elaine Farkas, President

Paul Tesser, Executive Vice President

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President

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Florence Schachter, Education Vice President

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### **Members at Large:**

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Justin Zeid

*Traditional Congregation welcomes new members. If someone you know would like to receive membership information, please contact  
Chris Brown, Membership VP, at 636-288-5356*

## On This Week's Torah Portion – Rosh HaShanah

For the first time since 5771 Rosh haShanah falls on Shabbat. Or haChaim's commentary on the Torah does not include commentary on the Festivals, so I will turn to R. Jonathan Sacks' *Ceremony and Celebration* (available from Koren Publishers ([www.korenpub.com](http://www.korenpub.com)) or the Orthodox Union ([www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org))).

Rosh haShanah begins the 10 Days of *T'shuvah*, usually translated as Repentance. But the word *t'shuvah* is much richer than mere repentance.

*There is no precise English translation of teshuva, which means both "return" – homecoming, a physical act; and "repentance" – remorse, a change of heart and deed, a spiritual act. The reason the Hebrew word means both is because, for the Torah, sin leads to exile. Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, were exiled from the Garden of Eden. Cain, after he had murdered his brother, was punished by being sentenced to eternal exile (Gen. 4:12). The idea of justice in the Torah is based on the principle of mida keneged mida, "Measure for measure." A sin, chet, is an act in the wrong place. The result, galut / exile, is that the agent finds himself in the wrong place. Sin disturbs the moral harmony of the universe.*

*But Gd forgives. That one fact rescues life from tragedy. The sages said that Gd created repentance before He created humanity (Nedarim 39b). What they meant was that Gd, in creating humanity and endowing the human person with free will, knew that we would make mistakes. We are not angels. We stumble, we sin. We are dust of the earth and to dust we will one day return. Without repentance and forgiveness, the human condition would be unbearable. Therefore Gd, creating humanity, created the possibility of repentance, meaning that when we acknowledge our failings, we are forgiven. Exile is not an immutable fate. Returning to Gd, we find Him returning to us. We can restore the moral harmony of the universe.*

*It follows that on a national scale, teshuva means two things that become one: a spiritual return to Gd and a physical return to the land.*

The cycle of exile and redemption is fundamental to creation. Creation starts from unbroken unity, Gd, alone and transcendent, self-sufficient, awake, bathed in His own light. From this unbroken unity, Gd emanates the creation in expanding layers of structure, from more abstract to more concrete. Now the very idea of "emanation" is a removal of something from its source. (emanate (v.) "to flow out," from Latin *emanatus*, past participle of *emanare* "flow out.") Thus, inherent in the idea of Creation is separation from Gd. R. Sacks defines sin as "an act in the wrong place." But there is only one right place, and that is in the transcendent, where all differences are harmonized. Once we move out of the transcendent to the realm of partial values, sin is inevitable.

Fortunately, there is a countervailing trend to the process of emanation, and that is the process of return and re-integration. Gd, knowing that creation involves estrangement, created the process of *t'shuvah*, return, as its antidote. Along with the desire for individuality to expand, there is the desire of every individual to lose itself in the embrace of the infinite. In truth, since the infinite is beyond the greatest imaginable expansion, the two tendencies are in fact one. When we become fully expanded we realize that we are, in fact, not separated from Gd, that Gd's "emanating" of creation is wholly a process that takes place *within* Gd.

The ultimate value of *t'shuvah* is the realization that Gd alone is (*ayn od milvado*). Individuality is Gd expressing Himself to Himself. We are a drop in the ocean of Gd's Existence, no more separate from the ocean than any other droplet. Our exile is, in a sense, self-imposed. By insisting on our individuality we lose the universal aspect of ourselves, which is what we truly are. By transcending our individuality, we wake up to our universal Self, and return from the bitterness of exile, only to find it was a figment of our imagination.

A central part of our Rosh haShanah prayers are *Zichronot* / Remembrances. One great theme of Rosh haShanah is that we should wake up and remember who we are. Let us not waste the opportunity!

***L'Shanah Tovah UM'vorechet and Shabbat Shalom!***

**Rafi Rabinoff**

**Join Rabbi Gordon on Zoom!  
Something for everyone!**



**Mondays, 9:00 - 10:00 AM**  
The history of the Jewish people. Newcomers are welcome to join us!  
[Register here](#)

**Wednesdays, 7:00 - 8:00 PM**

A look at the weekly Parashah from both traditional rabbinic and midrashic points of view as well as modern historians. Although we would love you to join us for all classes, you can join the lesson for that week's reading. Recommended: the New JPS translation, but feel free to use any translation.  
[Register here](#)



# The 613 Mitzvot

**Thursdays, 12 - 1:00 PM. Bring your lunch!** More than a "good deed," mitzvah in a deeper and truer sense means, literally, command. Teachings from Sefer ha-Chinuch will be provided; this work numbers the mitzvot as they appear in the Torah, adding rabbinic teachings and the author's own insights. Recommended: Have a translation of the Torah with you.  
[Register here](#)

**Fridays, 6:30 - 7:00 PM.**

Abbreviated services (including L'cha Dodi; though not Shabbat evening services) and the singing of Zemirot. Benefits include spiritual ones as we enter Shabbat, congregational togetherness before Shabbat, and learning about what we are singing.  
[Register here](#)



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