



July 29, 2017

ו אב תשע"ז

Parashat Devarim – Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22 דברים
Stone – p 938 Hertz – p 736 Etz Hayim – p 981

Haftarah – Isaiah 1:1-27 ישעיהו
(3rd of The Three Weeks)
Stone – p 1195 Hertz – p 750 Etz Hayim – p 1000

”Kold Kut Kiddush” is sponsored by
Friends of Traditional Congregation

Talmud Class—6:30 PM
Minchah – 7:45 PM
Seudah Sh'lishit
Shabbat Ends – 8:57 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
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Iris Salsman
Jerry Tullman
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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—Devarim

Moses began to clarify the Torah saying... (1:5)

He explained it to them in 70 languages (Rashi ad loc)

Rashi is quoting *Midrash Tanchuma* to our verse, but what is the question Rashi is trying to answer?

Artscroll publishes a 5-volume set of Rashi on Chumash, which is a wonderful way to learn to read Torah the way our Sages read it. (It's also a good way to learn to read Rashi script, which you'll need to do at some point to read virtually any Jewish text with commentaries.) They comment:

Clarifying is not taken in its simplest sense, for it is inconceivable that Moses would have allowed the Torah to remain unclear to the Israelites for nearly forty years [RAR: Sefer Devarim occurs in the last month before Moses' death at the end of the 40 years of wandering, just before Yehoshua leads the nation across the Jordan into the Land of Israel.], not even beginning to clarify it until this point, days before his death. Furthermore, Rashi to Leviticus 25:1 has already stated that all of the rules and fine points of the law of the Torah were given on Mount Sinai. "Moses began clarifying this Torah" thus cannot mean that he began to explain it in the simple sense.

The seventy languages are those which resulted from Gd's confusing the languages of those who built the Tower of Babel; see Gen 11:1-9.

Translating the Torah into seventy languages instilled some of the light of the Torah into those languages and those who speak them. This allows the Jewish people to maintain their bond with the Torah even when they are in exile, under the domination of other nations (Sfat Emet in the name of Chiddushei haRim)

The answer to our first question then appears to be that it doesn't make any sense to read the Torah literally here, as it goes against what we understand to be Moses' teaching method. Therefore we cannot read the verse as meaning that Moses began explaining the Torah to the Jewish people. Rather, following *Midrash Tanchuma*, Rashi explains the verse as referring to Moses' explaining the Torah to the rest of the world's peoples by translating Torah into their languages.

Artscroll, following the Gerrer Rebbes, explains that translating the Torah into another language actually appears to transform that language by infusing some of the Torah's holiness into it. I think that to understand this we must first examine what our tradition tells us about the nature of the Hebrew language.

According to modern physics, all the particles that constitute matter are the vibrational modes of underlying fields. We hope and expect that we will be able to demonstrate that all these different fields are in fact different aspects of one, underlying unified field. Thus, everything we see has a vibratory value, the total of the vibrations of this unified field that appear to us as all the zillions of particles that make up any object.

Our tradition tells us that the Hebrew language – its phonology, grammar and semantics – is a perfect reflector of the vibrational values of its referents. Thus the word *kisei* captures the "essence" of chair better than the English word "chair." Torah, in particular, captures the essence of the whole creation. It can, to be sure, be understood on a simple level as a book of laws and lore, and these levels hint at the deeper levels underneath. But the essence of Torah, in this view, is that it is actually a living model of creation, from the finest, subtlest vibrations to the largest galactic structures.

What happens to this "blueprint of creation" when we translate it into another language? Obviously, we can only translate the "meaning" of the words – that is, the most superficial value of the language. If one reads Biblical commentaries based on translations one quickly sees how many nuances of grammar and syntax, and therefore meaning, are lost. In the Talmud and Midrash the Rabbis are constantly deriving points of law and homiletical teachings from an extra letter here or an odd locution there. All this is "lost in translation." How much more so is the sound, or vibratory value lost, when we move to a different language – different words, different phonetic system, different grammar and syntax!

Nevertheless, the *Sfas Emes* tells us that some of the light of Torah does get passed into those other languages. I can think of two explanations (neither of them may be right of course). The more obvious explanation is that even on the surface level, Torah contains information about the structure of creation, and when that is translated it enlivens the target language.

The more compelling answer to me is the following. The "70 languages" come from Gd's confounding of humankind's speech at the Tower of Babel (*Gen 11:1-9*). Originally however, everyone spoke Hebrew. When Gd "mixed up" the languages (the word "Babel" comes from the Hebrew root meaning to mix up), each language maintained some quality of the original Hebrew. When Torah is translated from Hebrew to another language, this remnant quality gets enlivened in the language, at least for those who are reading the translation. Alternatively, it may be that at their root at the level that transcends expression, *all* languages are equivalent in that only the structure of creation exists – that is, all languages converge to Hebrew at their root. By translating Torah into those languages, we enliven each language from its root in the transcendent, allowing it to express the light of Gd more perfectly.

You can take this speculation for what you think it's worth. Language is a wonderful way of communicating between people, but it is an expression of reality, not the reality itself. In the words of Lao Tzu, "The Tao that can be told is not the perfect Tao."

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

If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
May my right hand forget its cunning.

*May my tongue cleave to my mouth, if I remember you not,
If I set not Jerusalem above my greatest joy.*

God will arise and have compassion upon Zion,
For it is time to be gracious unto her.

*God builds up Jerusalem;
He gathers together the dispersed of Israel.*

He will make her wilderness like Eden,
And her desert like the garden of God.

*Joy and gladness shall be found therein,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.*

The ransomed of God shall return,
And come singing unto Zion.

*They shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof.*

They shall abide in peaceful habitations,
In safe dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

*Zion shall be redeemed through justice,
And they that dwell there through integrity.*

Then shall Zion be saved,
And Jerusalem shall dwell in safety.

*For out of Zion shall go forth Torah,
And the word of God from Jerusalem.*

Biblical Verses

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Every generation thinks its problems are unique and potentially fatal. And yet every generation has survived to the next.

Carl Sagan