



TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

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Affiliated with the

Union for Traditional Judaism

Rabbi Seth D Gordon

Rabbi Ephraim I Zimand, Emeritus

Shabbat Bulletin

June 17, 2017

נג סיון תשע"ז

Parashat Shelach – Numbers 13:1-15:41 שלח

Stone – p 798 Hertz – p 623 Etz Hayim – p 840

Haftarah – Joshua 2:1-24 יהושע ב:א-כד

Stone – p 1184 Hertz – p 635 Etz Hayim – p 857

Kiddush following services is sponsored by Sisterhood

Talmud Class—6:45 PM

Minchah – 8:00 PM

Seudah Sh'lishit is sponsored by Fred & Lili Chait

in memory of Fred's mother, Lillie Chait

Shabbat Ends – 9:09 PM

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DAILY SERVICE TIMES—week of 6/17

Shabbat—9:00 AM & 8:00 PM Sunday—9:00 AM

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday—7:00 AM and 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

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Florence Schachter, Education Vice President

Elaine Farkas, Membership Vice President

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Chris Brown, Fundraising Vice President

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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—Shelach

Why did Moshe Rabbeinu send the spies, with disastrous consequences? Why did Gd allow him to send the spies? Our Sages tell us that in fact the words "Send for yourself..." (*Shelach l'cha*) which open our *parashah* indicate that Gd was saying, in effect, "Send them if you want to; I am not commanding you to send them." Ramchal writes:

Why did Moshe take this initiative rather than wait for a command from Hashem? Moshe understood that there are certain times in which man must take action in the physical world in order to arouse action from above in the spiritual realms. There are other times, however, when man does not possess the power to do anything in this world and it is therefore incumbent upon him to remain passive and await Hashem's intervention.

Moshe reasoned that sending the spies would arouse a rectification in the physical world that would "cause" Hashem to act, making the necessary preparations for B'nei Yisrael to overcome the tum'ah and conquer the land. Hashem realized that B'nei Yisrael were in a spiritually weakened state after the sin of the golden calf, and they did not possess the power to arouse the spiritual realms, which is why He did not command Moshe to send out the spies. The people should rather have waited for Hashem without the need for any awakening from below.

What we seem to have here is a kind of existentialist version of Hamlet's favorite question: "To do, or not to do, that is the question." Are human beings to act in the world, or are we not? It appears from Ramchal's words that there are times when we must act, and times when acting is counterproductive. Part of our job, apparently, is to learn to discern which is which.

Here is another explanation, quoted in *Peninim on the Torah*, 21st Series, by R. A. L. Scheinbaum:

... A nation that had witnessed the saving Presence of Hashem among them should have had enough faith to follow the Cloud – without question. Moshe allowed their request, because he saw that they were dead-set on this course. To deter them would increase the friction, thereby creating an even bigger issue. Thus, he accepted their misguided plan, rather than blow the situation out of proportion.

In other words, the people erred by assuming that it would be best to minimize the miracles that accompanied them and attack the land by conventional methods, i.e. spies. Their mistake was downplaying their miraculous existence. A nation that is subject to such supernatural intervention should abandon all desire for human endeavor. They erred, and Moshe did not want to exacerbate the issue further. (My bold)

R. Scheinbaum gives us a very strong hint that the decision whether or not to take action is based on the level of consciousness of the person trying to make this decision. "A nation that is subject to such supernatural intervention" is the one that should "remain passive and await Hashem's intervention." Implied is that if we have not experienced the kind of supernatural interventions that the Israelites experienced, then we should proceed to act. Perhaps this is at the root of our Sages' famous dictum, "We don't rely on miracles!"

I'd first like to discuss Ramchal's idea of arousing the upper spiritual realms from below (i.e. from the material plane). This is called *itaruta dile-tata*, literally "arousal from below." Chabad.org defines it as "an initiative taken by man by performing mitzvot and good deeds, which elicits a reciprocal response from Gd." Now this is an area where we have to be very careful – we don't wish to imply that we can take any action to "force Gd's Hand" so-to-speak, because fortunately, we can't. And we certainly wouldn't want to impose our limited intellect and perception on Gd, when He can take *all* relevant factors into account and arrange matters for everyone's maximum benefit. Nonetheless, since Gd *has* given us free will, our moral choices will have some effect on all levels of our environment, from the highest heavens to the farthest galaxies to our immediate, earthly environment.

Sometimes, on the other hand, the stimulus goes the other way – the awakening comes from Gd. This is called *itaruta dile'eyla*, "arousal from above." Prophecy and the Revelation at Mt. Sinai are two major examples of this "awakening from Above" – while one can prepare himself for prophecy, still Gd must grant prophecy to us. Prophecy does not arise from a cause-and-effect chain of events. It is based on the need of the time and the availability of a suitable vessel, but it is a gift of Gd.

In reality, there is a constant back-and-forth between Gd and human beings. Gd reveals Himself to those who are prepared to receive that revelation, and human beings are trying to do Gd's Will as best we can discern it. Gd asks us "return to Me and I will return to you" (Zechariah 1:3; Malachi 3:7) and we reply "Turn us to you and we will be turned" (Lam 5:21). In fact, I think this back-and-forth is actually a feedback loop. We turn to Gd, which means improving our behavior. Gd therefore turns to us, as we are doing His Will. This increases our perception of and our love for Gd, and we turn to Him even more. Where it starts may not actually matter that much, as long as it starts and breaks the opposite, vicious cycle of sin, estrangement and despair. Since "Heaven helps those that help themselves," we should take the attitude that *itaruta dile-tata* is primary and get busy turning ourselves to Gd. After all, the only thing in life we have any control over is our own actions!

Shabbat Shalom! Rafi Rabinoff

Get your tickets now!

Tuesday, August 22 TradCong goes to the ballgame! Cards vs. Padres, 7:15 PM. Enjoy the game from your seat in a luxury suite, plus dinner from Kohn's! This is a \$155 value—yours for just \$60/person! Tickets are going quickly, first-come, first-serve—don't wait to order!! Send your check for \$60/person to TradCong, 12437 Ladue Rd, 63141; or order online at www.traditional-congregation.org.

You can help underwrite Traditional night at Busch

Stadium!

Managers	\$5,000 and up	(includes 10 tickets)
Pitchers	\$1,000-4,999	(includes 4 tickets)
Catchers	\$750-999	(includes 2 tickets)
First Base	\$500-749	(includes 2 tickets)
Second Base	\$200-499	(includes 1 ticket)
Third Base	\$100-199	



To join the team, please contact Jerry Chervitz, 314-574-0456. Thank you for your support!

PRAYER

I watched them tearing down a building, A gang of men in a busy town
With a yo-heave-ho a lusty yell, they swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I asked the foreman: "Are these men skilled,
The kind you would hire if you wanted to build?"

*He laughed and said, "Why, no, indeed! Just common labor is all I need.
They can easily wreck in a day or two what builders have taken years to do."*

Which of these roles have I tried today? Am I a builder who works with care,
measuring life by the rule and square, shaping my deeds
by a well-made plan, patiently doing the best I can?

Or am I a wrecker who walks the town, content with the labor of tearing down?

G. K. Chesterton

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

We arrived at the land to which you sent us, and indeed it flows
with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

Bamidbar 13:37

UPCOMING EVENTS

Minchah/Arvit services will begin at 6:45 PM through the end of July. As always, we need your support to ensure a minyan.

Sunday, June 18 Softball game: TradCong vs United Hebrew, 11:40 AM, JCCA Field #2.
Come out and support our team!

Shabbat, June 24 **Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Arlene Fox** in honor of Ellis Frohman's
upcoming 75th birthday.

Wednesday, June 28 **Schmooze & Games**, 7:15 PM. Open to anyone looking to schmooze or
play some board games, bridge or mah jongg. Please bring cards and games, or knitting/crocheting/
needlework projects. Light refreshments will be provided. No RSVP necessary and no
charge. 7:15pm-8:15pm following Minchah/Arvit

Tuesday, August 22 **Cardinals Game & Dinner**, see previous page



Visit our **NEW** website www.traditional-congregation.org