



February 7-8, 2025

י שבט תשפ"ה

Candle Lighting 5:11 PM

Shabbat Shirah

Parashat B'shalach בשלח Exodus 13:17 - 17:16

Stone - p 366 Hertz - p 265 Etz Hayim - p 399

Haftarah - Judges 4:4-5:31 שופטים

Stone - p 1152 Hertz - p 281 Etz Hayim - p 424

Kiddush luncheon following services

is sponsored by

Barbara & Sid Levin

in honor of the 60th anniversary

of Sid becoming a **Bar Mitzvah**

Shabbat ends 6:12 PM

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

Rabbi Seth D Gordon - Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com
Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director - traditionalcong@gmail.com

WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT SERVICES

Sunday - 8:30 AM

Tuesday - 6:30 PM

Shabbat - 9:30 AM

Board of Directors:

Governance Committee:

Florence Schachter, Chair

Marty Levy, Vice-Chair

Ken Bohm, Ellis Frohman, Ron Green, Dina Rinder

Ellis Frohman, Financial Vice President

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Sid Levin

Ari Levy

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We welcome new members!

If you or someone you know would like to receive membership information,
please contact our office at 314-576-5230
or traditionalcong@gmail.com

On This Week's Torah Portion - Beshalach

Let us really try to understand God's decision to take a circuitous route out of Egypt: "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt". It seems to raise a number of significant questions.

First: we see that the alternative route they took was potentially even more traumatic. God led them around by the desert road towards the Red Sea. When the Israelites saw the Egyptian chariots pursuing them in the distance, they had nowhere to go. They were terrified. So they were not spared the fear of war. Hence the first question: why the Red Sea? On the face of it, it was the worst of all possible routes.

Secondly, if God did not want the Israelites to face war, and if He believed it would lead the people to want to return to Egypt, why did the Israelites leave chamushim, "armed" or "ready for battle"?

Third: if God did not want the Israelites to face war, why did He provoke Pharaoh into pursuing them? The text says so explicitly. "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them." (Shemot 14:4).

Fourth: God did not want the Israelites to have reason to say, "Let us return to Egypt." However, at the Red Sea, they did tell Moshe something very close to this: "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (Shemot 14:11-12)

Fifth: God clearly wanted the Israelites to develop the self-confidence that would give them the strength to fight the battles they would have to fight in order to conquer the Holy Land. Why then did He bring about a situation at the Sea where they had to do exactly the opposite, leaving everything to God?

The miracle that followed has so engraved itself on Jewish minds that we recite the Song at the Sea in our daily Morning Service. The division of the Sea was, in its way, the greatest of all the miracles. But it did not contribute to Jewish self-confidence and self-reliance. "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." (Shemot 14:14) The Egyptians were defeated not by the Israelites but by God, and not by conventional warfare but by a miracle. How then did the encounter teach the Israelites courage?

Sixth: Our parsha ends with another battle, against the Amalekites. But this time, there is no complaint on the part of the people, no fear, no trauma, no despair. Joshua leads the people in battle. Moshe, supported by Aaron and Hur, stands on a hilltop, his arms upraised, and as the people look up to Heaven, they are inspired, strengthened, and they prevail.

Where then was the fear spoken of in the opening verse of the parsha? Faced by the Amalekites, in some ways more fearsome than the Egyptians, the Israelites did not say they wanted to return to Egypt. The sheer silence on the part of the people stands in the strongest possible contrast to their previous complaints about water and food. The Israelites turn out to be good warriors.

So why the sudden change between the opening of our parsha and its close? In the opening, God is protective and miracle-working. At the close, God is more concealed. He does not fight the battle against the Amalekites; He gives the Israelites the strength to do so themselves. In the opening, the Israelites, seeing the pursuing Egyptians, panic and say that they should never have left Egypt. By the close, attacked by the Amalekites, they fight and win.

What has changed?

The answer, it seems to me, is that we have perhaps the first recorded instance of what later became a key military strategy. In 1519, a man named Cortes (the Spanish commander engaged in the conquest of Mexico) burned the ships that had carried his men. His soldiers now had no possibility of escape. They had to win or die. Hence the phrase, "burning your boats."

Sometimes you have to arrange that there is no way back, no line of retreat, no possibility of fear-induced escape. It is a radical strategy, undertaken when the stakes are high and when exceptional reserves of courage are necessary. That is the logic of the events in this week's parsha that are otherwise hard to understand.

Before they crossed the Red Sea, the Israelites were fearful. But once they had crossed the Sea, there was no way back. Their ability to fight and defeat the Amalekites showed how profoundly they had changed. Their boats and bridges were burned. They looked only forwards, for there was no return.

Any great undertaking comes with fear. Often we fear failure. Sometimes we even fear success. Are we worthy of it? Can we sustain it? We long for the security of the familiar, the life we have known. We are afraid of the unknown, the uncharted territory. And the journey itself exposes our vulnerability. We have left home; we have not yet reached our destination. Courage is not fearlessness. It is, in the words of a well-known book title, feeling the fear but doing it anyway.

Sometimes the only way to do this is to know that there is no way back. That is what crossing the Red Sea was for the Israelites, and why it was essential that they experienced it at an early stage in their journey. It marked the point of no return; the line of no retreat; the critical point at which they could only move forward.

I believe that some of the greatest positive changes in our lives come when, having undertaken a challenge, we cross our own Red Sea and know that there is no way back. There is only a way forward.

Then God gives us the strength to fight our battles and win.

**Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z"tl**

ALL ORDERS ARE DUE IN THE OFFICE BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14!

traditional congregation presents
PURIM 2025

**MISHLOACH
MANOT**

fulfill a
mitzvah and
support our
shul

ALL ORDERS
ARE DUE BY
Friday,
February 14,
2025

a fun gift box
including
hamantashen is
delivered to all
congregants

Enclosure card lists the names of those who contributed in recipient's honor.

Send baskets to friends/family who are not Traditional members. (U.City, Olivette, CC, Clayton, Chesterfield areas only)

Create your gift list by checking the names of members in whose honor YOU wish to contribute (see list on other side).

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Total	\$
THANK YOU!	

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12437 Ladue Rd, 63141; or pay online at www.traditionalcongregation.org/donate and email
form to traditionalcong@gmail.com.
Order Forms and payment are due by 2/14/25

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME(S) BELOW AS IT SHOULD APPEAR ON GIFT ENCLOSURE CARD:

Questions? Call the office (314.576.5230) or Nikki Goldstein (314.807.2055) or
Mimi Levy (314.852.1698)

**Contact Marian if you need another copy of the member list
to make your selections: traditionalcong@gmail.com**

**Drivers will be needed to deliver Mishloach Manot on Purim day,
March 14. Please let Marian if you're able to help:
traditionalcong@gmail.com**

A TASTE OF SOUP 2025!

SUNDAY

February 23

5:30 - 7:15 PM



ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT
SOUP BUFFET!

MEAT & VEGETARIAN OPTIONS

GARLIC BREAD

SWEET TREATS

\$20/person registered by 2/12/25

\$22/person walk-ins

Kids under 5 are free!

Register here by 2/12/25 or go to:

<https://bit.ly/4hwumVV>

or send payment with names attending to:

Traditional Congregation

12437 Ladue Road St Louis MO 63141

314-576-5230

www.traditional-congregation.org

*Don't go home empty-handed!
\$5 per additional carry-out container*





2025 Florence Gaponoff Mother's Day Gift Bag Project

The greatest need is monetary donations
to purchase items.

- To donate, send check to Traditional Congregation
or go to:

<https://www.traditional-congregation.org/donate>

- Donate travel-size shampoo, conditioner, lotion,
soap/body wash, deodorant,
toothpaste, toothbrush, dental floss.
- Women's necklaces and bracelets in good, wearable
condition. *NO earrings, rings, watches, tarnished or
broken jewelry, please.*
- To donate the above items, bring to Traditional and
place in the wicker bin near the office door.
 - Assembly date will be provided soon.

- *THANK YOU!*



PRAYER

It is good to thank You, O God
To sing praises to Your name,

*To proclaim Your love every morning,
And Your faithfulness every night.*

Your works, O God, bring me gladness;
Of Your deeds, I joyously sing.

*How great are Your deeds, O God;
How profound are Your designs.*

The superficial cannot comprehend,
The foolish cannot grasp this.

*Though the wicked may thrive like grass,
And doers of evil seem to flourish,*

Those who oppose You shall be destroyed;
Workers of evil are sure to be routed.

*I have seen the defeat of my foes,
I have heard the doom of my enemies.*

The just, however, grow strong like the palm tree,
They thrive like the cedar of Lebanon.

*Planted on the temple grounds,
They flourish in the courts of our God.*

They yield fruit even in old age,
They remain vital and vigorous.

*They proclaim "God is just;
My Fortress, having no faults."*

From Psalm 92

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Today's necessity was yesterday's luxury

Unknown