

We Warmly Welcome Rabbi Yosie Levine
of The Jewish Center for our
“Pulpit Swap” Shabbat



Following this shabbat's morning services,
Rabbi Levine delivers a lecture:
“A Revolutionary Tale: The Curious
History of the First Hebrew Prayer for
a Democratic Government”

Rabbi Yosie Levine joined The Jewish Center's rabbinic team in 2004. He earned a BA in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia College and remains an active alumnus. A Wexner Graduate Fellow, Rabbi Levine received rabbinic ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and was the winner of RIETS' writing prize. He holds an MPA in Public Policy from NYU's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School and recently completed his coursework toward a doctoral degree in Early Modern Jewish History at Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School. He is writing on Hakham Zevi, religious zealotry, and the nature of rabbinic responsa in the early modern period.

Rabbi Levine and his wife, Dr. Rachel Levine, are the proud parents of four children, Akiva, Yehoshua, Ari, and Judy, who is a participant in our Shearith Israel Toddler Program.

*Thank you to the sponsors of the kiddush luncheon
in Rabbi Levine's honor:*

Karen & Jack Daar
Jennifer Ash & Seth Haberman
The Kalfus Family
The Sherizen Family
The Solomon Family

Our next public tour
is next **Wednesday,**
March 14

Parnas Office Hours
Louis Solomon would be delighted to
meet with you. Please schedule a visit
at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

DEBAR TORAH: FACING MANY DIRECTIONS AT ONCE

—BY HAZZAN RABBI IRA ROHDE—

The description of the cherubim in the Bible is vague and perhaps even contradictory, as opposed to the many exacting details given in the descriptions of other parts of the Mishkan and the Temple. One of the most obvious contradictions, which the Talmud in Baba Batra 99a noticed, is the direction which the cherubim faced. The Torah in our Parashah seems to say that the cherubim faced each other, as well as saying that they faced the “Kapporet,” the “Atonement (or Mercy) Seat,” which is the top cover of the Ark of the Covenant, over which they are placed. So that would seem to indicate that they faced downwards. Certainly their wings spread over the Kapporet. And while other sources in the Bible are referring to cherubs which were in Solomon’s Temple, which may have been quite different from the cherubs in the Mishkan, they give yet other orientations, which may either mean simply facing “inward,” or facing the “front of the Temple.” The Talmud suggests two famous reconciliations: that the cherubim’s position actually (magically) changed, depending upon whether it was a time when “Israel obeyed the will of the Omnipresent,” or a time when “Israel did not obey the will of the Omnipresent.” The other reconciliation was that the cherubim didn’t move, and that their position was a compromise someplace in between, generally facing each other and yet partially turned “sideways.”

We can imagine, of course, plenty of good reasons why the Bible and our Sages deliberately preferred to keep the description of the cherubim vague, leaving them to our own imaginations. But the contradictions in the facing direction seems to open up a real ambivalence. Perhaps it depended upon the particular arrangement at the time, and left room for artistic interpretation. But it’s also probable that there is a real irreconcilable problem which the Talmud is trying to wrestle with and find a compromise: The cherubim must in some way be facing in all of these directions at once.

Many interpretations have been given to this problem, and to the meaning of the cherubim in general, to the extent it could or should be discussed, but to add my own homiletic interpretation, I’d say that there is a fundamental tension in the direction we Jews should face. Perhaps nowhere is that tension more apparent than here in our sanctuary at Shearith Israel: After all, the pews face each other. So when we stand, we face inwards, towards each other, right? Then there’s the place at the front of the room where the Sifrei Torah are kept, the Hekhal, the “Palace,” what the Ashkenazim call the “Aron” or “Ark.” Often people face that direction for important parts of the service. Then there’s the Reader’s Desk, the Tebah, towards the back of the center of the synagogue, from which the Torah is read and from which the service is conducted. These days, many congregants are used to facing the eastern, front Hekhal for much of the service, but if you look at the Shulhan Arukh, there is considerable ambiguity and the answer is far from clear.

That ambiguity is deliberate. We must reconcile the need to face our fellow man, to join each other as one community, with the need to each face God both individually and collectively. We must also face the demands of justice and law and truth and the Divine commands of the Torah. There are highly significant and apparent contradictions in reconciling all of these orientations, and the task of reconciling them is more of an art than a science, so there must be left significant room to the discretion and expression of the individual. There is communal politics involved here, there is Divine sovereignty involved here, there is friendship and support, love and awe, harmony and tension. We cannot simply choose one direction to face; we must each rather find a way of making our own reconciliation of the need to face all of these directions at once.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue
Shabbat Vayaqhel-Pekude-Parah
March 9-10, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 373; Haftarah: p. 999; Parah: p.652
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 464; Haftarah: p. 1278; Parah: p. 756

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:38 pm
MINHAH & ARBIT | 5:45 pm | Main Sanctuary
FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS: HAGGADAH EDITION | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “Matzot and Hamantashen in Colonial America: A Reflection on the Structure of the Haggadah” | 2017-2018 season sponsored by the Julis family.

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary
SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary
TOT SHABBAT WITH LIZ AND SHANADE | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am
| Fidanque Youth Room
YOUTH GROUPS WITH RACHEL | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Elias Room
JUNIOR CONGREGATION | Ages 5-12 | 10:30 | Little Synagogue

SPECIAL GUEST LECTURE | Rabbi Yosie Levine
“A Revolutionary Tale: The Curious History of the First Hebrew Prayer for a Democratic Government”

KIDDUSH LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF RABBI LEVINE | Levy Auditorium | Sponsored by Karen & Jack Daar, Jennifer Ash & Seth Haberman, The Kalfus Family, The Sherizen Family, and The Solomon Family.

SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | 4:30 pm | “Korban Pesah Revisited” | Levy Auditorium
MINHAH & ARBIT | 5:30 pm
HABDALAH | 6:30 pm

Weekday Service Times

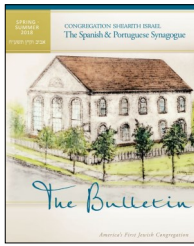
Mornings:

Sunday: 8:00 am
Monday-Friday: 7:15 am

Evenings:

Sunday-Thursday (Minhah & Arbit—note new time): 6:30 pm
*Daylight Savings Time begins this Sunday. Don't forget to turn your clock forward
an hour on Saturday night.*

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org



Our Spring-Summer Bulletin is Here
Members should be receiving their copies in the mail soon; until then, pick up a copy at the synagogue, or check out the online version at shearithisrael.org/bulletins-and-guides.

Upper West Side Celebrates Israel

Sunday, April 15 | Symphony Space
(2537 Broadway at 95th Street)

Join Shearith Israel and the entire Upper West Side Jewish community in celebrating Israel's 70th Yom Ha'atzmaut! This massive festival will have both indoor and outdoor activities for all ages. This festival is sure to be a can't-miss event of the year, so mark your calendars.

REGISTER NOW:

FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR THAT BROUGHT YOU
"THE WOMEN'S BALCONY"

The Film Critics Called a "Must-See" and "A Masterpiece"

"1945"

Wednesday, April 11 | 7:00 pm

In commemoration of Yom Hashoa, we will be holding a special screening of the critically acclaimed film, *1945*.

On a summer day in 1945, after the war has ended, an Orthodox man and his grown son arrive in a small village in Hungary while the villagers prepare for the wedding of the town clerk's son. The townspeople, in the aftermath of the war, react in various ways—with suspicion, remorse, fear, and cunning. Some expect the worst and behave accordingly.

A superb ensemble cast, lustrous black and white cinematography, and historically detailed art direction contribute to this eloquent drama.

Visit shearithisrael.org/1945 for registration and tickets.

Final Rehearsal and Celebration for Readers of Shir HaShirim Tuesday, April 3 (2nd Day Hol HaMoed Pesah) 5:00-6:30pm

The teen girls who are reading Shir HaShirim will meet with Rabbi Ira Rohde for a final rehearsal in the Large Synagogue. After rehearsal, there will be a small celebration with well-deserved refreshments in the Elias Room.

To sponsor the *kiddush* in honor of our teen girl Shir HaShirim readers, go to shearithisrael.org/teen-girls-shir-hashirim-2018.

SAVE THE DATE

Visiting Scholar:

Professor Laura Arnold Leibman

Shabbat, April 21 | Following Morning Services
Monday, April 30 | 7:00 pm

We are delighted to welcome Professor Laura Arnold Leibman, who will deliver two historical lectures. The Shabbat lecture will be on the topic of "Jews and Voting in Early America: The Fight for Civil Rights," and her mid-week lecture will be on "Sephardic Country Houses." For more information, visit shearithisrael.org/leibman.

Laura Arnold Leibman is Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Her work focuses on religion and the daily lives of women and children in early America, and uses everyday objects to help bring their stories back to life.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mazal Tob to **Malka and Z Edinger**, Shearith Israel's Sexton, on the birth of a baby girl.

Mazal Tob to our members **Ellen and Robert Kapito** and **Laurie and Eli Bryk** on the birth of a granddaughter, Lily Beatrice ("Dvasha Sarah" in Hebrew), to their children Alyssa and Aaron Kapito.

HAPPENING NEXT SUNDAY

Passover and the American Imagination

Sunday, March 18, 2018



Close Up View of Hebrew Inscription:
Proclaim Liberty Throughout All The
Land Unto All The Inhabitants Thereof
Leviticus XXV:10

A Year Of Years Celebration

**Featuring Rabbi Meir Soloveichik's discussion of the
greatest Passover stories in American history.**

This special symposium will include:

Lectures and discussions with pre-eminent scholars such as Lincoln historian, Harold Holzer

Remarkable Passover stories and lessons of liberty from the American Jewish historical narrative

An exclusive viewing of rarely exhibited archival materials, such as Thomas Jefferson's Letter to Mordecai Manuel Noah of Shearith Israel

A take-home Haggadah Companion custom created by Rabbi Soloveichik, which participants can use to inspire their own Seder this year

A bonus conversation—for luncheon participants only—with Harold Holzer and Rabbi Soloveichik on the making of Steven Spielberg's critically acclaimed film, *Lincoln*

Sunday, March 18, 2018 | Symposium 9 am - 12:30 pm

Luncheon to follow with a special tribute to Shearith Israel's 5778 *hatanim*

Simon Salama-Caro, *Hatan Torah*
Robert Kapito, *Hatan Bereshit*

Tickets start at \$25. Sponsorships start at \$500.

RSVP by March 4: shearithisrael.org/gala2018