We warmly welcome Rabbi Yosse 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 Yosse Levine joined The Jewish Center’s rabbinitic 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 response 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
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DEBORAH TOWARD FACING MANY DIRECTIONS AT ONCE
—BY HAZZAN RABBI IRA RODEZ—

The description of the cherubim in the Bible is vague and perhaps even contorted, as opposed to the many exact 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 “Kapporet,” the “Atonement (or Mercy) Seat,” which is the top cover of the Ark of the Covenant, over which they are said. This would seem to indicate that they faced them downward, certainly their wings spread over the Kapporet. And while other sources in the Bible are referring to cherubim were in Solomon’s Temple, which may have been quite different from the cherubim 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 further reconciliations: that the cherubim’s position (logically) 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 somehow in between, generally facing each other and yet partially “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 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 hermeneutic 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, when we face each other, we face facing towards each other, right? Then there’s the question of where the Sefarim Torah are kept, the Hakhol, the “Palace,” what the Ashkenazim call the “Aron” or “Ark.” Often people face that direction for important parts of the service. Then the Reader’s Desk, the Torah, towards the back of the center of the sanctuary, from which the Torah is read and from which the service is conducted. These days, many congregants are used to facing the cantor, front Hakhol for much of the service, but if you look at the Shulhan Anukh, 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 face God both individually and collectively. We must also face the demands of justice and law and truth and the Divine command 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 so much 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 SHEARI TH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue
Shabbat Vayaqhel-Pekude-Parah
March 9-10, 2018

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 373; Halakhah: p. 999; Parashat p. 652
Kaplan Living Torah: p. 464; Halakhah: p. 1278; Parashat p. 756

CANDLES LIGHTING | 5:38 pm
MINNAH & 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 Hagadah” | 2017-2018 season sponsored by the Jula 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 | Fidante 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 Yosse Levine “A Revolutionary Tale: The Curious History of the First Hebrew Prayer for a Democratic Government”


SHABBAT AFTERNOON SHIUR | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | 4:10 pm | “Korban Pesah Revisited” | Levy Auditorium
MINNAH & ARBIT | 5:30 pm
HABDALAH | 6:30 pm

Weekday Service Times

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

Evenings:
Sunday-Thursday (Minnah & Arbit) | 6:30 pm
Daylight Saving 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
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 Hashoah, 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 young 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 forReaders of Shir HaShirim
Tuesday, April 3 (2nd Day Hol HaMoed Pesah)
5:00-6:30 pm
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
Mazel Tov to Malka and Z Edinger, Shearith Israel’s Sexton, on the birth of a baby girl.

Mazel Tov 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
Sunday, March 18, 2018
Passover and the American Imagination
A Year Of Celebrations
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

- An exclusive viewing of newly exhibited archival materials, such as Thomas Jefferson’s letter to Monticello’s Manual Noah of Shearith Israel

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

For more information, visit shearithisrael.org/gala2018

Luncheon to follow with a special tribute to Shearith Israel’s 5778 Anshanim.
Siemon Salama-Caro, Hatan Torah
Robert Kapito, Hatan Beninacht
Tickets start at $25. Sponsorships start at $500.
RSVP by March 4: shearithisrael.org/gala2018