



CAI Adult Scholarly Committee

presents

Scholar-in-Residence Professor Michael Carasik

Friday, May 3 - Sunday, May 5, 2019

FRIDAY, MAY 3

7:45 pm Evening Lecture — “*The Bible Speaks: ‘Interpret Me!’*”

Rashi’s famous Bible commentary — once the Jewish child’s basic introduction to the Torah — is still sometimes thought of as a work for children. As an introduction to the *Commentators’ Bible*, we’ll examine Rashi’s comments to Genesis 1:1 to discover the profound questions that underlie Rashi’s sometimes simple-sounding answers.

SATURDAY, MAY 4

9 am Torah Study — *Parashat Aharei Mot*

This will not be a *shiur*; I won’t come in with a point to prove. Instead, it will be genuine Torah study, interactive and participatory. Expect new and surprising insights into the *parashah* — even though I can’t tell you in advance what they will be!

1 pm Lunch 'n' Learn — “*History and Literature in Psalm 29*”

The Bible is a religious book — but it is also both a work of literature and a window into the ancient world. In this talk, with the help of the medieval grammarian Jonah ibn Janach, we will look at Psalm 29 as a literary creation, one that offers us a tantalizing glimpse of an ancient Jewish writer who may have adapted his psalm from a poet in the lost city of Ugarit.

8:30 pm Night Lecture — “*Life and Times of the ‘Commentators’ Bible*”

The first words of the *Commentators’ Bible* were written on September 11th, 2001. In this talk, I’ll explain how that happened and give you an inside look at the project. You’ll learn about how the *Commentators’ Bible* was created and designed and get a peek inside the process of creating the page. (And you’ll find out why the Genesis volume comes last!) We will learn a bit of Parashat Kedoshim from the *Commentators’ Bible* and conclude with a few words about the religious value of translation.

SUNDAY, MAY 5

12 pm Lecture — “*The Poetry of Prayer: A Look at Psalm 114*”

The second psalm of Hallel is extremely familiar to most synagogue-goers, especially since there’s a well-known “call and response” tune associated with it. But it’s hard to analyze poetry while you’re singing. In this session — a combination of lecture and group study — we’ll look at the poetry implicit in the psalm and its surprisingly profound religious implications.



Michael Carasik teaches Biblical Hebrew at the University of Pennsylvania and is the weekday Torah reader at Historic Congregation Keshet Israel in Center City Philadelphia. He has a bachelor’s degree from New College (Sarasota, Fla.), bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Jewish studies from Spertus College in Chicago, and a Ph.D. in Bible and the ancient Near East from Brandeis University.

He is the creator of *The Commentators’ Bible* (JPS/U. of Nebraska Press), an English-language equivalent of the traditional Hebrew commentaries used for centuries.

Author of *Theologies of the Mind in Biblical Israel* (Peter Lang), a description of the Israelite understanding of psychology as revealed in the Bible, and *The Bible’s Many Voices* (Jewish Publication Society/University of Nebraska Press), a layman’s guide to the Bible as its human authors intended it.

His “Torah Talk” weekly podcast on his “Bible Guy” blog is available at <https://mcarasik.wordpress.com>.