

ONLY 3 WEEKS AWAY—REGISTER NOW:
Shearith Israel & The Jewish Center
Ski & Snowboard Trip
Monday, December 25

Join us on the slopes of Hunter Mountain!
 Shearith Israel and The Jewish Center are joining forces again this year for a fun day of skiing and snowboarding! All are welcome—teens, singles, couples, families, first-timers, black diamond skiers, and more.

This trip is all-inclusive (equipment, transportation, even lessons for beginners), though it is BYOL (Bring Your Own Lunch). There is preferred pricing for members of Shearith Israel and The Jewish Center, but non-members are welcome as well.

To register, go to shearithisrael.org/ski.

CARING CONNECTION & THE LEAGUE PRESENT:

Upper West Side Blood Drive

The Esther Goldfarb Memorial Blood Drive

January 7, 2018 | 10:00 am-4:00 pm

The Jewish Center, 131 W 86 St

Kick off the new year by giving the gift of life—be a blood donor. To maximize our impact, this year we are partnering with numerous congregations on the Upper West Side, so far including:

Darkhei Noam, The Jewish Center, Lincoln Square Synagogue, Congregation Shaare Zedek, and Young Israel of the Upper West Side.

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/uws-blood-drive.

Our next public tour is **Wednesday, December 13**

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



DEBAR TORAH: OF SHEAVES & STOOKS — BY HAZZAN RABBI IRA ROHDE —

“There we were binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf arose and stood; then your sheaves gathered around and bowed to my sheaf” (Gen. 37:7)

What is **אֵלוֹמִים מְאֻלָּמִים**—literally, “sheaving sheaves?” What is a “sheaf,” anyway, and how do you bind them? Is it like “baling bales” of hay? Are we talking about eleven individual stalks or “spikes” (from Latin “spica”) of wheat bowing down to Joseph’s “spike”? Or, as seems likely, are we talking about twelve bound-together bundles? Sometimes, in English, the term “sheaf” seems to be used for an individual “spike” or stalk, but that seems to be an imprecise usage. The text doesn’t use the famous term **שִׁבּוֹלֶת**, which would indicate an individual “spike” or stalk, but rather **אֵלוֹמִים**, which usually means a bunch of stalks tied in a bundle. What is meant by “arose” or “standing,” then? “Standing” (**קָמָה**) one of the terms, often refers to unharvested stalks “standing” in the field, before they are cut. But the text seems to indicate that the cutting had already been done, and they were now in the process of tying the spikes into bundles after the reaping. Those bundles are what are referred to as “sheaves.” They were probably using cut stems and straw (ones without much grain) to bind and tie the others. But if all the reaping has been done, then these cut spikes they are bundling would now be lying on the ground, right? Then how is it that the dream describes these cut and bound “sheaves” as now “standing up?”

Of course, the more common term for such a “sheaf” of grain, one which seems to be synonymous with **אֵלוֹמָה**, is the familiar word **עֹמֶר**. An *Omer* is also a bound “sheaf” of grain, although it does seem that an *“alumab”* can be a bundle of any size, whereas an *Omer’s* size seems to have been more fixed, just as we use the term “bale” more precisely as a particular measure of quantity. And presumably, when you took all the kernels off one such standard-sized *Omer*-sheaf-bundle, you would wind up with a fixed quantity of kernels, which was also called an *Omer*. That would make sense out of the fact that the same term “*Omer*” is used as a fixed dry-measure of volume of wheat and barley kernels, the final product, and even of the volume of flour made from those kernels, equivalent to a tenth of an *ephah*. Anyway, an “*alumab*,” by contrast, or even an “*עמר*” (a related term for a mini-*Omer*) seems to have been a more hastily-tied “sheaf-bundle” of any size. Now, when it came to the mitzvah of harvesting the *Omer* offering on Passover, Tractate *Menahot* does tell us that for ceremonial purposes they bound together the stalks while they were still unreaped and attached to the ground, and then they cut them, but this could hardly have been the usual practice.

So what were already-cut bundles of wheat doing “standing up, surrounding, and bowing?” Well, for one thing, the “sheaves,” the tied wheat-bundles, were not merely stacked in “piles” on the ground. The Hebrew term **גֹּדֶשׁ** doesn’t properly mean any old kind of “stack” or bale, but rather, a kind of round, teepee-shaped structure called a “stook” or “shock.” A “stook” consists of several, sometimes eight or, perhaps, in our story, as is the tradition in some places, exactly twelve, bundles of grain leaned against each other, touching at the top. Each bundle would have all of the spike-stalks facing the same direction: The reaper would grab a bunch of stalks in one hand and cut them with the sickle with the other, and they would all fall and then be bound in the same orientation. Then these sheaves would be leaned against each other teepee-style, with top-parts of the sheaves, where the ears of grain are, meeting on top, and the thickest, sturdiest part of each stock of grain touching the ground for support. This “stook” structure had many advantages: keeping the grain kernels off the ground avoided them getting dirty and too wet and, especially, kept them from vermin. It allowed the kernels, ventilated this way in mid-air, to be further dried and cured by wind blowing and drying them from all sides. It is this structure which is properly called a **גֹּדֶשׁ**, which is no ordinary “pile,” but refers properly to this “stook,” the teepee-like structure.

So I picture the sheaves in Joseph’s dream as such a “stook” of twelve tied grain-bundles, arranged “surrounding” each other and leaning against each other at the top for mutual support. Spikes heavy with grain-kernels tend to bow, and, likely, one sheaf would stand taller and firmer than the rest. All our Twelve Israelite Tribes stand together in such a stook, leaning against each other for support. The roundness and the leaning indicates our essential equality and interdependence, although some will inevitably stand taller and support more than others. But ultimately we can recognize the contributions of the leaders and realize that it is our mutual leaning which keeps the whole structure intact and protects the yield. Joseph’s brothers don’t appreciate this at first, and so Joseph brings his lessons in grain-storage and interdependence to Egypt first. However, the tribes inevitably learn Joseph’s lessons later.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayesheb December 8-9, 2017

Hertz Pentateuch: p. 141; Haftarah p. 152
 Kaplan Living Torah: p. 182; Haftarah p. 1082

CANDLE LIGHTING | 4:10 pm

MINHAH & ARBIT | 4:15 pm | Main Sanctuary

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “The Marvelous Mishkan in Utah” | 2017-18 season sponsored by the Julis family.

HANUKKAH SHIUR (PART 2 OF 3) | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik

| Elias Room | 8:15 am

ZEMIROT | 8:30 am

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am

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 | Fidanque Youth Room

JUNIOR CONGREGATION WITH A TORAH READING | Ages 5-12

| 10:30 am | Little Synagogue

TALK | Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “Jerusalem, DC (David’s City): The Making of Ancient and Modern Jerusalem”

KIDDUSH | Elias Room

HAMILTON LUNCHEON | For Registered Guests | Levy Auditorium

SEUDA SHELISHIT & SHABBAT AFTERNOON PIRKEI ABOT SHIUR |

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik | “What Does Maccabee Mean?” | 3:30 pm |

Elias Room | Fall semester sponsored by Scott Shay, in memory of Chana

Razel bat Aaron v’Sarah.

MINHAH & ARBIT | 4:05 pm

HABDALAH | 4:55 pm

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday: 8:00 am

Monday-Friday: 7:15 am

Evenings (Arbit Only):

Sunday-Thursday: 6:30 pm

Hanukkah begins Tuesday evening, December 12.

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

*Layaliza Soloveichik & the Rebbetzins of the UWS
cordially invite the women of the community to*

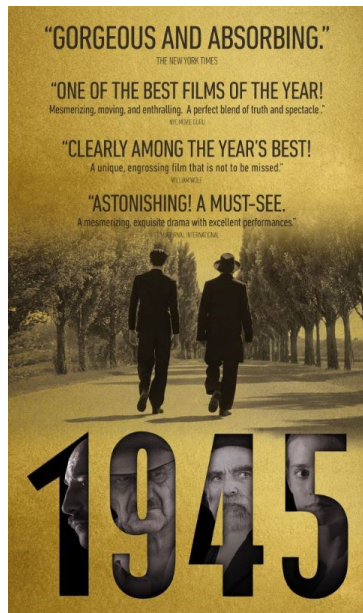
The Annual Westside Mikvah Fundraiser

Wednesday, December 27 | 7:30 pm

535 West End Avenue, Apartment 14

Come celebrate and support the Upper West Side Mikvah, with special guest speaker Rebbetzin Peshi Neuberger. Because the West Side Mikvah faithfully serves the community day in and day out, it is easy to forget about its financial needs. **Even if you cannot attend, please consider donating** to maintain this essential community institution.

To donate, sponsor, and register, visit
westsidemikvahfundraiser.com.



FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR
THAT BROUGHT YOU
“THE WOMEN’S BALCONY”
*The Film Critics are Calling a
“Must-See” and “A Masterpiece”*
“1945”

Now playing at Lincoln
Plaza Cinemas, with a
special screening to be held
at Shearith Israel
on Yom Hashoah,
April 11.

On a summer day in 1945, 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—

suspicious, remorseful, fearful, and cunning—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.

HANUKKAH AT SHEARITH ISRAEL

A Three-Part Series by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik
*The Most Misunderstood Holiday:
The True Meaning of Hanukkah*

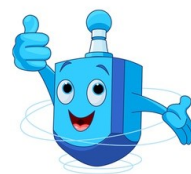
Part 2: This Shabbat, December 9, 8:15 am
Part 3: Shabbat Hanukkah, December 16, 3:30 pm
(Morning Services begin at 8:30 am on Dec. 9)

We will utilize both halakha and
history to show how we have lost much of what this
holiday is truly all about and why it is so important to
rediscover it now.

The second class will take place prior to *shaharit* this
Shabbat morning, December 9, at 8:15 am, and the
series will conclude on the afternoon of Shabbat
Hanukkah, December 16, prior to *minhah*, at 3:30 pm.

Shabbat Hanukkah—Special Choral Performance Next Shabbat, December 16

Join us for services on Shabbat Hanukkah, when our choir, led by
Leon Hyman, will perform *Min HaMetsar* during
the *Hallel* (about 9:30 AM). This wonderful and elaborate piece
was composed by the famous French composer, Jacques
Fromenthal HaLevy. This piece, along with the theme of *Maoz
Tzur* and *En Kelohenu* set to Handel's *See, the Conquering Hero
Comes*, makes Shabbat Hanukkah at Shearith Israel a particularly
special day in the musical calendar of our synagogue.



Hanukkah Fest!

For all Shearith Israel Youth and
PTTS Families

Sunday, December 17 | 11:00 am
Join PTTS and CSI youth for fun and
informative Hanukkah festivities,

including an interactive olive press demonstration, art
projects, holiday songs, and homemade waffles.

While many Jews celebrate Hanukkah by eating potato
pancakes, deep fried in oil in remembrance of the
miracle of the oil, here at Shearith Israel we honor the
tradition of Amsterdam by eating vaffele (waffles)
because God made a “miracle and wonder” (Hebrew:
“nes va-fe'le”) during these days. And after all, everyone
loves a good waffle!

Enjoying Our New Fidanque Youth Room

Thank you to all the Young Families and their supporters who
have made this room happen. We're immensely gratified by the
positive response we received after unveiling the room last
Shabbat. To ensure the room is used as intended and to preserve
it for long term enjoyment, please take note of
the following guidelines:

- This room was designed primarily with our youngest
children in mind. Tot Shabbat will be held there each
week;
- Our older children (5-12) will continue to enjoy the
beautiful Elias Room most weeks;
- On the occasions, like **this** week, when Elias is
unavailable, Youth Groups will also be held in the
Fidanque Youth Room, with a partition.

We will be evaluating these arrangements over time and making
adjustments as needed.

A few general reminders:

Tot Shabbat is a combination of supervised play and structured
Shabbat activities. The schedule is (approximately) as follows:

- ⇒ **10:00 am - 10:30 am:** Free play and snacks
[No drop-off before 10:00, please—Liz needs to prepare the room.]
- ⇒ **10:30 am - 11:15 am:** Older children may attend Junior
Congregation; younger ones remain with Liz.
- ⇒ **11:15 am:** Circle Time with Shabbat songs and stories with
Shanade
- ⇒ **11:45 am:** Cleanup and wrap-up
- ⇒ **After services or speech:** Pickup
- ⇒ Parents should pick up children **before kiddush**. Children
may not play unsupervised in the new Fidanque Youth Room
(or in the hallways). Liz will lock the Fidanque Youth Room
when Tot Shabbat ends.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome the following new members to the Shearith
Israel family:

**Avrom & Arlene Doft,
Jacob & Suzanne Doft.**

Mazal tob to **Adele & Ronald Tauber** on the engagement of
their daughter, Lisa, to Richard Dinerstein.