

The Dream of Unification Miraculously Fulfilled

At the end of Mikketz, Judah had convinced Jacob to allow Benjamin to return to Egypt with the other nine brothers. When the ten of them came before Joseph, Joseph freed his hostage, Simon. But as the eleven of them were departing safely, Joseph framed Benjamin for stealing by planting his Divining Goblet in his sack. As punishment, Joseph demanded that Benjamin alone be left behind as a slave. In Vayiggash, Judah asks to be enslaved in Benjamin's stead, explaining that he had personally guaranteed Benjamin's safe return to their father, for old Jacob was so attached to Benjamin that bereft of him he would surely die. Hearing this response, that Judah was willing to sacrifice himself rather than abandon Jacob's favored last son, in contrast to the treatment Joseph himself had suffered, deeply moves Joseph. Unable to hold back his feelings, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.

How should we describe this feeling which came over Joseph? Compassion towards his brothers, and towards his father, had brought Joseph to inquiring of his father and giving the brothers food without accepting payment. But this had not stopped Joseph from being quite hard-nosed with them nor assuaged Joseph's bitterness towards most of them. Interpreting Joseph's threat to keep Benjamin as his "testing" his brothers does not seem tenable - for all we know, Joseph fully expected that the brothers would abandon Benjamin just as they had abandoned him. Was Joseph moved by compassion for his father's life? Perhaps, but it wasn't this alone which moved Joseph to reveal himself. After all, Joseph could have simply accepted Judah's offer to serve as a slave in Benjamin's stead. As long as Benjamin was returned, Jacob's life was not at risk, and Joseph could have continued to disguise his identity.

But rather, it seems Joseph was rather unexpectedly stunned by Judah's statement and saw in it the miraculous hand of God acting to fulfill Joseph's prophetic dreams. As in later prophetic books, such as in our haftarah from Ezekiel, a hand of God is prophetically seen in bringing about repentance among all brother Israelites for their sins against God and against their brethren and miraculously bringing reconciliation and reunification among all the national "family" of Israel. We were told that Joseph remembered all his dreams when he first saw his brothers bowing to his begging for food. But for the full dream to be fulfilled, *the whole family* would have to come and bow to him. Joseph's prophetic dream was not merely one of personal glory, but of his exercising leadership *among his brethren* Israel.

Joseph's dream in this way is like Ezekiel's: There will be a unified Israel with one king ruling over all Israel and Judea. Although in Egypt Joseph had fulfilled some ambition for political power, his dream of exercising rule *over his brethren* had seemed remote. But now, he suddenly sees this spirit of repentance and family solidarity among his divisive brethren and is stunned that the prophecy of national/family unity under his leadership is possible and will indeed miraculously be fulfilled. It is seeing the fulfillment of this prophesy of unification coming true despite all the divisions and rivalries which suddenly moves Joseph to cast aside all his previous grievances and deeply reattach himself to his people and nation. It is seeing that prophetic vision of repentance and national reconciliation at least partially coming true in the foreseen Return from Babylonian Exile which similarly inspired Ezekiel and the other Prophets. And it is our further seeing this spirit of reconciliation and brotherly reunification among our divisive People Israel down to our day which continues to stun and move us in seeing Divine Prophecy miraculously being fulfilled. Unlike Isaac and Ishmael, and unlike Jacob and Esau, Joseph sees a spirit of true reconciliation coming over his eleven brothers. And it is that same miracle of repentance and reconciliation which will eventually allow God's People Israel to flourish.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL
The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue

Shabbat Vayiggash

December 30-31, 2022 | 7 Tebeth 5783

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

Hertz: p. 168 | Haftarah: p. 178

Kaplan: p. 222 | Haftarah: p. 1086

Candle Lighting | 4:20 pm

Friday Evening Services | 4:30 pm | Main Sanctuary

The choir and Friday Night Lights will return next week.

Zemirot | 8:15 am / **Shahrit** | 9:00 am | Main Sanctuary

Youth Program | 10:00 am | Fidanque Youth Room

Kiddush | following services | *Kiddush wine sponsored by Karyn Braka Bogart, in memory of her grandfather, David Braka*

The choir and Shabbat Afternoon Class will return next week.

Evening Services | 4:10 pm | Main Sanctuary

Habdala | 5:05 pm

See inside for the Fast of Tebeth (Tuesday, Jan. 3) schedule.

Weekday Service Times

Mornings:

Sunday & Monday (legal holiday): 8:05 am | Tuesday-Friday: 7:05 am

Evenings:

Sunday-Monday & Wednesday-Thursday: 4:30 pm

The earlier time means a harder time making a minyan. If you can help out and attend minyan, morning or evening, please contact Z. Edinger.

COMING UP

FINALE:

Sisterhood Sunday Matinee Film Festival

Final Film Discussion: Sunday, January 8 | 4:00 pm

Film provided in advance to registrants | Price: \$10

Discussion on Zoom with filmmaker & actor Emanuel Cohn on Jan 8

THE LITTLE DICTATOR

Starring: Emanuel Cohn, Iris Penn, and Ruth Geller

A history professor, Yossi Kleinmann, an expert on the political leaders of totalitarian regimes, feels unappreciated both by his students and his domineering wife. At the 90th birthday party of his wife's grandmother, a Holocaust survivor, Yossi finds himself in an unexpected situation that forces him to face up to history, to his family, and to himself.

Registration and details at shearithisrael.org/events/sisterhood-film-fest.

A link will be sent to you to watch the film, a week before the appointed date, together with a second link to join the Sunday discussion on Zoom. For questions, contact rgedinger@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Schedule Changes

- Our office will be **closed** this Monday, January 1, for the legal holiday.
- Services on Monday morning will be at **8:05 am**.
- Tuesday, January 3, is the **Fast of Tebeth** - see opposite panel for full schedule.

Mazal tob to **Flora Jakobishvili**, upon becoming a Bat Mitzvah in Israel.

Congratulations to her parents, **Isabelle Levy & Nugi Jakobishvili**.

Condolences to **Carol Di Pisa (& John Quinones)**, upon the passing of Carol's father.

FAST OF TEBETH

This Tuesday, January 3

Dawn (Fast Begins): 6:08 am

Shahrit: 7:05 am

Minha (with Tefillin) & Arbit: 4:00 pm

End of Fast: 5:00 pm

LAST CHANCE

Make Your Year-End Gift Before January 1st!

Now is the time to support Shearith Israel, our societies, and special funds (e.g. rabbi's discretionary fund, Sisterhood, Hebra, etc.) with an end of year gift. These gifts are a crucial part of our budget and enable Shearith Israel to maintain the high standard to which we are all accustomed.

If you have any outstanding balances, now is also a good time to take care of those.

Visit tinyurl.com/end-gift22 to submit your gift.

COMING UP

Sign up now for Early Bird Pricing!

A Community Shabbat Dinner with *Magevet*,

Yale's Jewish Acapella Group

Friday Evening, Shabbat Shira, February 3

Following Evening Services & *Friday Night Lights*

What better way to enjoy Shabbat Shira than with *shira*, song? Following our Friday evening services – always musically exquisite – registered guests will enjoy a festive Shabbat dinner enhanced by a musical performance by *Magevet*, Yale University's Jewish, Hebrew, and Israeli acapella group. A co-ed ensemble, comprised of talented undergraduate students at Yale University, *Magevet* is known for its sweet blend of voices, unique arrangements, and lighthearted sense of humor, and is one of the nation's premiere Jewish acapella singing groups.

To register, visit shearithisrael.org/events/magevet-dinner.

SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 8

Shearith Israel will be joining the West Side Wide Ice Skating Outing!

Details upcoming - keep an eye on your emails