

Parasha Perspectives

Parashat Shemot tells of the beginning of Moshe's "career" as a prophet, a role which he first assumed when God appeared to him at the famous burning bush on Mount Sinai (chapter 3). Numerous theories have been advanced to explain the symbolic significance of this particular vision, of a bush that burns but is not consumed (3:2).

The *Keli Yakar* detects within this vision a harsh indictment of *Benei Yisrael's* interpersonal conduct at the time. Earlier in the parasha, we are told of Moshe's experiences as he observed the work of the Israelite slaves in Egypt. In his second encounter, he came upon two quarreling slaves, and upon approaching the aggressor, he was angrily rebuffed. Worse, Moshe learned that the news of the previous day's event – when he had killed a violent Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a slave – was spread and became public knowledge. Moshe then lamented, "Indeed, the matter is known." The Midrash (*Shemot Rabba* 1:35) explains, "There is *lashon ha-ra* [negative speech about others] among them – how can they be worthy of redemption... I now know on account of what matter they are enslaved!"

According to the Midrash, Moshe attributed *Benei Yisrael's* oppression to the prevalence of *lashon ha-ra* – slander, gossip and backstabbing. The *Keli Yakar* suggests that it is for this reason that God first appeared to Moshe in a "*seneh*," a thorn bush. *Benei Yisrael* at the time were like a *seneh*, "pricking" each other like thorns. The animosity and conflicts ignited the "flames" of oppression and suffering, symbolized by the raging fire that burned inside the *seneh* at Sinai. But just as the bush burned but was not consumed, the "thorns" of *Benei Yisrael* persisted and endured. The affliction caused by the people's contempt for one another should have led them to come together peacefully, and destroy the "thorns" that plagued them – just as the fiery flames should have consumed the bush. Oddly enough, however, "the bush was not consumed" – the "pricking" continued. Although the fighting caused so much pain and harm, the people were not wise enough to end it.

One could debate whether or not this was truly God's intent in revealing Himself at the *seneh*, but regardless, the parallel is indeed a compelling one. So often, people "set fire" to their lives through senseless fighting, but refuse to allow the "thorns" to be consumed. They refuse to relent, to back down, to move forward, despite the havoc the conflict is causing. According to the *Keli Yakar*, the image of the burning bush reminds us to allow the "thorns" to be consumed, to put an end to fights and conflict before the "fire" overwhelms us.

By Rabbi David Silverberg, from the Virtual Beit Midrash (www.vbm-torah.org).

To submit a Dvar Torah to the weekly Keshet, please email bulletin@mtsinaishul.com.

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The Mount Sinai Keshet

January 8-9, 2010 • 23 Tevet, 5770 • Parashat Shemot • Shabbat Mevarchim

Shabbat Schedule

Candle Lighting	4:27 p.m.
Mincha	4:32 p.m.
Shacharit	7:00, 9:00 a.m.
Kri' at Shema before	9:41 a.m.
Tot Shabbat	10:45 a.m.
<i>Kiddush following davening</i>	
Rabbi Schwartz's Gemara shiur	3:10 p.m.
Mincha	4:10 p.m.
<i>Seuda Shlishit following Mincha</i>	
Women's Shabbat Mevarchim shiur	4:40 p.m.
Shkia	4:46 p.m.
Maariv/Havdala	5:33 p.m.

Tefillah Schedule Week of January 10th

<i>Shacharit</i>	
Sunday	7:30, 8:30, 9:00 a.m.
Mon., Thurs.	6:45, 7:20, 8:00 a.m.
Tues., Wed., Fri.	7:00, 7:30, 8:00 a.m.
<i>Mincha/Maariv</i>	
Sunday -Thursday	4:35 p.m.
<i>Maariv</i>	
Sunday - Thursday	10:00 p.m.
<i>Next Shabbat, Parashat Va'era, Rosh Chodesh</i>	
Candles	4:35 p.m.
Mincha	4:40 p.m.



HATZOLA
(212) 230 - 1000

Sponsorships

The **ERUV** sponsored by **Ilana Mann** in gratitude to all of the hosts who are or who have housed SAR students for our shabbatons, and just because she never has before.

The **KESHER** is sponsored in memory of Menachem Yehoshua ben Yitzchak Shraga, and by **Elie and Leezy Klein** wishing Mazal Tov to Josh Gottlieb on his engagement to Rebecca Winter.

SEUDA SHLISHIT is sponsored by **SAR** and **Dan Datikashvili and family** in memory of their father, Merab Datikashvili.

The **KIDDUSH** is co-sponsored by **SAR**. Additional contributors:

- **Friends of Mikey Butler** in honor of his 6th yearzeit
- **Jeremy and Cheryl Ginsburg** in honor of their anniversary
- Birthday Sponsors: **Sara Shatz, Orlee Levin**
- **Michal and Shlomo Wadler** in honor of Rabbi Yosef Blau

The Eruv DOES extend across Broadway, but does not extend into Fort Tryon Park. If you are not sure where you can carry, please contact the rabbi or a member of the eruv committee.

Rabbi Schwartz's Office Hours

Monday: 9 p.m.-10 p.m.
Wednesday: Following 8:45pm Shiur (approx. 9:30-10:30pm)

This Week at Mt. Sinai

Sunday:

Lecture by Rabbi David Silber, 7:00 p.m. entitled "Moshe's Encounter at the Sneh: Redemption and Revelation in Sefer Shemot."

Monday:

Women's Aerobics, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Anat Coleman, (212) 740 2740. \$10 to try a class.

Women's Basketball, 9:00 p.m. Contact: Susanne Goldstone, susqhb@gmail.com.

Tuesday:

Women's Basketball, 9:00 p.m. Contact: Elie Appleson, elie.appleson@gmail.com.

Wednesday:

Men's Basketball, 8:00 p.m. Contact: Daniel Falik, daniel@danielfalik.com

Class with Rabbi Schwartz, 8:45 p.m. on "When Uncle Sam Comes Knocking: Cheating on Your Taxes".

Motzai Shabbat:

Men's Basketball, 6:00 p.m. Contact: Daniel Falik, daniel@danielfalik.com

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Under the Vaad of Riverdale

Tot Shabbat

Parents and children under 5 are invited to Tot Shabbat during Mussaf (approx. 10:45 am), downstairs in the Multipurpose room.

Sponsorships are available! Contact the shul office, or familylife@mtsinaishul.com



Welcome New Members

Ben Kohanim
Rebecca Weiser
Caryn Keller



Education Update

- This week there is a Shabbat Mevarchim Women's Shiur after Mincha at 4:40 p.m, given by Devora Khayyat, entitled "Yetziat Mitzrayim: First Cut."
- On Sunday, January 10th at 7:00 p.m. Rabbi David Silber will deliver a lecture entitled 'Moshe's Encounter at the Sneh: Redemption and Revelation in Sefer Shemot'.
- Rabbi Schwartz's shiur will meet this Wednesday at 8:45 p.m. The topic is "When Uncle Sam Comes Knocking: Cheating on your Taxes."
- The annual Lehmann Lecture on Science and Halakha will take place on Monday night, January 18. We are privileged to be hearing from Rabbi Dr. Edward Reichman who will speak on, "Re-inventing life and Re-defining death: Medical Halakha in the 21st Century".
- Save the date! On Saturday night, January 23, at 8pm we will be screening the powerful film, **Refusenik**, about the movement to free Soviet Jews. **Admission is FREE!**

Check out the Torah Tab at mtsinaishul.com, and follow us on Twitter @mtsinaiedu.



Contact education@mtsinaishul.com

Refuah Shleima

Rabbi Yehuda Hilewitz



Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee is now in full swing again!

Join us for Shabbat.



If you can host guests for shabbos, or if you need a meal, please sign up at www.mtsinaishul.com/hospitality by Thursday at 10AM.

If you have any questions, the please be in touch with members of the Hospitality Committee, or e-mail shabbosmeals@gmail.com.

Membership Appreciation Dinner

Save the date!

The Mt. Sinai Membership Committee is proud to announce the second annual **Membership Appreciation Dinner**, thanking all of shul's members for being a part of our community.

This year's dinner will take place on **Friday night, January 29th** after davening (i.e., at about 6pm).

All current members are invited!

To express our appreciation to our membership, the shul is offering this exciting event for only **\$15/person!**

Reminder: 2010 Membership dues must be paid in order to attend. Dues should be sent out within the next few days.

For more information:
membership@mtsinaishul.com