

Parasha Perspectives

Let My People Go!

"Let My People Go": This often-occurring phrase never appears alone, but always as "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." Note: not to party, not to just have a democratic Jewish state, but to do the task God is calling the people to do.

Early on, Jacob Birnbaum, founder of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) in 1964, added "Let My People Know" to the organization's signature slogan. He understood that, important as it was to rescue Jewish bodies from the Soviet Union, it was equally important to rescue their Jewish neshamas. Tonight's showing of the film "Refusenik" shows some of the powerful Jewish souls who managed, against tremendous odds, to discover and to maintain their Jewishness in a very strange and difficult land.

The film balances refuseniks' stories with accounts of how American and world Jewry campaigned to achieve the Exodus of some two million Jews from the Soviet Union. Often these efforts were in spite of the American Jewish establishment's original policy of quiet, behind-the-scenes, don't-make-waves diplomacy. Many of these early US activists worked for years without official recognition or funding. It's more than interesting to note that Moshe Rabbenu was not "Mr. Charisma," making speeches, etc. In fact he asked for someone else to do the speeches! But he did the job God asked him to do – and it happened.

Many people think that now that so many former Soviet Jews are out, the job is done. But there is still much to do about religious outreach and education, and integrating Jews from the former Soviet Union into the fabric of the Jewish people, to the point where we don't refer to them any more as "the Russians" but take them for granted as fellow Jews.

People often ask Jacob Birnbaum if he was inspired by the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Certainly they had things in common: peaceful demonstrations and non-violence (up to the time of Black Power), grassroots campaigns, influencing political figures. I remember that years ago an African-American friend who was a guest at our Seder could hardly believe some of what she was hearing: "That's OUR stuff!" she exclaimed. Of course it is the other way around: the Biblical Exodus story is profound inspiration not only for civil rights movements, but for any liberation movement, certainly the movement to free Soviet Jewry, which achieved one of the great historic redemptions of Jewish history.

This week's Parsha Perspective is by Freda Birnbaum in honor of her husband Jacob Birnbaum. Mrs. Birnbaum is a long time member of Mt. Sinai who serves on the Board. Her favorite committee is usually the Eruv Committee to which she belongs, but this week her favorite is Lisa Kellerman's Education Committee for sponsoring "Refusenik" and for all the other excellent work they do.

Mt. Sinai Jewish Center
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Rabbi Emeritus: R' Mordecai Schnaidman
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Office Hours:
Sunday 8:30 - 12:00
Mon, -Thurs 9:30 - 5:00
Friday 8:30 - 12:00
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The Mount Sinai Keshar

January 22-23, 2010 • 8 Shevat, 5770 • Parashat Bo

Shabbat Schedule

Candle Lighting	4:43 p.m.
Mincha	4:48 p.m.
Shacharit	7:00, 9:00 a.m.
Kri'at Shema before	9:40 a.m.
Rabbi Schwartz's Gemara shiur	3:25 p.m.
Mincha	4:25 p.m.
<i>Seuda Shlishit following Mincha</i>	
Shkia	5:02 p.m.
Maariv/Havdala	5:49 p.m.
Film Screening of "Refusenik"	8:00 p.m.

Tefillah Schedule Week of January 24th

<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	4:50 p.m.
<i>Maariv</i>	
Sunday - Thursday	10:00 p.m.
<i>Next Shabbat, Parashat Beshalach, Tu Be-shevat</i>	
Candles	4:51 p.m.
Mincha	4:56 p.m.

Rabbi Schwartz's Office Hours

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

Sponsorships

The **ERUV** sponsored by **James and Caryn Wolfe** in honor of the birth of their daughter, Eva Rose.

The **KESHER** is sponsored by **Shuli Berger and Jai Zion** in tribute to three Washington Heights residents who had a significant role in the Soviet Jewry Movement: **Dr. Jacob Birnbaum**, initiator of the activist movement; **Rabbi Jacob Goldberg z"l**, chairman of the New York Coordinating Committee for Soviet Jewry; and **Rabbi Shlomo Kahn z"l**, founder and longtime chairman of the Washington Heights-Inwood Council for Soviet Jewry.

SEUDA SHLISHIT is not sponsored this week.

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.

Please send all announcements to office@mtsinaishul.com and bulletin@mtsinaishul.com by 5 p.m. on Wednesday. Thank you!



HATZOLA
(212) 230 - 1000

This Week at Mt. Sinai

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. Jews in the Non Jewish World. Topic: Avoda Zara

Motzai Shabbat:

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

Next Sunday:

General Membership Meeting, 10:00 a.m. See opposite page for details.

Shiur with Rabbi Angel, 7:00 p.m. on Divrei Hayamim. Ice cream celebration to follow!

Film Screening: Refusenik

This **Saturday night, January 23, at 8pm**, we will be screening the powerful film, **Refusenik**, about the movement to free Soviet Jews.

Admission is FREE!

Gabbaut Notices

- This **Sunday, January 24th**, will be the last time the **10:00 p.m. maariv** will be held on Sunday. After that, the minyan will be Monday through Thursday only.
- The Shabbat Hashkama minyan is looking for volunteers to lead in the upcoming weeks. If anyone is able to volunteer to lead please contact Yoni Ray or Ya'akov Kanner.

Haiti Relief Effort

With the encouragement of Rabbi Schwartz, those interested in making donations for the Haitian relief effort may do so at the following Washington Heights and Inwood drop-off sites:

- High Class Car Service at 604 W. 158th St. between B'way & Riverside Drive/Edward Morgan Place. 212-926-1111. High Class also will pick-up items at your home or place of business; please call to schedule an appointment.
- Mamajuana Cafe at 247 Dyckman btwn Seaman & Payson Ave. 212-304-0140
- Tabacoy Ron Cafe at 501 West 214 Street & 10th Avenue. 212-567-7170

Donations may also be made to such organizations as the Red Cross www.redcross.org and UNICEF www.unicef.org.

Education Update

- This Saturday night, January 23, at 8pm we will be screening the powerful film, **Refusenik**, about the movement to free Soviet Jews. **Admission is FREE!**
- **Rabbi Schwartz's shiur** will start a new series, "Jews in a Non Jewish World" on Wednesday at 8:45 p.m. The topic is Avoda Zara.
- Next Sunday, January 31 at 7 pm, **Rabbi Angel** will give his final shiur in our Nach series, and it will be on Divrei Hayamim. There will be a special ice cream celebration as part of the shul's Nach Yomi siyum. All are welcome.

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



Contact education@mtsinaishul.com

Career Networking Initiative Email List

The Chessed Committee's Career Networking initiative will be establishing an email list to circulate information about available jobs to those who are looking.

If you are interested in being added to the email list, please email Zev Safran, at zsafran@gmail.com.

Please include some basic details about your background and what you are looking for.

Refuah Shleima to 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.

General Membership Meeting

There will be a general membership meeting on **Sunday January 31st** at 10AM in the Beit Midrash. On the agenda will be a vote on the shul's proposed new constitution and the presentation of shul financial reports. *Please remember that in order to attend and vote at the meeting you must be a member in good standing.*

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Bills for 2010 membership dues have been sent out. If you are a member and have not received your bill please contact the office.

Mazal Tov!

- **Sefi Lerner** on her engagement to Jonathan Hefter



- All those who are finishing the shul's 2-year **Nach Yomi cycle** this Shabbat