

**Parasha Perspectives**

Parashat Ki-Tisa begins with the *mitzva* of *machatzit ha-shekel*, the annual half-shekel tax that every individual had to pay to the treasury of the *Beit Ha-mikdash*. The Torah emphasizes that this was a flat tax; each person had to pay precisely a half-shekel, regardless of his financial status: "The wealthy man shall not increase, nor shall the indigent man decrease, from the half-shekel" (30:15).

The Ramban, in his commentary to this verse, interprets it as establishing a *mitzvat lo ta'aseh* (Torah prohibition) that forbids deviating in either direction from the specified amount. While noting the fact that the *Ge'onim* and *Rishonim* who listed the Torah's 613 commands make no mention of such a prohibition, the Ramban asserts that we should, indeed, include this command in the list of the *mitzvot*. Accordingly, in the Ramban's view, a pauper who pays less than a half-shekel not only fails to fulfill the affirmative command to pay a half-shekel, but also violates the command that forbids paying less. Furthermore, and perhaps even more surprisingly, a wealthy man who pays more than a half-shekel violates a Torah prohibition, since he exceeded the specified amount of a half-shekel.

A number of later writers (including Rav Zalman Sorotzkin, in his *Oznayim La-Torah*) note the significance of this prohibition as it applies to the wealthy person's additional donation. Sometimes, *chesed* is used as a means of asserting control or earning distinction. The Torah certainly allows, and even encourages, voluntary donations to the Temple treasury. However, it insists upon an equal annual tax in order to reserve one area where all members of the nation are equal, and where no member can assert supremacy over another even through the means of magnanimity. We might imagine that for the wealthier members of *Benei Yisrael*, it was very difficult to pay the same measly half-shekel that the nation's beggars paid. They likely felt a natural drive and inclination to pay higher dues, if for no other reason than to set themselves socially apart from the mendicants. The prohibition of "*he-ashir lo yarbeh*" required the nation's aristocrats and moguls to experience a sense of kinship and identification with members of the lower socioeconomic classes. The Torah found it necessary to designate one area where the wealthy would be unable to distinguish themselves – even through acts of generosity. While the Torah certainly encourages voluntary donations to the *Mikdash*, it assigned one "flat tax" which reminded the people that all members of *Am Yisrael* are, ultimately, equally beloved by the Almighty and worthy of bringing His presence into the nation's midst.

*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.*

*We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have paid their 2010 dues.  
Your support enables our shul to continue serving as the epicenter of our community.  
Thank you so much.*

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**Mt. Sinai  
Jewish Center**  
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**Rabbi:** R' Ezra Schwartz  
**Rabbi Emeritus:** R' Mordecai Schnaidman  
**President:** Ben Sandler  
**Vice-President:** Ilana Mann  
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**Office Hours:**  
Sunday 8:30 - 12:00  
Mon, -Thurs 9:30 - 5:00  
Friday 8:30 - 12:00  
212-568-1900 • office@mtsinaishul.com



*The Mount Sinai Keshet*

March 5-6, 2010 • 20 Adar, 5770 • Parashat Ki Tisa • Parashat Para

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**Shabbat Schedule**

Candle Lighting	5:33 p.m.
Mincha	5:38 p.m.
Shacharit	7:00, 9:00 a.m.
Kri'at Shema before	9:15 a.m.
<i>Kiddush following davening</i>	
Rabbi Schwartz's Gemara shiur	4:15 p.m.
Mincha	5:15 p.m.
<i>Seuda Shlishit following Mincha</i>	
Shkia	5:52 p.m.
Maariv/Havdala	6:40 p.m.

**Tefillah Schedule  
Week of March 7th**

<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	5:40 p.m.
<i>Maariv</i>	
Monday - Wednesday	10:00 p.m.
<i>Next Shabbat, Parashat Vayahel-Pekudei, Parashat Hachodesh</i>	
Candles	5:41 p.m.
Mincha	5:46 p.m.



**HATZOLA**  
**(212) 230 - 1000**

**Sponsorships**

The **ERUV** is sponsored by **Jeremy and Aviva Stern** wishing a Mazal Tov to Shlomo and Michal Wadler on the birth of their son.

**KIDDUSH** and **SEUDA SHLISHIT** are sponsored by Shlomo and Michal Wadler in honor of the brit of their son.

The **KESHER** is not sponsored this week.

*Find out the latest updates with the Washington Heights eruv by calling 646-450-ERUV (3788), sending an SMS to (412) 213-8991 or by sending a Google Chat message to eruv@bot.im.*

The Eruv **has again been extended and DOES extend across Broadway**, but does not extend into Fort Tryon Park. For an updated map of the Eruv please go to our [website](#) or see the map in the shul lobby. 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)

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

### ***This Week at Mt. Sinai***

#### **Sunday:**

General Membership Meeting, 10:00 a.m. to vote on the new constitution.

#### **Monday:**

Women's Aerobics, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Anat Coleman, (212) 810 1178. This is the final class of the session; classes resume after Pesach.

Shiur with Rabbi Bergmann, 8:00 p.m. See below for details .

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. 2nd in a 3 part series on Pesach.

#### **Thursday:**

Uri L'tzedek Beit Midrash, 7:30 p.m. See below for details.

#### **Motzai Shabbat:**

Men's Basketball, 7:15 p.m. Contact: Daniel Falik, daniel@danielfalik.com

### **Uri L'tzedek Beit Midrash**

**Thursday, March 11, 7:30 - 9:00pm**

Join Uri L'Tzedek, Rav Yitzchak Blau, and Miriam Ignatoff from the Hebrew Immigrant Aide Society on Thursday, March 11th from 7:30-9 as we study the Jewish perspective on immigration, and we can understand these issues in light of this perspective. Rav Yitzchak Blau, the Rosh Kollel at Yeshivat Shvilei HaTorah & the author of Fresh Fruit & Vintage Wine (a book on aggadah) will be coming in from Israel and will be teaching on "Compassion for the Convert in the Jewish Tradition."

*Co-sponsored by Pardes. Free dinner will be served!*

### **Education Update**

- This **Monday** at **8pm** Rabbi Ari Bergmann will be continuing his 3-part series on **Pesach** entitled, "Pesach Ba-halakha u-be'aggadah: Where the Two Paths Merge."

*Rabbi Ari Bergmann is the lead Portfolio Manager at Penso Capital Markets, LLC. Originally from Brazil and having spent time learning at Ner Yisroel, he is currently a PhD candidate in Comparative Religion at Columbia University.*

- Rabbi Schwartz's shiur will meet this **Wednesday** at 8:45pm. This is the second shiur in a series on Pesach.



### **Mazel Tov!**



- **Shlomo and Michal Wadler** on the birth of a son. The Shlom Zakhar will be at 8:45 in the MPR.
- **Judy Fuld** on the Bar Mitzvah of her grandson.
- **Mark Grinberg and Nekhama Zilberstein** on the birth of a grandson.

### **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](mailto:zsafran@gmail.com).

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

### **Washington Heights Canned Food Drive**

Donate un-damaged, un-opened, un-expired and non-junk food to the JCC from now until March 21st at the designated drop off apartments. Every month, the JCC hands out thousands of food packages to families in need, and their supplies are running low. Contact Zev Safran at [zsafran@gmail.com](mailto:zsafran@gmail.com), Rebecca Weiser at [rebweiser@gmail.com](mailto:rebweiser@gmail.com), or the Chessed committee at [Chessed@mtsinaishul.com](mailto:Chessed@mtsinaishul.com) if you would like more information.



### **Welcome New Member**

Tuvya Felt

### **Kiddush Next Week**

There will be a kiddush next Shabbat, March 13, for Shabbat Mevarchim Nissan (Shabbat Hachodesh). Kiddush sponsorships are a great way to celebrate simchas, birthdays, and to commemorate yahrtzeits of loved ones.

Sponsorships start at \$25. Please contact the office for more details.

(There will be NO crystal meth at this Kiddush.)

### **Gabbaut Notice**

If anyone is interested in helping out with the davening, laining, or gabbaut for Pesach, please see Yoni Ray.

### **Hospitality Committee**

Need a Shabbat meal? Want to host one? Sign up at [mtsinaishul.com/hospitality](http://mtsinaishul.com/hospitality) by 10 a.m. on Thursday.

Email [hospitality@mtsinaishul.com](mailto:hospitality@mtsinaishul.com) or [shabbosmeals@gmail.com](mailto:shabbosmeals@gmail.com) for more information



### **Refuah Shleima**

Solo Aron  
Judith Kantor

### **Beit Midrash**

**LAST CALL!** We are revamping our Beit Midrash and you can help!  
**Donate a new chair for just \$36 each.** Donations can be made online at [www.mtsinaishul.com](http://www.mtsinaishul.com) or at the office.