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THE DERASHAH: MAKING TORAH ETERNALLY RELEVANT

Last night, at a reception in my suite for Natan Shcharansky before he began his series of four lectures at Yeshiva, I was asked to greet him before a distinguished gathering of faculty, administration, Board members, and guests. I did so with an appropriate devar Torah.

In his response, Shcharansky said that several months ago he came to the United States to help organize the great march on Washington for Soviet Jewry during the visit of USSR Gorbachev -- a most successful demonstration. In preparing for it, he spoke in congregations throughout the country. It is remarkable, he said, that every time he was introduced, the rabbi presenting him would comment on how appropriate his visit was at that time because the Torah, in the weekly pareshat ha-Shavua, makes the following statement which can be applied to Soviet Jewry and Shcharansky...

"I thought to myself," said Shcharansky, "How funny it is that every week a rabbi should discover that the Torah's words apply to me and my situation. On second thought," he ruminated, "that is a wonderful tribute to Torah and its expositors, that it indeed is relevant to every situation and such relevance can be demonstrated by one who is a true student of Torah."