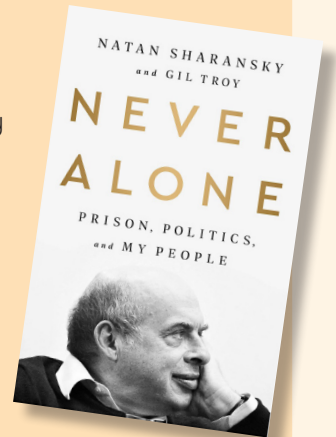


Natan Anatoly Sharansky

Natan Anatoly Sharansky is an Israeli-Ukrainian politician, author, mathematician and social rights activist. In his early days, Sharansky lived in what was then the USSR, a block of countries that were ruled by Russia. This area is now referred to as Ukraine. He became a famous Zionist leader for the Jewish community in the USSR and throughout the world.

The USSR had a policy of not allowing its citizens to leave and move to other countries. This was especially difficult for Jews who wanted to hold onto their religion and move to Israel to live freely as Jews. Jews who were refused the right to leave the USSR were called Refuseniks. On 5 March 1977, Sharansky was wrongfully accused and arrested for spying in favour of the United States government and being a Zionist worker. He was sentenced to 13 years in a labour prison in Siberia. During the years of his sentence he became the face of human rights movements, and especially the face of the antisemitic struggle in Eastern Europe.



Sharansky's wife, Avital, made Aliyah to Israel in 1974, the day after they got married, on the assumption that he would be allowed to make Aliyah very shortly after. She founded an organisation that included Knesset (Israeli Parliament) members and important leaders around the world in efforts of freeing her husband. On 11 February 1986, he was released after a major diplomatic agreement between Israel and Russia and reunited with his wife in Israel.

When Anatoly arrived in Israel, one of Israel's ambassadors waited for him along with many Zionist leaders with his Israeli passport which stated his new Israeli name- Natan.

After moving to the state of Israel, Sharansky worked hard towards helping fight for the release of other Zionist leaders who were falsely put in jail. After the collapse of the USSR, he became head of an organisation helping Russian Jews make Aliyah. In 1996 he founded a new political party *ישׂרָאֵל בְּעַלְיָה*, focused mainly on helping to accommodate and care for new Olim - Jews who move to Israel.

Throughout his career of service to Israel, Sharansky served as many positions including Minister of Industry and Trade, Internal Affairs, Jerusalem Affairs and Chair of the Jewish Agency.



Activity

During Sharansky's time in Russian prison, he often mentioned that what helped him survive and stay focused was playing an imaginary game of chess as well as repeating over things he had learnt from his Jewish studies.

Drawing inspiration from Natan Sharansky's story, ask the students the following:
If they had to pick 3 things each to take with them to a desert island- what would they pick?

Rules:

Ask the students to write their items on post-it notes and stick on the provided island poster.

Activity suggestion

The students will randomly pick one of the notes on the island and try to guess who wrote the note originally. Then, the student who wrote the note will get a chance to elaborate on why he chose those things specifically.

ITEM 1

Must represent their
family/ friends

ITEM 2

Must represent
their hobby

ITEM 3

Must represent
their Judaism or
Jewish traditions

