

The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror

Natan Sharansky, Ron Dermer

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One of the leading figures in the Soviet human rights movement who became a major political voice in Israel writes about democracy, about which he has earned the right to be passionate.. Natan Sharansky believes that the truest expression of democracy is the ability to walk into the middle of a town square and say whatever you like without fear of arrest or imprisonment. He should know. A dissident in the Soviet Union Sharansky was jailed for nine years for asserting his right to speak freely. During that time he reinforced his moral conviction that democracy above all others was a political virtue to be protected and enhanced, whatever the circumstances. It is a prerequisite for civilized society. Since his release and emigration to Israel in 1986 Sharansky has been a deputy prime minister of the Knesset, leading the party of Russian immigrants, and is now minister for Jerusalem. He has been pilloried by those who say he has been a disappointment as a liberal activist. He says he has been as consistent as he has been stubborn: tyranny, whether in the Soviet Union or the Middle East, must always be made to bow before Democacy. For Sharansky, drawing on a lifetime of experience of democracy and of its absence, politics is no longer a matter of left and right but of right and wrong. Politics must face up to moral responsibility and make hard choices: it must determine what matters most. And for Sharansky, it is only democracy that can safeguard the wellbeing of societies. This is a passionately argued book from a man who carries supreme moral authority to make the case he does here: that all rights and freedoms stem from democracy. With it robustly in place, societies will thrive and nations should be respected. Its absence is a fatal moral flaw that cannot be ignored. His argument is sure to stir controversy on all sides; his opinions will be studied at the highest levels of government policy making; this is arguably the next great issue of our times.

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