



THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION OF HONG KONG SHABBAT SHALOM

5 - 6 September, 2008

6 Elul 5768

Parashat Shoftim
(Deuteronomy 16:18–21:9)

Rabbi Stan Zamek
Song Leader Shani Ben Or

D'var Torah by Rabbi Stan Zamek

“Taste and know that the Lord is good.” This line from Psalm 34 has been a favorite of mine since I first heard Rabbi Avram Davis quote it at the beginning of one of his teachings years ago. The text points to the primacy in Jewish spiritual life of religious practice and experience over theory. It makes perfect sense. Just as we know that a peach is ripe and sweet by biting into it, so we can only know “the Lord is good” --- that Judaism will enrich our lives --- through doing. Until we taste we know nothing.

I am so happy that on my first Shabbat at the UJC my teacher and friend, Avram Davis, will be here to share this and other teachings with all of you. Rabbi Avram is coming to Hong Kong to install me as your new Rabbi and to serve as our Scholar-in-Residence. As you know from the invitation you received, a full weekend of learning has been planned. What you cannot know unless you come and “taste” is what a delight these teachings will be.

I have studied with Rabbi Avram off and on for almost 10 years. My spiritual life has greatly deepened as a result. He is a remarkable bridge between the mystical teachers of the Jewish past and the contemporary Jewish scene. I think you will be charmed by his wit and moved by his message. Do come. Taste and know.

Although the installation is supposed to be the formal beginning of a Rabbi's tenure with a congregation, it usually takes place after a new Rabbi has been with the congregation for a few months. I am very pleased that the schedule worked out so that my installation will occur at my first Shabbat as the Rabbi of the UJC. This seems like an auspicious way to begin.

I feel blessed to be here and look forward to immersing myself in the life of the UJC. This weekend is a great simcha for me and for my family. I hope you will come and help us celebrate.

All Blessings
Rabbi Z

4th September, 2008