

# THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION OF HONG KONG

*Celebrating 20 Years of Progressive Judaism in Hong Kong*

## SHABBAT SHALOM

22 – 23 January, 2010

8 Shevat 5770

Parashat Bo  
(Exodus 10:1-13:16)

Rabbi Stanton M. Zamek  
Cantorial Soloist Shani Ben Or

### From the Rabbi's desk

The past few weeks have been a time of remembrance of two of the moral and spiritual giants of the last century, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. The Martin Luther King holiday was this past Monday. Heschel's yartzheit, the 18<sup>th</sup> of Tevet, falls close to the King holiday. This year it was exactly two weeks prior to the King observance.

In memory of these two men, who were both personal friends and allies in the cause of justice, I offer you an iconic image and some words to reflect upon at the opening of this new decade.



Selma, Alabama  
21<sup>st</sup> March 1965

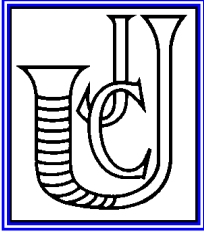
**Heschel, 14<sup>th</sup> January 1963 opening address of the Conference on Religion and Race (Heschel met King at this conference).**

Friends, at the first conference on religion and race, the main participants were Pharaoh and Moses. Moses — and Moses' words were, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, let my people go." While Pharaoh retorted, "Who's the Lord that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord. I will not let Israel go." The outcome of that summit meeting has not come to an end. Pharaoh is not ready to capitulate. The Exodus began but is far from having been completed.

**King, at the 1968 Convention of the Rabbinical Assembly**

I would like to say, however, on the question of being a moderate, that I always have to understand what one means. I think moderation on the one hand can be a vice; I think on the other hand it can be a virtue. If by moderation we mean moving on through this tense period of transition with wise restraint, calm reasonableness, yet militant action, then moderation is a great virtue which all leaders should seek to achieve. But if moderation means slowing up in the move for justice and capitulating to the whims and caprices of the guardians of the deadening status quo, then moderation is a tragic vice, which all men of good will must condemn.

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### **From the Rabbi's desk (con't)**

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#### **Heschel, in a telegram to President John F. Kennedy**

The hour calls for high moral grandeur and spiritual audacity.

#### **King, Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1965**

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up. I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land ... I still believe that we shall overcome."

#### **Abraham Joshua Heschel—"To Be a Jew: What Is It?" in Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity**

Faith comes over us like a force urging for action. It often begins by pledging us to constancy of devotion, by committing us to the presence of God, and remains an affiliation for life, an allegiance involving restraint, submission, self-control, and courage. Its power is revealed when man is able to exercise defiance in the face of adversity. We cannot stem the tempest of evil by taking refuge in temples, by fervently adoring the restrained omnipotence of God. Our task is to act not only to enjoy; to change not only to accept; to augment not only to discover the glory of God. And life is refulgent with possibilities of creating the good.

#### **King, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1968**

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

All Blessings

Rabbi Z

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21<sup>st</sup> January, 2010