



THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION OF HONG KONG

Welcoming all who seek a Progressive vision of Jewish life

SHABBAT SHALOM

6 – 7 May, 2016

29 Nisan 5776

Parashat Acharei Mot
(Leviticus 16:1-18:30)

Rabbi Stanton M. Zamek
Rabbi Martha Bergadine, Education & Programming Director
Cantor Melissa Berman, Cantor/Programming Associate

From the Rabbi's desk

Chaverim,

Time truly flies at The UJC. Pesach has passed, the sedarim are history, and now we are in the midst of the Omer, the countdown (really, the "count-up") to Shavuot.

We are not just marking time as we count the days between Pesach and Shavuot. The period of the Omer is meant to have its own spiritual character. These are days of anticipation and reflection, during which we prepare for the celebration of *Matan Torah*, the Giving of Torah, on Shavuot.

The long-standing custom of studying Pirke Avot on each Shabbat during the Omer is the best way to achieve the spiritual depth we need as we make our annual journey from *Mitzrayim* to Sinai. This anthology of Rabbinic wisdom is one of the most studied and best loved texts of the entire Jewish corpus. Whether one is studying it for the first time or for the fiftieth, entering the world of Pirke Avot is always rewarding.

The procedure is simple. Pirke Avot is six chapters long and there are six Shabbatot between Pesach and Shavuot. Simply read one chapter of Pirke Avot each Shabbat for the next six weeks, starting this week. If you do this, by the time Shavuot comes in you will have read the entirety of this precious compendium of Rabbinic thought. [Click here to download the text.](#)

Over the next six weeks, expect to hear teachings of Pirke Avot - at services, at Torah study, in the pages of Shabbat Shalom, and maybe even if I bump into you in Central. I invite you all to live with Pirke Avot throughout the Omer. In doing this you will be following the advice of Yehoshua ben Perachya, who says in Pirke Avot Chapter 1, "provide yourself with a teacher" and "acquire for yourself a companion." Pirke Avot itself can be both.

All Blessings

Rabbi Z

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5th May 2016