

message was that we would do well to seek "emotional relevance," which is a far deeper and more human pursuit than mere intellectual relevance. Five years later, it seems obvious, but in 1968 this was not a popular position.

What I learned from Shraga Arian had most to do with creativity and institutions. He was a rebel at heart, but he was too wise to altogether shun institutions. He tried, instead, to use them to good ends, and ignored them when they became an interference. He had a habit of not asking permission before working on one of his unusual, exciting projects, and he explained to me that such questions, in an institutional setting, could only lead to bureaucrats saying "no," because that was the easiest thing to say. He found it unnecessary to fight with people who tried to prevent his being creative; he simply worked without them. On the other hand, nobody was more adept than he at seeking out creative, exciting personalities, and at helping them to realize their full potential as artists and as educators. Simply to be in his presence was to become more alive.

I did not have the pleasure of knowing Abraham Joshua Heschel, except of course, through his writings. I mean that in a personal way as well, for in the weeks before his death we heard from him twice. The first time was to explain his inability to participate in our Symposium on Living in Two Cultures, which concludes in this issue. He cited other obligations, and he was nothing if not busy. Still, I cannot help but wonder whether the problems posed in Alan Mintz's article, and in the questions which accompanied it, were perhaps irrelevant and even meaningless to a man who so gracefully and powerfully bridged what are commonly thought of as "Jewish" and "outside" commitments. It is symbolic of Heschel that the two books that were found at his bedside at the time of his death were David Halberstam's *The Best and The Brightest*, an account of American involvement in Vietnam, and a collection of writings by the *Besht*. His second note to us was to accept our invitation that he join our honorary advisory board.

Reuven Kimelman's tribute to Heschel, which follows immediately, expresses everything that I would want to say. Rabbi Kimelman was a student of Heschel, and reflects his deep love and respect for him in this tribute. I am most grateful to him for agreeing, on such short notice, and in the midst of this personal loss, to share his feelings and ideas with all of us.

Reuven Kimelman

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

(1907-1972)

אברהם יצחק

We are stunned by the loss, distraught by the opportunities missed. Abraham Joshua Heschel has left our presence as mysteriously as he entered. He came to us plucked from the burning holy communities of Poland. He left us on the holy Sabbath, *Parashat Vayehi*. He came from war, and left in peace.

Heschel made his impact by the wholeness of his person, by his passion for social justice, by his scholarship in the Jewish tradition, and by his religious thinking on the human situation. He alone possessed the richness of language to express what his person meant to his friends and students, his colleagues and his people, his nation and the world. Only his own eloquence could do justice to that bond. Only his own superlatives could convey the essence of that most superlative of men. We must use his words now, words he once used in a eulogy:

The beauty he created in his writings, the dignity and force he lent to the life and literature of Judaism, the sensibility to the Jewish spirit which he inspired in his students, the abundance of his learning, the radiant vitality of his understanding for human beings, for works of art, for subtleties of words, and above all the integrity of his character, his unassuming and magnificent piety, his power to revere and to love. This was Abraham Joshua Heschel.

There are many people from whom we can learn methods, skills, and techniques. There are few from whom we can learn the meaning and the secret of nobility. Heschel would quote a Hassidic master: "The Jew's greatest sin is to forget that he is the son of a King."

He walked on a higher plane than most of us. In my mind, his name has always evoked an image of exaltation. He was able to sense glory where others could see only darkness. He was blessed with a

I wish to express my gratitude to Rabbis Stanley Kessler and Arthur Green for their corrections and insights. —R.K.

gift which few men possess: the marvel of presence. He did not have to speak to communicate his faith, his convictions, his nobility. His very presence communicated a vision. His outwardness conveyed something of his indwelling greatness. His very being radiated a sacred meaning.

Some people are like commas in the text of Jewish life; Heschel was an exclamation point. He was honest with his God, and honest with his fellow men. He burned with sincerity. In the last week of his life, he mentioned having just completed his work on the Kotzker Rebbe entitled *A Passion for Sincerity*. I asked him why he did not translate *emes* as truth or integrity. "The word is sincerity," he replied.

It was easy to revere him, for he was endowed with the power to revere. It was easy for many human beings to love him, for he had the power to love many human beings. He had also the capacity for hatred, and he despised sham and injustice.

Abraham Joshua Heschel lived out his name. As Abraham, he possessed that distinctive combination of compassion and justice. "He kept the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right." He risked his life, his reputation, the affection of his friends and colleagues to fight for the unfavored and the unpopular of this world. At the same time, he could pray for and even forgive those who offended him. Some called him Father Abraham.

As Joshua he fought the battles of the Lord. He attacked anti-Semitism with every fiber of his being. He opposed nihilism with a sense of values that was almost embarrassing. He undermined atheism with the words of the Living God that seered the heart of the listener. He assaulted racism with such a sense of the dignity of man that blocks of human hate were burned upon the altar of shame and contrition. Above all, he stormed the fortresses of self-righteous power—the warmakers, reminding even the most aloof that man is made in the image of God, and is not a mere cipher.

As Heschel, finally, he was the descendant of the Apter Rav, Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, known as the *Ohev Yisrael*, Lover of Israel. Such a lover of the holy, the divine, and the sublime has yet to be seen. Abraham Joshua Heschel once remarked: "We are commanded to love our neighbor: this must mean that we can."

Heschel's meaning for our time is reflected in the impact he made on the passions of the day. A beautiful little book called by Franklin Sherman, *The Promise of Heschel*, captures some of the highlights.

Heschel's concern and action have been pivotal in two issues; race and peace. On the first, many will remember the picture of him striding alongside Martin Luther King Jr., in the protest march at Selma, Alabama. Mrs. Coretta King, in recalling that event recently, called Heschel "one of the great men of our time." Rabbi Heschel described the march in these words: "For many of us the march from Selma to Montgomery was both protest and prayer. Legs are not lips, and walking is not kneeling. And yet our legs uttered songs. Even without words, our march was worship. I felt my legs were praying."

Less well known was Heschel's prominent role at the National Conference of Religion and Race in Chicago, 1963, a convocation which sparked the participation of clergymen in the great march on Washington later that year. Heschel delivered a major address: "One hundred years ago," he reminded the delegates, "the emancipation was proclaimed. It is time for the white man to strive for self-emancipation, to set himself free of bigotry." The greatest sin, he declared, is that of indifference: "Equality is a good thing . . . what is lacking is a sense of the monstrosity of inequality."

It was Heschel, too, who helped organize and served as co-chairman of Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam, a group which spearheaded the religious opposition to the war. It was typical of Heschel to emphasize *concern about Vietnam*. While others saw the issue as being one of American involvement in world affairs, Heschel cried out for the people of Vietnam and for the soul of America.

Heschel's protest went to the deepest level of the issue. To withdraw from Vietnam would no doubt mean losing face, and he understood the dilemmas of the policy-makers. But to remain in Vietnam would mean something worse: losing our souls. He regarded the continuation and escalation of the war as another instance of that moral callousness, that insensitivity to the sufferings of others which, combined with an overweening confidence in the righteousness of a position, underlay the problems of America. And so he called—long before this became a theme of political campaigns—for national repentance, for a return to conscience and an enlargement of the moral imagination, for a dedication to peace rather than victory. In particular he appealed to those of religious faith. "To speak about God," he proclaimed, "and remain silent on Vietnam, is blasphemous." Typically, one of his last public acts was a visit to Danbury Prison to witness the release of Daniel Berrigan, and to

formally receive that anti-war hero.

What pained Heschel most of all was the relative silence of the Jews. When one remembers the masses of Jews participating in the civil rights struggle as though they were going forth from Egypt again, one is struck by their reticence on the war. Not that Jews did not speak out; they did, as always, well out of proportion to their number. What caused Heschel so much sorrow was that for twenty years we had been condemning the good, but silent Germans. And now within only one generation there were Jews who were satisfied being good, silent Americans. In a democracy, a silent majority is a scared majority. Still, as far as I know, Heschel, unlike younger spokesmen, refused to use the language of the Holocaust even to discuss Vietnam, for he understood the horrible singularity of Auschwitz. But his rallying cry of "Some are guilty, but all are responsible," simmered with the question of "Where art Thou?"

Early in the 1960's, when Heschel was forging concern for Vietnam, he was simultaneously lighting the spark for one of the greatest protest movements of Jewish history—Soviet Jewry. Back in 1963 it was Heschel who first declared that Soviet Jewry was the number one priority of American Jews. On September 4, 1963, he sounded the call: "East European Jewry vanished. Russian Jewry is the last remnant of a people destroyed in extermination camps, the last remnant of spiritual glory that is no more. We ask for no privilege; all we demand is an end to the massive and systematic liquidation of the religious and cultural heritage of an entire community, and equality with all the other cultural and religious minorities. Let the twentieth century not enter the annals of Jewish history as the century of physical and spiritual destruction! If I forget thee, O Russian Jewry . . ."

It was Heschel who addressed the White House Conference on Children and Youth. And it was Heschel who addressed the White House Conference on Aging, when, like Maimonides, he spoke of old age as a disposition to achieve moral virtue, as the age of opportunity for inner growth. At the American Medical Association, it was Heschel who reminded the physicians of the sacredness of their task. At Protestant and Catholic conferences throughout the country it was Heschel who spoke for the meaning of true religion, and for the integrity of Judaism. And, of course, it was Heschel who represented the diverse and scattered Jewish community in urging the Pope to rectify a 1900 year-old injustice which had caused untold misery and

interreligious animus.

Heschel's fulfilled desire to be connected with such diverse constituencies is reflected in the fact that over thirty national organizations, Jewish and otherwise, sponsored a memorial meeting in his honor. His roots in Judaism reached so deep that they penetrated that substratum of life which nourishes all mankind. Heschel's ability to relate to so many people on their various levels flowed from his conviction that man's grandeur surpasses his ideologies. His ability to deal with the thought and attitudes of so many religious communities issued from a certitude that God is greater than His theologies.

When Heschel spoke, people sensed a vibrant, incarnated tradition. He never had to make forced connections with Judaism, for he was the connection. To hear him in an address echoing the perspectives of Moses, Hillel, Saadyah, and the Ari was to witness a three thousand year tradition rolled up into one soul.

He once declared that "the ultimate meaning of existence is God, reverence for man, celebration of holiness in time, sensitivity to the mystery of being a Jew, sensitivity to the presence of God in the Bible."

Most recently, it was Heschel who issued a call for renewal at the 28th World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem last year. There he echoed the concerns of his address at the 1957 Jerusalem Ideological Conference when he had spoken of "the sin we have sinned in disparaging the spirit," and in not teaching that Judaism is "a joy of the spirit and the Paradise of the soul." "Judaism," he declared, "is not a matter of blood or race, but a spiritual dimension of existence, a dimension of holiness. We are messengers; let us not forget our message."

"Who is a Jew?" he asked in 1972. "A person who knows how to recall and to keep alive what is holy in our people's past, and to cherish the promise and the vision of redemption in the days to come." He concluded by calling our attention to what could be "a golden hour in Jewish history. Young people are waiting, craving, searching for spiritual meaning. And our leadership is unable to respond, to guide, to illumine. With Zion as evidence and inspiration, as witness and example, a renewal of our people could come about."

No one knew better than he that authentic renewal will be based on a return to our sources. And it is in such a light that Professor Heschel's formidable accomplishments in Jewish scholarship must be

viewed. In a review of these accomplishments, Professor Seymour Siegel rightly quoted Heschel's comment on Maimonides: "The achievements seem so incredible that one is almost inclined to believe that Maimonides is the name of a whole academy of scholars rather than the name of an individual."

Professor Siegel went on to say that in most of his scholarly work, Heschel touches upon the relationship between mind and mystery—between that which can be expressed and that which is greater than our power to describe. This is usually called the relationship between faith and reason. But in Heschel's thought it is much more than this. It is no less than the recognition that sensitive scholars and thinkers have always realized that they existed in a reality surrounded by the ineffable, and that all of life, whether it be theologizing, philosophizing, or performing sacred deeds, is an attempt—never completely successful—to express this overwhelming experience.

I can think of no other individual in recent history who has contributed a new scholarly understanding to each of the four pivotal periods of Jewish existence. For the Biblical period, *The Prophets* articulates the divine pathos of the Most Moved Mover's involvement in the affairs of man. This is done in a systematic presentation of Biblical philosophy. In the Rabbinic period, the polarity of Rabbinic thought in dealing with man's situation as exemplified by Rabbis Akiba and Ishmael can be found in his work on Rabbinic theology *Torah Min HaShamayim*. In my opinion, this is his *magnum opus*. In three scholarly volumes Heschel outlines the history of the theology of Judaism as viewed from within. Without such an understanding of the dynamics of Jewish thought, his works on contemporary issues are almost inconceivable.

Heschel's excursions into the world of medieval thought are best uncovered in his existential biography of Maimonides. Although Isaiah, Rabbi Akiba, the Baal Shem, and Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk were his constant companions, it was Maimonides, I think, who was his model. And like his mentor, he put off many scholarly dreams to dedicate himself to the sicknesses of mankind. History may yet say of him, "From Abraham to Abraham . . ."

Heschel's work reached its climax in his study of mysticism and Hassidism. Although he left Hassidic life to go to Berlin, Hassidism never really left him. For some strange reason, which only his disciples sense, he put off making his major contribution to the understanding of Hassidism. Previously, he had written on specific

Hassidic matters, and had described their lives in *The Earth is the Lord's*. And yet, it was not until the last week of his life that he finished a full-length portrait of Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk with whom he compared the Baal Shem Tov. It was with this book that he repaid his debt to the world of Hassidism and was laid to rest.

Heschel was a scholar who wrote books with impressive bibliographies and footnotes. But they read like *seforim*—holy books. In this, his books illustrate his own insight: "Judaism teaches that God can be found in books."

Many of us, before we encountered Heschel, thought that Tradition served to limit our horizons. But his teachings were so expansive, his insights from traditional sources so breathtaking, that we were tempted to run back to the safe bosom of secularism. Such an escape, however, was impossible, for he never permitted us to flee from intellectual challenges. Above all, by teaching us that there is a God in this world, he helped us overcome our common embarrassment with serious theological discussion.

Heschel is best known as a theologian, and the themes which concerned him are reflected in the titles of his theological works, *Man is Not Alone*, and *God in Search of Man*. Although he was a life-of-God theologian, his major contribution may have been with his work in pretheology. He held that faith has its roots in a "pretheological situation, the resymbolic depth of existence" that cannot be adequately verbalized in philosophical discourse:

The primary issue of theology is pretheological; it is the total situation of man and his attitudes toward life and the world. It is from this point of view that we must realize that there are four dimensions in religion . . . four necessary components of man's relationship to God: a) the teaching, the essentials of which are summarized in the form of a creed; it is the creed that contains norms and principles about matters sacred or eternal—the dimension of doctrine; b) faith, inwardness, and the direction of one's heart, the intimacy of religion—the dimension of privacy; c) the law, or the sacred act to be carried out in the sanctuary, in society or at home—the dimension of the deed; d) the content in which creed, faith, and ritual come to pass, such as the community or the covenant, history, tradition—the dimension of transcendence.

Critics frequently avoid grappling with the challenges posed by Heschel, preferring instead to think of him, conveniently, as a "mere" poet or mystic. While Heschel himself refused to reduce the perceptions of the mind to the rationally transparent, he also rejected the refuge of irrational mysticism. To fully comprehend Heschel's thinking we must follow his advice to "unthink many thoughts."

Abraham Joshua Heschel left this world on the Sabbath, that day of peace which he taught so many of us to appreciate and celebrate as a foretaste of eternity.

He once said: "There are three ways in which a man expresses his deep sorrow: the man on the lowest level cries; the man on the next level is silent; the man on the highest level knows how to turn his sorrow into a song." In that spirit, may the following suffice:

Had he illuminated the prophetic experience and the intellectual relevance of the Bible, but had not depicted how the struggles of the Rabbis illuminate our own religious situation, it would have been enough.

Had he depicted the intellectual struggles of the Rabbis and not shown how medieval Jewish philosophy is the window to the soul of the Jewish intellect, it would have been enough.

Had he shown how medieval Jewish philosophy is the window to the soul of the Jewish intellect, but not demonstrated how the mystical-Hassidic experience is a real way of living Jewishly in the world, it would have been enough.

Had he demonstrated how the mystical-Hassidic experience is a real way of living Jewishly in the world, but not illuminated the categories of contemporary Jewish existence, it would have been enough.

And now that he has illuminated such categories from Auschwitz to Israel, from suffering to the Sabbath, from prayer to ethics, from Warsaw to Berlin, from New York to Selma, from Washington to Rome, from Hanoi to Moscow, and from Jerusalem below to Jerusalem above, how much more is doubled and redoubled the claim of our gratitude to Heschel, who bore witness to what it means to be a Jew in the twentieth century.

A CONVERSATION WITH HESCHEL

© Copyright 1973 by the National Broadcasting Company. Used by permission of NBC and "The Eternal Light," a television program prepared under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

This is a condensed transcript of "The Eternal Light," shown on television Sunday, February 4, 1973, and taped ten days before Heschel's death. Heschel was interviewed by Carl Stern of NBC News.

You first gained prominence as a scholar writing about the Prophets. Is it possible for a modern prophet to come to us? Or is that just pre-Biblical?

The idea of a prophet is complex and consists above all of two things. Of the message or the substance of what the prophet has to say from some extraordinary claim to an experience which is not given to other men. Let us ignore the second, let us take the first.

What's so great about the message of the prophet, about the prophet as a character? I would say the prophet is a man who is able to hold God and man in one thought, at one time, at all times. This is so great and this is so marvelous. Which means that whatever I do to man, I do to God. When I hurt a human being, I injure God.

Now, their thoughts, their message, continues to be so relevant today that I venture to say, and I've had this experience with many distinguished philosophers when we get together to discuss contemporary social problems, that the ultimate source of hope for all of us, whether it was Protestant or Catholic or secular philosopher, was suddenly our reliance on a hope uttered by the prophets of Israel.

Editor Bill Novak
 Managing Editor Barbara Kreiger
 Contributing Editor Alan Mintz

General Manager Richard Narva
 Office Manager Judy Kotlier
 Business Manager Eta Paransky
 Typography Robert Elkin

Honorary Advisory Board: Robert Alter, Authur A. Cohen, Leonard Fein, Everett Gendler, Jacob Neusner, Marshall Sklare, Zalman Schachter, Charles E. Silberman, Trude Weiss-Rosmarin

RESPONSE: A Contemporary Jewish Review, is an independent journal of Jewish expression. Our offices are located in Berlin Chapel on the campus of Brandeis University.

RESPONSE is an affiliate of the Jewish Student Press Service, and is a member of the North American Jewish Student Appeal. Listed in the Index to Jewish Periodicals.

RESPONSE is published four times a year: October, February, May and August. Subscriptions are \$6 a year in the United States and Canada; \$5 for students. Subscriptions outside North America are \$7 per year. Single copies \$1.50. © Copyright 1973 by RESPONSE: A Contemporary Jewish Review, Post Office Box 1496, 415 South Street, Waltham, Mass. 02154. All rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions.

RESPONSE welcomes articles, fiction, poetry, artwork and letters. Contributors should keep a copy of everything sent, as we cannot be responsible for lost or misplaced material. Manuscripts should be sent to RESPONSE, Editorial Office, Box 1496, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass. 02154. Our phone number is 617-894-6000, extension 2281.

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Mass. and additional mailing points.

Printed in the United States of America.

Type set by *The Tech*, MIT.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES

This Quarter	
<i>Bill Novak</i>	3
In Memoriam: Abraham Joshua Heschel	
<i>Reuven Kimelman</i>	15
A Conversation with Heschel	
<i>The transcript of an interview for "The Eternal Light"</i>	23
The Meaning of Munich	
<i>Eugene Weiner</i>	35

FICTION

The Birth of Simon Stern	
<i>Arthur A. Cohen</i>	43

SYMPOSIUM: LIVING IN TWO CULTURES (II)

Introduction	53	Jeffrey Green	75
Robert Alter	54	Joel Rosenberg	80
Jane Rubin	56	Gershon Hundert	93
Alvin H. Rosenfeld	60	Leonard Levin	97
Robert Neiss	71	Norma Rosen	105
Jack Nusan Porter	73	Peter Dreier	111

ODDS AND ENDS

Tissues	118
Index to our first fifteen issues	121
Notes on Contributors	126

Illustrations by Stu Copans
 Cover photo by Joel Orent

Volume VI No. 4

Winter 1972-73