



CALL for PAPERS

The International Conference on

Abraham Joshua Heschel: Philosophy and a Path Tested by Time

The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Tuesday–Thursday, 23–25 December 2014

More than forty years have passed since the death of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972), but the growing interest in his philosophy shows that he is more relevant than ever to the challenges of the twenty-first century. Until now, most research has focused on the connection between his views and the historical, social, cultural, and political stages of his life. However, his unique path was also criticized in his day, both in the Jewish Theological Seminary and by others, and his approach to religion, conception of time and space, and political activity on behalf of civil rights were considered unconventional. This invites new contemporary research approaches. Was Heschel indeed the “product” of the experiences of his time, merely a responder, or was he the shaper of a path? Was his influence on the path of the Conservative Movement and on American Jewry in general the outcome of his original and independent thought? His spiritual-ethical teaching is unique in drawing on sources in Hassidism and developing an existential element within it, but does it seem natural

among the various streams of spiritual renewal in the twenty-first century? What can be learned from his having engaged in a moral, social, and political struggle on the grounds of his being the offspring of migrants who had forgone struggles in order to integrate and live a quiet life? And what can be learned from that model for the present time—a time of worldwide protest and the development of a discourse of rights? What are the reasons for the dramatic change in the attitude toward his philosophy in recent decades? What is the meaning of this change? Where and how is his philosophy influential today?

In the spirit of Heschel’s approach to tradition and change, the conference aims to deepen the understanding of his theological and spiritual thought, to propose a new and relevant look at his political and social ethics, and to examine the relations, tensions, and disagreements between Jewish groups and streams and between Jews and non-Jews in Israel and the Diaspora.

Scholars whose work deals with the conference topics are invited to submit a proposal of 500–750 words for a lecture at the conference.

Please send the proposals, along with a short CV, by **Thursday, 20 March 2014**, to Dafna Schreiber: dafnas@vanleer.org.il.

Academic Committee: Prof. Hanan Alexander, Rabbi Dr. Alexander Even-Chen, Dr. Elisabeth Goldwyn, Rabbi Michael Graetz, Prof. Ron Margolin, Prof. Paul Mendes-Flohr, Dr. Avinoam Rosenak, Prof. Tamar Ross, Rabbi Prof. Naftali Rothenberg, Dafna Schreiber, Prof. Benjamin Sommer, Rabbi Prof. Gordon Tucker, Prof. Christian Wiese

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