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23 January 2002

To: Steve Brand

It is a pleasure to affirm my support for a film to be created by Steve Brand on Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), the Jewish philosopher, theologian, and social activist. Heschel is a great writer and vivid thinker, a theologian, an interpreter of Judaism and religious and ethical judgment for gentiles as well as Jews. His vivid theological and ethical writings and social action reconcile traditional faith and piety with modern approaches to religion and moral responsibility.

Steve Brand himself is a gifted interpreter of contemporary religious and historical experience. His film, "Kaddish," is remarkably balanced and sensitive, and I am confident that he will do a superb job on Heschel.

I am the author of two books on Heschel: a fully documented biography of his years in Europe, A.J. Heschel, Prophetic Witness (Yale University Press, 1998), a finalist in the National Jewish Book Awards; and an interpretation of his works, Holiness in Words: A.J. Heschel's Poetics of Piety (SUNY Press, 1996). The latter book was published in French translation in 1999, La Sainteté en paroles, by Les Editions du Cerf and it inspired a symposium on Heschel in Paris in January 2000 in which I participated. I am currently working on volume two of the Heschel biography, also under contract with Yale University Press.

I am pleased to serve as a consultant for Steve Brand's proposed film on Abraham Joshua Heschel. It will be an extremely important contribution to the understanding of religious life in the United States and to interfaith relations here and in other countries.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edel Kaplan".

Edward K. Kaplan  
Chair, Program in Religious Studies  
Professor of French  
and Comparative Literature  
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