

College of Saint Benedict

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Steve Brand
310 East 12th Street, Apt. 4L
New York, NY 1003-7257

Dear Steve,

Thank you for inviting me to be an advisor for your film on Abraham Joshua Heschel, an invitation that I am delighted to accept. Your proposal sounds wonderful, and I am honored to have the opportunity to work with you and with the others you have selected for your advisory team.

A film on Rabbi Heschel is long overdue, and I am convinced that, given your background and past accomplishments, you are an ideal person to produce such a film. In my judgment, Heschel was one of the foremost Jewish religious thinkers of his time, and his was one of the most important religious voices in twentieth century America. His insights are just as important for us today as they were when he first articulated them, and his life, so full of poetry and passion, lends itself perfectly to the art of film. Heschel's message of "meaning beyond absurdity" needs to be heard today, especially by young people whose hope for a better world has been profoundly shaken by acts of absurdity. The story of his life, which bore eloquent witness to the transcendent meaning he sensed, may serve as an inspiration for all of us whose sense of life's meaningfulness is severely threatened by the absurdities we daily witness. Thank you for choosing to make this film. I am sure it will reach people in ways beyond which my books and other books on Heschel are able to do.

I very much enjoyed our conversation by phone, and I look forward to meeting you and being a part of your important project.

Sincerely yours,



John C. Merkle, Ph.D.