



THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION OF HONG KONG SHABBAT SHALOM

7 – 8 October, 2005

5 Tishrei, 5766

Parashat Vayelech
(Deuteronomy 31:1–30)

Rabbi Michael Schwartz
Cantorial Soloist Julie Howard

D'var Torah by Rabbi Michael Schwartz

Shalom chaverim,

The days between *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* are called the “*Aseret Yemei Teshuva*” – the Ten Days of Repentance. The Shabbat that falls during this time is called “*Shabbat Shuva*” – The Sabbath of Return. The word “*shuva*” also begins the week’s Haftara reading: “**Shuva** Yisrael Ad Adoshem Elokeicha” - “Return O Israel unto the Lord your God”. The theme of “return” to our true selves and the holy path of life which is the way to God characterizes the sermon traditionally given by the rabbi on this Shabbat.

Jews throughout the ages and around the world today try to “put their money where their mouth is” during the “*Aseret Yemei Teshuva*”: *Tzedaka* is given at this time as we make the effort to transform into actual good deeds the “mere” words of the promises we have made to ourselves about how we will improve in the year to come. We generally try our best to perform deeds of kindness, refrain from gossip, and otherwise live up to our highest visions of who we need to be. We try to develop good habits of behavior now with the expectation and hope that we will continue them even after *Yom Kippur*.

We have embarked on the year 5766 on the Jewish calendar. 5766 is the numerical equivalent of the Hebrew phrase “*tavo alekha berakhah*” – “May blessing come to you.”

May we merit blessings, and may blessings come to us, in the year 5766.

Chatima tova –

May you all be sealed for good in the New Year,

Rabbi Michael
3 Tishrei 5766

6th October, 2005