



# THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION OF HONG KONG SHABBAT SHALOM

23 – 24 September, 2005

20 Elul, 5765

Parashat Ki Tavo  
(Deuteronomy 26:1–29:8)

Rabbi Michael Schwartz  
Cantorial Soloist Julie Howard

## D'var Torah by Rabbi Michael Schwartz

Shalom Chaverim,

Simon Wiesenthal z"l, died Tuesday at age 96. He was a Holocaust survivor who helped track down numerous Nazi war criminals following World War II and who spent the later decades of his life fighting anti-Semitism and prejudice against all people. He believed that in order to "Never Forget", memory must be fed by action.

Wiesenthal had been an architect before World War II, but his life's mission changed after he survived the Holocaust. He became a voice for the 6 million Jews who died during the onslaught. "When history looks back I want people to know the Nazis weren't able to kill millions of people and get away with it," he once said.

Wiesenthal's work began after the Americans liberated the Mauthausen death camp in Austria where Wiesenthal was a prisoner in May 1945. It was his fifth death camp among the dozen Nazi camps in which he was imprisoned, and he weighed just 45 kilo when he was freed. He said he quickly realized "there is no freedom without justice," and decided to dedicate "a few years" to seeking justice. "It became decades," he added.

"He acted on behalf of 6 million people who could no longer defend themselves, he brought justice to those who had escaped justice," said the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Wiesenthal was perhaps best known for his role in tracking down Adolf Eichmann, the one-time SS leader who organized the extermination of the Jews. Eichmann was found in Argentina, abducted by Mossad agents in 1960, tried and hanged for crimes committed against the Jews. The episode is documented in the book, The House on Garibaldi Street.

Among others Wiesenthal tracked down was Austrian policeman Karl Silberbauer, who arrested the Dutch teenager Anne Frank and sent her to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp where she died. Wiesenthal decided to pursue Silberbauer in 1958 after a youth told him he did not believe in Frank's existence and murder, but would if Wiesenthal could find the man who arrested her. His five-year search resulted in Silberbauer's 1963 capture.

"The most important thing I have done is to fight against forgetting and to keep remembrance alive," he said in 1999, "It is very important to let people know that our enemies are not forgotten."

Wiesenthal wrote several books, including his memoirs, The Murderers Among Us, and The Sunflower. In 2003, at the age of 93, Wiesenthal announced his retirement. "I have survived them all," he said. "If there were any left, they'd be too old and weak to stand trial today. My work is done."

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Michael  
18 Elul 5765

22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2005