



THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION OF HONG KONG SHABBAT SHALOM

30 June – 1 July, 2005

24 SIVAN, 5765

Parashat Korach
(Numbers 16:1 - 18:32)

Rabbi Michael Schwartz
Cantorial Soloist Julie Howard

D'var Torah from Rabbi Michael Schwartz

Shalom Chaverim,

I'm told that Rabbi Lee was a stickler for pointing out that Jewish holidays come 'on time' every year. When someone would remark that "Rosh Hashana is late this year", meaning that it falls in October of the Gregorian calendar (as it will this autumn) rather than in September, Rabbi Lee would point out that according to the lunar Jewish Calendar the holiday is, as always, on the 1st of Tishri. Right on schedule.

Being 'on Jewish time' is not an easy mental adjustment for us to make, but it does have its rewards. For example, it was last year during parashat Korach – the weekly Torah portion Korach - that I visited Hong Kong for the first time. Now that it has come 'round again, it brings back memories of the first impressions I had of this city, this community, and of the warm reception I received from many of you in the congregation. The connection of last year's Korach and this year's Korach also gives me pause to reflect on the time in-between.

A year of learning, growing and building relationships with members of this community has led to the wonderful feeling of honor and good fortune I have at being with our community this Shabbat at the aliya to the Torah of Anaïs Ross for the reading of this year's Korach in our synagogue– the same feeling of *mazal*, *nachas* and good fortune experienced last Shabbat when Phillip Ross became bar mitzvah. I invite all of you to join the inclusive spirit of warmth and welcome that so characterizes the UJC community.

In the coming months, our community is expecting to celebrate several additional *simchas*, happy occasions: a crew of baby boys are due to arrive in July and August. Although I will be in Israel during this time, I am looking forward to the feeling of joy and gladness that will infuse this community as it celebrates the blessing of new life. A spark of that joy will glow in Jerusalem as Tamar and I and our boys rejoice together with you.

May this be a summer of only *simchas*, light, blessings, and peace, both in Hong Kong and in Israel.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Michael
23 Sivan 5765

30th June, 2005