



# Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness

*Edward K. Kaplan, Samuel H. Dresner*

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Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) was one of the outstanding Jewish thinkers of the 20th century. A renowned American theologian and interpreter of tradition, he was author of such books as "Man Is Not Alone", "God in Search of Man", and "The Prophets". This book, the first of two volumes, is a comprehensive biography of Heschel. Based on interviews with Heschel's friends and family, archival documents and Heschel's previously unknown writings in Yiddish, German and Hebrew, the book traces Heschel's life from his birth in Warsaw in 1907 to his emigration to the United States in 1940. Edward Kaplan and Samuel Dresner describe how Heschel came of age in a Hasidic community and reached maturity in secular Jewish Vilna and cosmopolitan Berlin, speaking out as a religious philosopher during the advent of Nazism. They relate how he became a teacher in Berlin, in Martin Buber's education programme in Frankfurt (where his lifelong debate with Buber originated), in Warsaw, and in London, while the several Jewish cultures he had absorbed were being destroyed. They show that he was already intellectually and spiritually mature when he emigrated to the United States, fully prepared for his dual roles as interpreter of Jewish piety and social activist.

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