

NEWS RELEASE



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For immediate release

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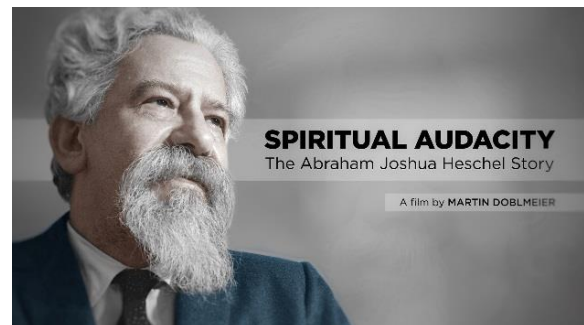
Note: To schedule an interview with Journey Films' Martin Doblmeier, please reach out to one of the contacts listed above.

SPIRITUAL AUDACITY: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story **premieres May 8 on MPT**

Film is latest offering from award-winning Alexandria, Virginia-based Journey Films

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Maryland Public Television (MPT), as part of Jewish-American Heritage Month, will premiere the one-hour documentary *SPIRITUAL AUDACITY: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story* on MPT-HD at 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Saturday, May 8 and on the MPT livestream at mpt.org/anywhere/live-stream-mpt/.

The new film tells the compelling story of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), one of the most inspiring American figures of the 20th Century. Rabbi Heschel was a mentor to the leaders of the United States' Civil Rights Movement, an early and outspoken critic of the Vietnam War, and a pioneer in the critical work of interfaith dialogue. A preview of the film is available at youtube.com/watch?v=OWGS7ofZVjQ.



SPIRITUAL AUDACITY: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story combines archival photographs, rarely seen archival footage, and a collection of interviews – including segments with civil rights leaders Congressman **John Lewis** and **Andrew Young**; Pulitzer-prize winning historian **Taylor Branch**; public theologian **Cornel West**; Jewish Theological Seminary Chancellor **Arnold Eisen**; and Heschel's daughter **Susannah Heschel** – to tell Heschel's story. Also featured in the film is the artwork of Marc Chagall and his depiction of the Hebrew prophets.

The film is the last installment in a series of documentaries by award-winning filmmaker Martin Doblmeier on significant religious figures of the last century, including films which profile Reinhold Niebuhr, African American theologian Howard Thurman, and Catholic social activist Dorothy Day. Doblmeier's company, Journey Films, is based in Alexandria, Virginia.

Following its Saturday, May 8 premiere on MPT-HD, *SPIRITUAL AUDACITY: The Abraham Heschel Story* will be rebroadcast at 12 a.m. and 3 a.m. on Sunday, May 9, and on MPT2/Create® at 10 p.m. on Monday, May 24.

The film is presented nationally by MPT and distributed by American Public Television.

About Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Born in Warsaw, Poland, Heschel was descended from a long line of celebrated rabbinical scholars dating back centuries. He left Poland to study philosophy in Berlin as Adolf Hitler was beginning his rise to power. He fled Germany for the United States in 1940, barely escaping the Holocaust. Before the end of World War II, he would lose his mother and three sisters to the Nazi horrors.

Heschel spent most of his academic life at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, rising to become one of the nation's most celebrated Jewish figures. His book on the Hebrew prophets (*The Prophets*) captured the imagination of Martin Luther King, Jr., who invited Heschel to take a role in the civil rights movement. For King, Rabbi Heschel embodied the connection between the movement and the plight of the Jews in Egypt. Many of the iconic images of the Selma March feature King and Heschel standing arm-in-arm in the front row.

It was that friendship and mutual respect that enabled Heschel to persuade King to speak out publicly against the war in Vietnam. Both would be widely criticized for what seemed to many an anti-American stand.

Famed American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr called his friend Rabbi Heschel "an authoritative voice not only in the Jewish community but in the religious life of America." Heschel's major writings, including *The Sabbath*, *The Prophets*, and *God in Search of Man*, are considered religious classics and remain widely studied.

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.

About Martin Doblmeier

Doblmeier holds degrees in religious studies, broadcast journalism and honorary degrees in fine arts and humane letters. Since 1984 he has produced and directed more than 30 films focused on religion, faith, and spirituality. He combines a lifelong interest in religion with a passion for storytelling. Over the years Doblmeier has traveled on location to more than 40 countries to profile numerous religious leaders, spiritual communities, heads of state, and Nobel Laureates. His films explore how belief can lead individuals to extraordinary acts, how spirituality creates and sustains communities, and how faith is lived in extraordinary ways.