

CONGREGATION EMANU-EL

of the City of New York

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MARCIA WAXMAN

INTRODUCTION OF DR. NEIL GILLMAN EMANU-EL READS: *THE SABBATH* JANUARY 23, 2008

This evening it is my great pleasure to introduce Rabbi Neil Gillman who joins us tonight as part of our **Emanu-El Reads** program here in the Klau Reading Room of the Ivan M. Stettenheim Library. This year we are focusing on *The Sabbath* by Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Introductions are supposed to be short and to the point and allow the speaker to get on with the lecture because that's what you're here for. I assure you there will be a proper introduction, listing all of Dr. Gillman's credentials, but first allow me to share some personal thoughts about our guest.

I'm sure that at one time or another each of us has been in a class with a teacher who is impossible to forget...someone who makes learning so exciting that the class is not long enough. Dr. Gillman is that teacher. Seder in my home took on special meaning the year I spent eight weeks studying the Haggadah. Dr. Gillman studied with Mordecai Kaplan and Abraham Joshua Heschel, and the course he gave discussing the two, bringing in stories and anecdotes of his experiences, made it memorable. In the years that he has taught here, I've taken many courses with him. It really didn't matter what he was teaching, he knew "the group," — I put that in quotes — and I would be there. Not only did Rabbi Gillman share his knowledge and love of Judaism with us, but he shared himself, his family and his life, and in doing so, he became part of our lives... intellectual and otherwise. The only downside of being Emanu-El's president, and I do love it, is that I've not had time to be his student.

Now, as I promised...

A native of Quebec City, Dr. Gillman graduated from McGill University in 1954, was ordained at Jewish Theological Seminary in 1960 and received his doctorate in philosophy from Columbia University in 1975. Rabbi Gillman entered JTS in 1954 as a rabbinical student and has spent his entire career there. After ordination he became an advisor to rabbinical students, eventually being appointed dean of the rabbinical school. Dr. Gillman is the Aaron Rabinowitz and Simon H. Rifkind Professor of Jewish Philosophy. For many years he was a regular contributor to the "Sabbath Week" column in *The Jewish Week*. I still look forward to reading his occasional columns. Dr. Gillman began publishing in the 1980s and among his many books on Jewish theology are *Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew*; *The Way into Encountering God in Judaism*; and *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought*. This year Rabbi Gillman is the scholar-in residence at the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning here at Temple Emanu-El. He will be teaching several courses at Skirball beginning next week.

It is my pleasure to present Dr. /Rabbi Neil Gillman to you.
He will teach us tonight as he has taught generations of students.