

HUC-JIR/NY Graduation Benediction

Provost Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss

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The seal of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
that is embossed on the diplomas
our graduates and honorary degree recipients
will receive
contains a quotation from the book of Genesis:

הַבֶּקֶר אֹר.

(Gen 44:3)

In the context of HUC's seal,
this phrase is understood to mean:
“In the morning, let there be light!”

This citation speaks to the promise
inherent in the first light of each new day;
it speaks to the light of learning,
the light of new ideas,
the light of hope
that better days will come.

Psalm 36 reminds us
that by God's light,
we see light:

בְּאֹרֶךְ נְרָאֵה-אֹר

(Ps 36:10)

At this harrowing, heartbreaking juncture
in the history of our people Israel
and the wider world,
let us search for sparks of light
amidst of darkness.

Inspired by the accomplishments of our graduates
and our honorary degree recipients,
let us commit ourselves
to creating light,
to pursuing peace,
to bringing about justice,
to making *chesed* —
generous acts of loving kindness —
more manifest in the universe.

As we do,
somehow,

אור חדש על ציון תאיר

may a new light will shine on Zion
and around the world.

And let us say: Amen

& Mazal tov!