



**HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI  
MAY GOD ASSIST HIM**



# **Full text of HM the King's Message at Award Ceremony of 'Martin Luther King Jr. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel' Freedom Award Given posthumously to Late HM King Mohammed V**

HM King Mohammed VI addressed a message on the occasion of the award ceremony, here Sunday, of the "Martin Luther King Jr. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel" Freedom award, given posthumously to late HM King Mohammed V.

HRH Princess Lalla Hasnaa received this award on behalf of HM King Mohammed VI.

Here follows the full text of the Royal message read by HM the King's Advisor, André Azoulay.

"Praise be to God

May peace and blessings be upon His Prophets and Messengers

Your Excellencies,

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight, you are inviting the Kingdom of Morocco to a date with history. Indeed, this is one of those events which make history, adding the most beautiful chapters to the book of mankind, who knew in the past and still knows today, how to resist the dizzying impacts of the cultural, religious and social divide.

Let us take a moment and try to understand what is really at stake.

On the pews of this synagogue, in the heart of New York, on the heights of Manhattan, it is the names, the struggles, the victories and the everlasting messages of no less eminent figures than the

Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel that are being associated with the tribute paid tonight to my illustrious grandfather, His Late Majesty King Mohammed V. May he rest in peace.

It is in memory of these two icons of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States that you have decided to name the Freedom Award you have just created. As its first recipient, you have chosen to honor - tonight and for eternity - His Late Majesty King Mohammed V, the revered hero not only to all Moroccans, but also to all peoples yearning for freedom and dignity - all of which are deeply rooted in our time-honored identity, which is open to the whole world, an identity the Kingdom of Morocco has constantly nurtured by building on the rich, diverse components of its society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is precisely to that country, Morocco, which epitomizes bravery as well as the highest ethical standards, that you have decided to pay tribute tonight. By reminding the world, from this city of New York, that although the power of His Majesty King Mohammed V was drastically constrained by the implacable realities of the French protectorate - at a time when France itself was under Nazi occupation, he refused to allow the racist laws of the Vichy government to be applied to Moroccan citizens of Jewish faith.

It was an exemplary Royal Resistance - a National, Popular Resistance characteristic of enlightened Islam which, from the Rabat Royal Palace, kept alive the lesson and teachings of the great philosopher Ibn Rushd who, already in his day, said that society was at its best when its most eminent figures - first and foremost the nation's leader - subscribed to the loftiest, most enlightened elements of human nature.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking to you as 2015 draws to a close, I am sure you realize that my understanding of the honor bestowed on the Kingdom of Morocco tonight is more than a mere reminder of an exemplary page of history written more than 70 years ago.

Today, we need, more than ever, to ponder the lessons and relevance of this part of history in order to stand up more forcefully to the deadly aberrations of those who are hijacking our cultures, our faiths and our civilizations.

We are living at a time and in a world in which the collective imagination of our societies is too often impaired, not to say poisoned,

by regression and archaism. By capitalizing on the depth and resilience of the legacy left by my revered grandfather His Majesty Mohammed V, we can, together, set out to recover the lost expanses of reason and mutual respect which have vanished from many parts of the world.

May I point out that this duty of remembrance has, at times, been lacking in a Community of Nations that has often turned its back on the very complex nature of our respective histories.

Reminding that Community - as we are doing this evening - that it was countries like mine, in the heart of the Arab and Islamic world, that rejected Nazi barbarism, would certainly contribute to greater discernment in the face of growing Islamophobia and gross generalizations that feed on a culture of rejection, exclusion and refusal to learn how to live together.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the hundreds of American students who are here with us today. Thanks to Mr. Peter Geffen, the Founder of KIVUNIM, the organization which has brought us together this evening, these students chose to go to Morocco in order to study its history and its culture, to learn Arabic and to get to know Islam.

Most of these students, who are members of the American Jewish Community, will be different people in their community tomorrow. Not just different, but also valuable, because they will have made the effort to see the world in a different light, to better understand our intertwined and unified traditions, paving the way for a different future, for a new, shared destiny full of the promises of history, which, as they will have realized in Morocco, is far from being relegated to the past.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

MAP 21 December 2015