'Religious Existence' To Be Chapel Topic

By RICHARD BEST

"Religious Existence" will be the topic of an address to be delivered this Thursday by "one of the world's most illustrious Jewish theologians." At 7:15 pm. Abraham Joshua Heschel, professor of Jewish ethics and mysticism at New York's Jewish Theological Seminary, will preach to the University in the Rice Chapel.

Recently Heschel was a principal speaker at the National Conference on Religion and Race, where he criticized American religions' ineffectiveness in dealing with problems of racial discrimination.

HIS RECENTLY published work, "The Prophets" is a discussion of the nature of prophecy. Unlike the mystics, the prophets did not express the ineffable glory of God, but spoke of specific situations — the machinations of Jewish foreign policy, or the selling of debaters into slavery . . ."

Heschel does not necessarily think the age of prophecy is over. "Prophecy is the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to be plundered poor." The prophet can "sense the human situation as a divine emergency."

DESCENDED FROM a long line of Polish rabbis, Heschel attended the University of Berlin but fled to England and the U.S. when war was declared. He has taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary since 1945.

It is his thesis that the secular disciplines of philosophy and science lead nowhere in the solution of ultimate questions. "Science pre-supposes a certain aspect of being, but is it the ultimate?" Eventually "the prophet may be more relevant than the scientist."