

Professor Martin Buber -PERSONAL-  
c/o Hebrew University  
Jerusalem, Israel.

17. August 1961

Dear Professor Buber,

The last few days I have been reading some studies of yours which I had not seen before. They are the five papers which have been published in English under the collective title "Between Man und Man", and I think especially of "Zwiesprache", "Die Frage an den Einzelnen", and parts of "Was ist der Mensch".

After having finished reading these studies, I feel the need to send you again a greeting – after far too long a time of silence, understandable only in the light of the pressure of circumstances. In what you say about the "signs", about the "questions" and the response and about the Single One and his responsibility, with reference also to the political sphere, you have formulated shared experiences in ways which made your studies very much what you would call a "sign" for me. It is strange – over a gulf of time and a gulf of differences as to background and outer experience – to find a bridge built which, in one move, eliminates the distance.

This was all I wanted to tell you and I do not believe that any further comments would add or clarify anything.

I still keep in my mind the idea of translating you so as to bring you closer to my countrymen, but it becomes increasingly difficult to choose and of course I can not envisage any more extensive work. Also, the more I sense the nuances in your German, the more shy I become at the thought of a translation which, at best, could render only a modest part of its overtones.

Dag Hammarskjöld

Tatbiyeh, Jerusalem (Israel)

23 August 1961

Dear Mr. Hammarström,

I want to thank you for your letter. It is for me, even more than what you said in our first talk, a token of true integral understanding, — rather a rare gift in this world of ours.

Were I asked, which of my books a Jew should read first, I should answer: "The most difficult of them all, but the most apt to introduce the reader into the realm of dialogue, I mean: "I and Thou." As you may not know the postscript to the new edition, I am sending you a copy, together with a paper on language I gave last year.

With kind regards

yours

Martin Buber