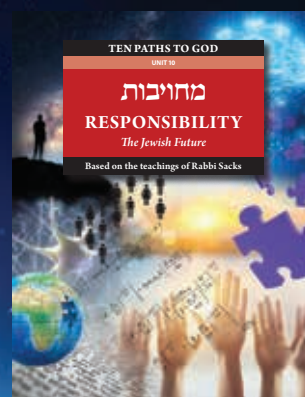
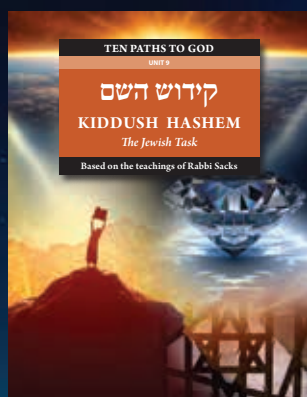
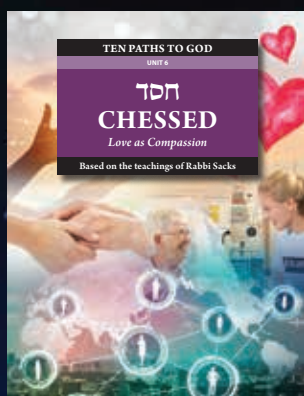
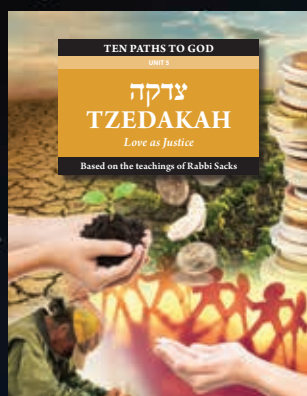
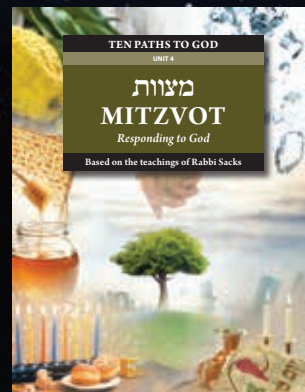
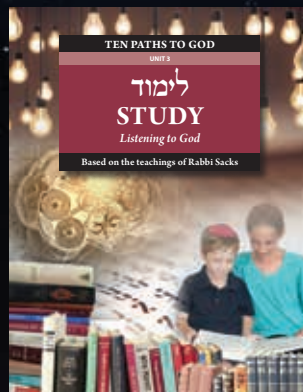
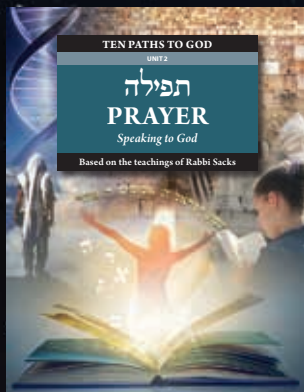
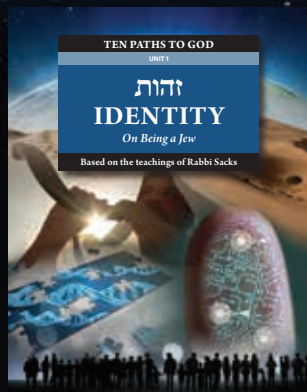


TEN PATHS TO GOD

A curriculum based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks


Student Guide / Entry Level



Jonathan Sacks

The Office of Rabbi Sacks

www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths



“Among the fine people it has been my privilege to know, Chaim (Harry) and Anna Schimmel hold a special place. Their life has been built on a love of Torah, which they have learned, taught, supported, and in Harry’s case written brilliantly about. They epitomized it for our community; they have communicated it to everyone they know, and especially to their children and grandchildren. I always counted Harry as my benchmark. If he agreed with an interpretation I had given, I was confident I was on the right lines. Now that Harry and Anna have made *aliyah* to *Yerushalayim Ir ha-Kodesh*, I count it as a special delight that this curriculum project has been sponsored in their honor. They inspired me; I hope these materials inspire others.”

RABBI SACKS

Introduction by Rabbi Sacks

Why 'Ten Paths to God'?

'Seek God where He is to be found, call Him when He is close.' The sages were puzzled by this verse. When is God not close? Surely God is everywhere. Their answer was profound. God is always close to us, but we are not always close to God.

At some point in life, every reflective human being will ask three fundamental questions: Who am I? Why am I here? How then shall I live?

Whether we believe, or don't believe, these are religious questions. Science can tell us how life began, but it can never tell us what life is for. Anthropology can tell us the many ways in which people have lived, but it can never tell us how we should live. Economics and business studies can tell us how to generate wealth, but they cannot tell us what to do with the wealth we have made.

The various sciences, natural, social or human, can tell us how, but not why. The 'why' questions ask us to lift up our eyes beyond the immediate, in search of the ultimate. The name we give to the ultimate ultimate is God. The search for meaning at its heart is a religious quest.

God is always close to us, but we are not always close to God. How then do we come close to Him? By living Jewishly. 'We will do, then we will understand,' said our ancestors at Mount Sinai. So it is in all matters of the soul. We learn to love music by listening to music. We learn to be generous by performing acts of generosity. 'The heart follows the deed.' Don't expect to have faith or find God by waiting for Him to find us. We have to begin the journey. Then God meets us halfway.

There are many ways of finding God, many paths to the Divine presence. For this series of videos and accompanying curriculum, I have chosen ten of the most important. The first is **identity**. We are born into a family that has a history. Who are we? To which story do we belong?

The second is **prayer**, the most focused way in which we reach out to God. Third is **study**, the highest of all Jewish acts, which the sages said was more holy even than prayer. Fourth is **mitzvot**, the way of the commands. In prayer we find God by speaking; in study we find God in listening; in *mitzvot* we find God by doing.

Then come the three great attributes of the Jewish personality: **tzedakah**, love as justice; **chesed**, love as compassion; and **faith**, love as loyalty. Judaism is a religion of love, not the mystical, otherworldly love that hovers above the world, leaving its imperfections intact, but the love that engages

with the world, trying – one act at a time, one day at a time, one life at a time – to make it a little less cruel, a little more human and humane.

Then, lastly, come the three great expressions of Jewish life: **Israel**, the one place on earth where Jews have the chance to do what every other nation takes for granted, namely the right to rule ourselves and create a society in accordance with our beliefs; ***Kiddush Hashem***, sanctifying God's name in the world by acting as God's ambassadors; and lastly **responsibility**, the idea that we are God's partners in the work of creation, and there is work for each of us to do in this tense and troubled age.

Any of these units may be the starting point of a personal meditation, framed by such questions as: How does this apply to me? How can I act on it to become a better person? How can this help me to lead a more meaningful and fulfilled life? Some may not speak to you, others will. For there are as many ways to the Divine presence as there are Jews, said Rav Nachman of Bratslav. Or as I put it, where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.

There are many ways to God. Where we begin doesn't matter, so long as we begin. Jewish life is the circumference of a circle at whose centre is God. That is where we meet, whatever our starting point.

However long we live, life is short, too short. Every day matters. Every day in which we do not do some good deed, take some step toward God, make some difference to the world, is a day lost – and our days on earth are too few to waste even one.

Jonathan Sacks

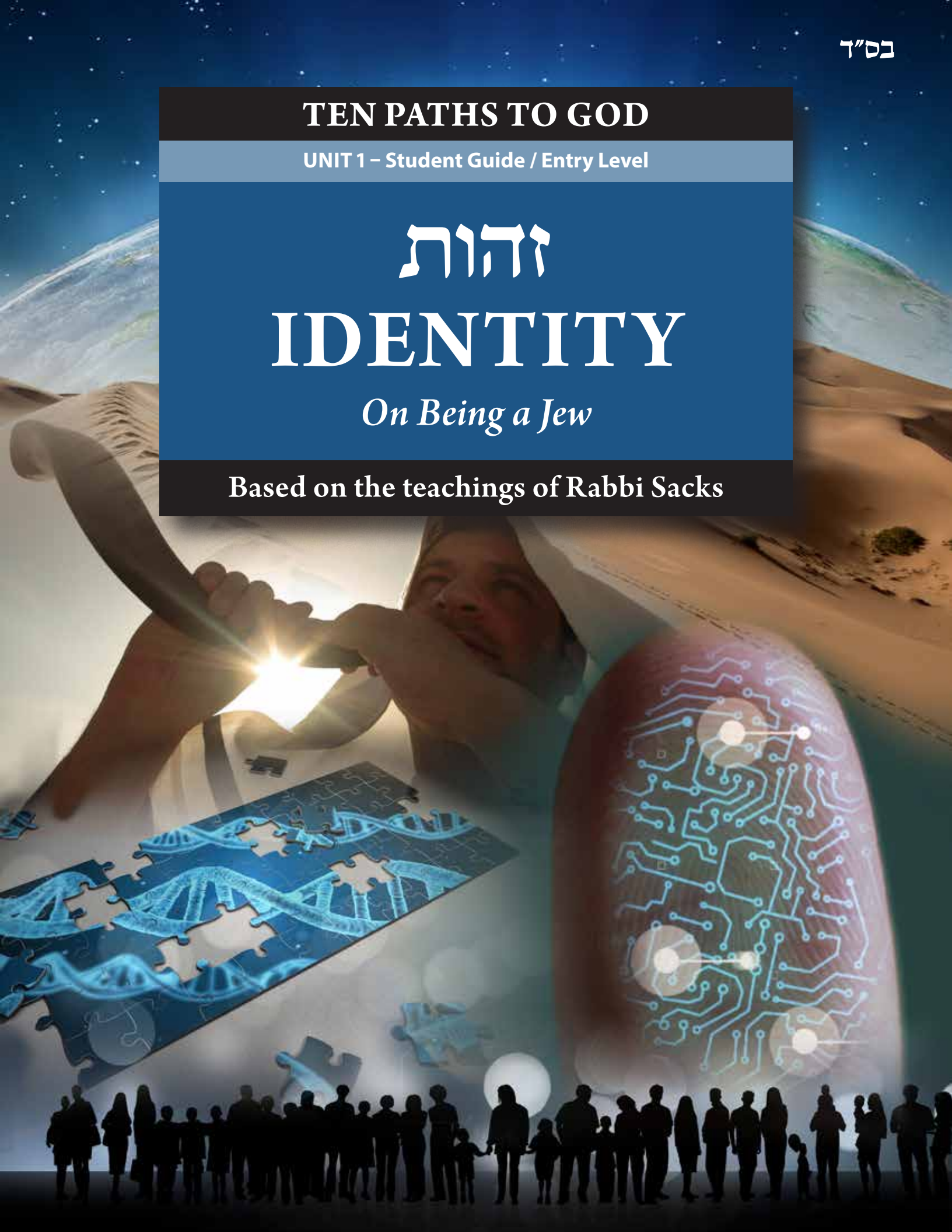
TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 1 – Student Guide / Entry Level

זהות IDENTITY

On Being a Jew

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 1



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.

Uniquely, Jews are born into a faith. It chooses us before we choose it. Physically we come naked into the world, but spiritually we come with a gift: the story of our past, of our parents and theirs, through almost forty centuries from the day Avraham and Sarah first heard the call of God and began their journey to a land, a promise, a destiny and a vocation. That story is ours.

It is a strange and moving story. It tells of how a family, then a collection of tribes, then a nation, were summoned to be God's ambassadors on earth. They were charged with building a society unlike any other, based not on wealth and power but on justice and compassion, the dignity of the individual and the sanctity of human life – a society that would honor the world as God's work and the human person as God's image.

That was and is a demanding task, yet Judaism remains a realistic religion. It assumed from the outset that transforming the world would take many generations – hence the importance of handing on our ideals to the next generation. It takes many gifts, many different kinds of talent – hence the importance of Jews as a people. None of us has all the gifts but each of us has some. We all count; we each have a unique contribution to make. We come before God as a people, each giving something and each lifted by the contributions of others.

And yes, at times we fail or fall short – hence the importance of *teshuvah*, repentance, apology, forgiveness, re-dedication. Judaism is bigger than any of us, yet it is made by all of us. And though Jews were and are a tiny people, today a mere fifth of a per cent of the population of the world, we have made a contribution to civilization out of all proportion to our numbers.

To be a Jew is to continue the journey our ancestors began, to build a world that honors the image of God in every human being and to be part of a people summoned by God to be His ambassadors down here on earth.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

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a faith

1. What does the word *faith* mean?
2. What does Rabbi Sacks mean when he says we are born into a faith?
3. Why do you think the word faith is sometimes used to refer to this?



the story of our past

1. When do you think “the story of our past” begins? When does Rabbi Sacks state it begins? When do you think it ends?
2. Do you think it is important to learn about the “story of our past”? Why?
3. Do you learn Jewish history at your school? Do you think Jewish history should be taught by the history department or by the Jewish studies department? Why?

the call of God

1. What do you think Rabbi Sacks means by “the call of God”?
2. What did God “call” on Avraham and Sarah to do or be?
3. Do you think God has called on you to do or be something?

journey to a land

1. Which land?
2. Why do you think God starts Jewish history by asking Avraham to leave his home and travel to an unknown land?
3. How do you think our land is connected to the next few words in the text: “a promise, a destiny and a vocation”?

a promise, a destiny and a vocation

1. What do the words *promise*, *destiny* and *vocation* mean? Are these words related to each other at all?
2. What do you imagine your destiny is?
3. Have you found your vocation yet?

ambassadors on earth

1. What is the job of an ambassador?
2. How can we be God’s ambassadors?
3. Do you think we are doing a good job?

building a society

1. What does the word *society* mean?
2. How do you “build” a society?
3. Where can we as Jews build a society?



justice and compassion, the dignity of the individual and the sanctity of human life

1. What do these words mean?
2. What do they have in common?
3. How do you build a society based on these values?

God's work

1. What does Rabbi Sacks mean when he says that the world is "God's work"?
2. Where do you see this to be true in the world?
3. Do you think it can be proven?

God's image

1. If God does not have a physical form, then how can He have an "image"?
2. What does it mean to be created in the "image of God"? Think about all the other creations that are not made in God's image – how are we as humans different? Are these differences what it means to be created in the image of God?
3. Which people are created in God's image?

handing on our ideals to the next generation

1. How do we "hand on our ideals to the next generation"?
2. What ideals have your parents handed on to you?
3. How have they handed them on to you?

we have made a contribution to civilization out of all proportion to our numbers

1. What contributions have the Jewish people made to civilization?
2. Can you give any examples of Jews that have made a big impact on the world?
3. Why do you think we have made these contributions despite our small number?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

The Core Concepts



Exploration of the Core Concepts: Together with your *chavruta* join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group). Look at the supplementary sources provided below for each of the core concepts highlighted in the text. Your teacher will tell you which core concept to look at first. Make sure you understand it fully, and write down any questions you have.

Explain how the supplementary sources help you understand the core concept they are connected to. Use the questions to guide your discussion and analysis.

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A PEOPLE OF HISTORY



לֵב כִּי שְׁאַל-נָא לַיָּמִים רָאשֵׁינִי אֲשֶׁר-הָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ לְמוֹת-הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם עַל-הָאָרֶץ
לֵב וְלִמְקָצָה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְעַד-קֶצֶה הַשָּׁמַיִם הִנֵּהיָה כְּדָבָר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה אוֹ הַנִּשְׁמָע כְּמָהוּ: הַשְׁמַע עִם
לֵב קוֹל אֱלֹהִים מְדַבֵּר מִתּוֹךְ-הָאֵשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַעְתָּ אֹתָהּ וַיְחִי: אוֹ הַנִּסָּה אֱלֹהִים לָבוֹא לְקַחַת לּוֹ
גוֹי מִקֶּרֶב גּוֹי בְּמִסְתָּ בְּאֹתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְזִרְעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדֹלִים
כָּל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לָכֶם ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֶיךָ:

Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

Devarim 4:32–34

1. "Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of?" To what is this referring exactly?
2. Do you think it could also be referring to Jewish history in general? In your opinion, is Jewish history unique? Is it miraculous?
3. Can Jewish history be a source of faith? Is it a source of faith for you? Why?



a promise

THE CALL

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹרְאָךְ: וְאָנֹכִי
לְגֹי גָדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדָּלְהָ שְׁמֹךְ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה: וְאֶבְרַכְהָ מִבְּרַכְיֶיךָ וּמִקֻּלְלֶיךָ אֲדָר וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְּךָ כָּל
מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה:

The Lord said to Avram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all families on earth will be blessed through you.'

Bereishit 12:1–3

1. God made two covenants with Avraham, but this is not one of them. What is the difference between a promise and a covenant?
2. What exactly is Avraham being called on to do?
3. What does it mean to "be a blessing"? Is this a promise, or part of the call?

THE WAY OF THE LORD

וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוּ יְהוָה לְגֹי גָדוֹל וְעָצוֹם וְנִבְרַכְוּ בּוֹ כָּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ: כִּי יִדְעֻהֶנּוּ לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יַעֲזִיחַ
אֶת-בָּנָיו וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשִׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא ה' עַל-אַבְרָהָם
אֵת אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר עָלָיו:

Avraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Avraham what He has promised him.

Bereishit 18:18–19

1. What does it mean to be a "great and powerful nation"? Why is that important?
2. What do you think Avraham has been chosen for?
3. Why has Avraham been chosen according to these *pesukim*? Although the translation seems to imply that Avraham was chosen *in order* to instruct his children, the Hebrew text leaves room for the implication that Avraham was chosen because he *naturally* understands the importance of education. Which of these interpretations do you think most accurately describes Avraham, and the Jewish people in general?



DUST AND THE STARS



'I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heaven and the sand on the seashore' (Bereishit 22:17). Rabbi Yehudah bar Ilai explained: This people is compared to dust and to the stars. When it sinks, it sinks to the dust, but when it rises, it rises to the stars.

Talmud Bavli, Megillah 16a

'I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth' (Bereishit 13:16). As the dust of the earth is from one end of the world to the other, so your children will be dispersed from one end of the world to the other. As dust is trodden on by all, so will your children be trodden on by the peoples of the world. As dust outlives all vessels of metal while it endures forever, so all the peoples of the earth will cease to be, while Israel endures forever.

Bereishit Rabbah 41, Lech Lecha

1. According to these sources, is it a blessing or a curse to be compared to the dust of the earth?
2. Dispersed throughout the world; trodden on by other nations; outliving other nations – have these things happened to the Jewish people in their history?
3. Do you have an idea why this may have been part of God's plan?

a destiny and a vocation... to be God's ambassadors on earth

A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS



אֲנִי ה' קְרָאתִיךָ בְּצִדְקָה וְאֶחֱזֶק בְּיָדְךָ וְאֶצְרֶךְ וְאֶתֶּנֶּךָ לְבְרִית עִם לְאוּר גּוֹיִם: לִפְתָּח עֵינַיִם עוֹרוֹת
לְהוֹצִיא מִמִּסְגֵּר אֲסִיר מִבֵּית כְּלָא יֵשְׁבִי חֹשֶׁךְ:

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the nations, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Yeshayahu 42:6–7

1. What do you think it means to be "a light for the nations"?
2. In your opinion, should the following be taken literally? If not, then what could the text mean?
 - a. "to open eyes that are blind"
 - b. "to free captives from prison"
 - c. "to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness"



3. Do you think the Jewish people are “a light for the nations” today? Can you give examples?

LIKE FRAGRANT OIL



‘Your name is like fragrant oil poured out,’ (Shir HaShirim 1:3): As oil brings light to the world, so Israel brings light to the world, as it is said, ‘Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn,’ (Yeshayahu 60:3).

Shir HaShirim Rabbah, 1:3:2

1. Shir HaShirim compares the Jewish people to perfume. This midrash gives one explanation of what that means. What is it?
2. Can you think of another explanation of how the Jewish people can be compared to perfume?
3. Why do you think the midrash focuses on the capacity of oil to bring light? What kind of “light” do the Jewish people bring to the world?

THE JEWISH HEART OF THE WORLD



Israel is to the nations as the heart is to the limbs of the body.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, The Kuzari: 11:36

1. What role does the heart play for the rest of the body? In what way do the Jewish people play that role for the rest of the world?
2. What happens to the body when the heart isn’t healthy or malfunctions? What can that teach us about the Jewish people?
3. Do you believe the Jewish people do play that role in the world? Do you think the nations of the world see that also?

THE ENNOBLEMENT OF THE HUMAN RACE



The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, an almost fanatical love of justice, and the desire for personal independence – these are the features of the Jewish tradition which make me thank my stars that I belong to it.

Albert Einstein, As I See It, p. 103

1. Where in Judaism do you think these values are transmitted?
2. Albert Einstein was not a religious Jew. Nevertheless he received these values from Judaism. How do you think that happened?
3. Do you think these values inspired him to become a scientist? How so?



BIGGER THAN OUR NUMBERS

Each of us Jews knows how thoroughly ordinary he is; yet taken together, we seem caught up in things great and inexplicable . . . The number of Jews in the world is smaller than a small statistical error in the Chinese census. Yet we remain bigger than our numbers. Big things seem to happen around us and to us.

Milton Himmelfarb, *Jews and Gentiles*, p. 141–142

1. We are so very small in terms of the population of the world. Do you think we have made a contribution beyond our small numbers?
2. Can you explain why this is?
3. Can you explain why “big things seem to happen around us and to us”?

LOOKING OUTWARD

We have become altogether too inward-looking, with our horizons largely limited within the ghetto-walls we have erected to separate us from the rest of our people and from the human society beyond . . . Preoccupied with the burning problems of our own survival, we have lost sight with our assignment as a light unto the nations.

Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, *The Timely and the Timeless*, p. 96–97

1. What do you think Rabbi Jakobovits means when he says: “We have become altogether too inward-looking”?
2. Do you agree with him? Can you give examples to prove your point?
3. How does being “outward-looking” allow us to better fulfill “our assignment as a light unto the nations”?



building a society unlike any other

THE COVENANT AT SINAI: A HOLY NATION



אֲתֶם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וְאֲשָׁא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשִׁיִּים וְאָבָא אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי: וְעַתָּה
אִם־שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְהָיִיתֶם לִי סֻגָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:
וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבֹּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Shemot 19:4–6

1. The term *Am Segula* is often non-literally translated as “chosen people”. Here, however, it is translated as “treasured possession”. Are these two terms connected?
2. If we are “treasured” by God does that mean we are His favorite, or could He have other “treasured” people who have a different relationship with Him?
3. What do you think it means to be a “kingdom of priests”? What role did the priestly tribe (the tribe of Levi) have in biblical times? How can the Jewish people serve in that role in today's world?

handing on our ideals to the next generation

LOYALTY TO GOD



Devoid of power, splendor, bereft of the brilliant show of human grandeur, Israel was upheld by its faithfulness toward the All-One... Other states, everywhere, in all the glory of human power and arrogance, disappeared from the face of the earth, while Israel, though devoid of might and splendor, lived on because of its loyalty to God and His Law.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Nineteen Letters*, p. 64

1. What do you think Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch means by “power, splendor... grandeur”?
2. How do you think the Jewish people survived despite not having these things?
3. Was this more about God, or us, or a combination?



HOPE IN FAILURE



Despair and resignation were unknown to the man of the covenant who found triumph in defeat, hope in failure, and who could not conceal God's Word that was, to paraphrase Jeremiah, deeply implanted in his bones and burning in his heart like an all-consuming fire.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, p. 112

1. How do you think the Jewish people managed to see "triumph in defeat" and "hope in failure" throughout their history?
2. Who "implanted" this hope in our "bones"?
3. How can we make sure it is "implanted" in the "bones" of future generations too?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class. Present your approach to the core concept allocated to you, making reference to the supplementary sources and the answers you came up with to the questions accompanying them.

As a class, consider the following meta-questions (big picture questions):

1. What has God called on the Jewish people to be or do? What is the national mission of the Jewish people?
2. How can we best fulfill this role?
3. How do you think we are doing in this mission?

The Assignment



Final Thoughts: The following text, by Rabbi Sacks, summarizes the lessons and concepts we have been studying in this unit:

REMAKING THE WORLD



For forty centuries, Jews have held tenaciously to the belief that we have been charged with a sacred mission: to sanctify life by being God's ambassadors to a world that has all too often worshipped the multiple forms of what Nietzsche called 'the will to power.' We were called on to write a different story, that tells of the beauty of holiness and the call of compassion: 'to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world.'

Judaism has placed at the center of its striving some of the most healing of all sacred imperatives: the importance of love and loyalty; marriage and the sacred bonds between husband and wife, parent and child; education and the life of the mind; justice, equity and the rule of law; compassion, charity and human dignity; the bonds of belonging and community; memory, history and imperishable hope. We seek God not just in the remote heavens or the innermost recesses of the soul but in ordinary life, with its pleasures and pains, fears and hopes, conflicts and consolations. Judaism believes not in abandoning earth for the sake of heaven, but in bringing fragments of heaven down to earth in simple deeds and celebrations.

For that is where God is found. Not in wealth, power, fame, success, or any other of the myriad substitutes for life, still less in violence and terror, but in life itself: living, breathing (*neshamah*, the Hebrew word for soul, means 'breathing'), loving, giving, caring, praying, praising, giving thanks, defeating tragedy in the name of hope, and death in the name of life.

Our task is to be true to our faith and a blessing to others: a blessing to others *because* we are true to our faith. To be a Jew is to bring redemption, one day at a time, one act at a time. Every *mitzvah*, every kind word or deed, every act of sharing what we have with others, brings the Divine presence into the world. By recognizing the image of God in other people, we help to remake the world in the image of God.



In this unit we have explored the concept of the Jewish people having a "destiny and vocation" to be "God's ambassadors on earth," and to "build a society like no other" based on the values found in the Torah, and described in this text. While it is perhaps a little early on in your life to think about being a society builder (although why not dream big?!) let's start with your school's community.



Part 1: Work in small groups allocated by your teacher. Your job in this assignment is to create a proposal to improve your school society. Suggest three initiatives that will improve your school's community based on the values that Rabbi Sacks says our wider society should be built on.

1. Make a list of the values found in the paragraph in the text that is italicized. Describe where each of these values is already found in your school.
2. Choose three of the values. Write a short proposal based on each value to create a program that will improve your school's community.



Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 2 – Student Guide / Entry Level

תפילה PRAYER *Speaking to God*

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 2



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.

See the short glossary below for help.

Glossary

Redeem: to change for the better (this word has other related meanings but this is how it is being used here).

Solitude: the quality or state of being alone or remote from society.

Fate: an inevitable and often adverse outcome, condition, or end.

Infinitesimal: immeasurably or incalculably small.

Concatenation: linked together.

Descartes: René Descartes (1596–1650) French mathematician and philosopher.

Unfathomable: impossible to comprehend.

Parameters: a characteristic element.



Prayer is our intimate dialogue with Infinity, the profoundest expression of our faith that at the heart of reality is a Presence that cares, a God who listens, a creative Force that brought us into being in love. It is this belief more than any other that redeems life from solitude and fate from tragedy. The universe has a purpose. We have a purpose. However infinitesimal we are, however brief our stay on earth, we matter. The universe is more than particles of matter endlessly revolving in indifferent space. The human person is more than an accidental concatenation of genes blindly replicating themselves. Human life is more than 'A tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' (Macbeth 5.5.26–28). Prayer gives meaning to existence.

It is possible to believe otherwise. There can be a life without faith or prayer, just as there can be a life without love, or laughter, or happiness, or hope. But it is a diminished thing, lacking dimensions of depth and aspiration. Descartes said, 'I think, therefore I am.' Judaism says, 'I pray, therefore I am not alone.'

It takes courage to believe. Jews need no proof of the apparent injustice of events. It is written on the pages of our history. Jews had no power or earthly glory. For the better part of forty centuries our ancestors lived dispersed throughout the world, without a home, without rights, all too often experiencing persecution and pain. All they had was an invisible God and the line connecting us to Him: the Siddur, the words of prayer. All they had was faith. In Judaism, we do not analyze our faith, we pray it. We do not philosophize about truth, we sing it, we *daven* it. For Judaism, faith becomes real when it becomes prayer.

In prayer we speak to a Presence vaster than the unfathomable universe yet closer to us than we are to ourselves: the God beyond who is also the Voice within. Though language must fail when we try to describe a Being beyond all parameters of speech, yet language is all we have, and it is enough. For God who made the world with creative words, and who revealed His will in holy words, listens to our prayerful words. Language is the bridge that joins us to Infinity.

In prayer God becomes not a theory but a Presence, not a fact but a mode of relationship. Prayer is where God meets us, in the human heart, in our offering of words, in our acknowledged vulnerability.

Jonathan Sachs



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

Prayer is our intimate dialogue with Infinity, **the profoundest expression of our faith** that at the heart of reality is **a Presence that cares**, a God who listens, a creative Force that brought us into being in love. It is this belief more than any other that **redeems life from solitude and fate from tragedy**. The universe has a purpose. We have a purpose. However infinitesimal we are, however brief our stay on earth, we matter. The universe is more than particles of matter endlessly revolving in indifferent space. The human person is more than an accidental concatenation of genes blindly replicating themselves. Human life is more than 'A tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' **Prayer gives meaning to existence**.

It is possible to believe otherwise. There can be a life without faith or prayer, just as there can be a life without love, or laughter, or happiness, or hope. But it is a diminished thing, lacking dimensions of depth and aspiration. Descartes said, 'I think, therefore I am.' Judaism says, 'I pray, therefore I am not alone.'

It takes courage to believe. Jews need no proof of the apparent injustice of events. It is written on the pages of our history. Jews had no power or earthly glory. For the better part of forty centuries our ancestors lived dispersed throughout the world, without a home, without rights, all too often experiencing persecution and pain. All they had was an invisible God and **the line connecting us to Him: the Siddur**, the words of prayer. All they had was faith. In Judaism, we do not analyze our faith, we pray it. We do not philosophize about truth, we sing it, we *daven* it. For Judaism, **faith becomes real when it becomes prayer**.

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In prayer God becomes not a theory but a Presence, not a fact but a mode of relationship. Prayer is where God meets us, in the human heart, in our offering of words, in our acknowledged vulnerability.



the profoundest expression of our faith

1. What is “our faith” referring to? Can you give some examples of “our faith”?
2. By “expressing” something we are declaring what we believe to be true. In what way does *tefilla* express what we believe?
3. When you pray, what are you saying about what you believe?

a Presence that cares

1. Why does Rabbi Sacks capitalize the ‘P’ of “Presence”?
2. How does this “Presence” show that He (God) cares about us? Can you think of examples of this from your own life?
3. How does the act of praying confirm that we believe in a Presence that cares?

redeems life from solitude and fate from tragedy

1. How does belief in a caring God make us feel less like we are alone?
2. The ancient Greeks believed that fate (what is destined to be) determines all the good and bad things that will happen in our lives, and that there is no way to avoid this fate. How does believing in a caring God differ to this?
3. Who do you believe makes the ultimate choices in your life and decides how your life will turn out; random “fate”, God, or yourself?

Prayer gives meaning to existence

1. How can prayer, and the statement of belief in a caring God that it is, give your life meaning?
2. What meaning does your life have?
3. How does that affect the way you live your life?

It takes courage to believe

1. What do you think people who do not believe in a caring God might believe in?
2. Why does Rabbi Sacks describe faith as courageous?
3. “It is written on the pages of our history.” Do you think it is easier or harder to believe in God because of Jewish history? Why?



the line connecting us to Him: the Siddur

1. Describe how the Siddur connects us to God.
2. Wouldn't it be easier to use our own words to connect to God and not the words of the Siddur? How does the Siddur help?
3. Do you find the Siddur helps or hinders your connection to God? Why?

faith becomes real when it becomes prayer

1. Is Judaism primarily about believing, or doing?
2. How does praying make belief "real"?
3. Rabbi Sacks says we don't just talk about faith (philosophize) or keep it in our heart, we sing or *daven* our faith. Why do you think faith is better acted upon, rather than kept only in your mind or heart?

the God beyond who is also the Voice within

1. Where is the God "beyond"? How do you connect to that God?
2. How is God the "Voice within"? Within what? What does that "Voice" say?
3. Do you find it easier to relate to the "God beyond" or the "Voice within"?

Language is the bridge that joins us to Infinity

1. Why "must language fail" when we try and use it to describe God?
2. Why is language "all we have" to connect to God?
3. How do we use language to "join us to Infinity (God)"?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and share your answers to the questions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

Themes of Tefilla



Exploring Themes of Tefilla: Together with your *chavruta* look at the following text from Rabbi Sacks' introduction to the Koren Siddur, and then the *mishna* from *Pirkei Avot* that follows it. Use the questions below to help you understand Rabbi Sacks' approach to *tefilla*, and its connection with the *mishna*.



The metaphor that, to me, captures the spirit of prayer more than any other is Yaakov's dream in which, alone at night, fleeing danger and far from home, he saw a ladder stretching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending... Prayer is a ladder and we are the angels. If there is one theme sounded throughout the prayers, it is *creation–revelation–redemption*, or *ascent–summit–descent*.

Creation – Pesukei DeZimra

In the Verses of Praise (*Pesukei DeZimra*), we climb from earth to heaven by meditating on creation. Like a Turner or Monet landscape, the psalms let us see the universe bathed in light, but *this* light is not the light of beauty but of holiness – the light the sages say God made on the first day and “hid for the righteous in the life to come.” Through some of the most magnificent poetry ever written, we see the world as God's masterpiece, suffused with His radiance...

Revelation – Shema/Amida

By the time we reach *Barechu* and the blessings of the *Shema* we have neared the summit. Now we are in heaven with the angels. We have reached revelation. The Divine Presence is close, almost tangible... Now comes the great declaration of faith at the heart of prayer, the *Shema* with its passionate profession of the unity of God and the highest of all expressions of love, “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.”... Then comes the *Amida*, the supreme height of prayer. Three traditions fuse at this point: the silent *Amida* said by individuals, reminding us of prophetic prayer; the Leader's repetition representing priestly worship and prayer as sacrifice; and then the *Kedusha*, prayer as a mystical experience.

Redemption – Concluding Prayers

From here, prayer begins its descent. First comes *Tachanun* in which we speak privately and intimately to the King. At this point, with a mixture of anguish and plea, we speak not of God's love for Israel but of Israel's defiant love of God... Then comes *Ashrei* and the subsequent passages, similar to the *Pesukei DeZimra* but this time with redemption, not creation, as their



theme. The key verse is “A redeemer will come to Zion.” The section closes with a prayer that we may become agents of redemption as we reengage with the world... We are now back on earth, the service complete except for *Aleinu*, *Kaddish* and the *Shir shel Yom*. We are ready to reenter life and its challenges...

We are not the same after we have stood in the Divine Presence as we were before. We have been transformed. We see the world in a different light. Perhaps we radiate a different light. We have spoken to and listened to God. We have aligned ourselves with the moral energies of the universe. We have become, in Lurianic terminology, vessels for God’s blessing. We are changed by prayer.

Understanding Jewish Prayer, The Koren Siddur

Creation – *Pesukei DeZimra*

1. The first theme is Creation, and our part in it. How does thinking about Creation help us climb the ladder to stand before God?
2. Where in our *tefillot*, specifically in *Pesukei DeZimra*, can you see examples of “magnificent poetry” that describes the world as “God’s masterpiece”?
3. Turner and Monet were painters who tried to capture the splendor of nature in the same way as *Sefer Tehillim*. Do you think we can use music and art in all its forms, even nature itself, to find a connection to God?

Revelation – *Shema/Amida*

1. The second theme is revelation, when God reveals or communicates something to us. How is standing in front of God and praying like revelation?
2. How is prayer different from revelation? (Clue: dialogue vs. monologue)
3. The climax of our *tefilla* is the *Shema* and the *Amida*. Who wrote the *Shema*? Who wrote the *Amida*?

Redemption – Concluding Prayers

1. The third theme is redemption, looking outward to make the world a better place. What does that have to do with prayer? Where in the Siddur do we find this theme?
2. Why do we not end our *tefillot* at their climax, standing in the presence of God? Why descend at all?
3. “We are not the same after we have stood in the Divine Presence as we were before... we are changed by prayer”. Can you explain how we are different? Can you think of an example of how prayer has changed you?



שמעון הצדיק היה משירי כנסת הגדולה. הוא היה אומר על שלשה דברים העולם עומד.
על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים.

Shimon HaTzadik was one of the last of the Men of the Great Assembly.
He used to say: the world stands on three things: *Torah*, *Avodah*, and *Acts of Lovingkindness*.

Mishna Avot 1:2

1. What do you think Shimon HaTzadik means when he says the world “stands on three things”?
2. Why three?
3. Who is the focus when you keep the *Torah*?
4. *Avodah* is the service in the *Bet HaMikdash*, which was replaced by the *tefilla* service after the *Bet HaMikdash* was destroyed. Who is the focus during the *Avodah*?
5. Who is the focus of “Acts of Lovingkindness”?
6. These “three things” in the *mishna* are the basis of the three core relationships: man and himself (בין אדם לעצמו), man and God (בין אדם למקום) and man and others (בין אדם לחבירו). They can also be found in other sources that come in threes such as *Mishna Avot 1:12*; the three cardinal sins found in *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 74a*; the three concepts of repentance, prayer, and charity that are mentioned in the *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur* prayers as “averting the evil decree”. Can you see a connection between these and the three themes of *tefilla* we explored above?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your conclusions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to these themes from you? Does their approach speak to you?

Further Exploration of the Themes of *Tefilla*



Further Exploration of the Themes of *Tefilla*: Together with your *chavruta* look at one of the themes below through the two supplementary sources. Your teacher will tell you which theme to focus on. Use the guiding questions to help you.



Then join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group) to examine the *tefilla* text from the Siddur that illustrates the theme. Use the guiding questions and commentary to help you with your analysis.

Creation: Between Man and Himself (בין אדם לעצמו)



Before I was born, Your love enveloped me.
You turned nothing into substance, and created me.
Who etched out my frame?
Who poured me into a vessel and moulded me?
Who breathed a spirit into me?
Who opened the womb of Sheol and extracted me?
Who has guided me from youth-time until now?
Taught me knowledge, and cared wondrously for me?
Truly, I am nothing but clay within Your hand.
It is You, not I, who have really fashioned me.
I confess my sin to You, and do not say
That a serpent intrigued, and tempted me.
How can I conceal from You my faults, since
Before I was born Your love enveloped me.

Rabbi Shlomo ibn Gabirol, *Before I was Born*

1. What would you say is the theme of this poem?
2. What realization is Rabbi Shlomo ibn Gabirol expressing about himself? Can you describe what that must feel like emotionally?
3. Can *tefilla* lead to this same humbling process? How so?



All beings long for the very source of their origin. Every plant, every grain of sand, every clod of earth, small creatures and great, the heavens and the angels, every substance and its particles – all of them are longing, yearning, panting to attain the state of holy perfection. Human beings suffer constantly from this homesickness of the soul, and it is in prayer that we cure it. When praying, we feel at one with the whole creation, and raise it to the very source of blessing and life.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook, *Olat Hariyah*

1. What is the “source of their origin” for all of creation?
2. How do you think the realization that we are *part* of creation and not the *masters* of creation changes the way we see ourselves?
3. What do you think Rav Kook means when he says prayer is the “cure” for “this homesickness of the soul”?



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחִכְמָה
 וּבָרָא בּוֹ נִקְבִּים וְנִקְבִּים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים.
 גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כֹסֶא כְבוֹדְךָ
 שֶׁאִם יִפְתָּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם
 אוֹ יִסְתָּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם
 אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקִים וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֶיךָ.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'
 רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

...A THOUSAND WORDS



בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
 who formed man with wisdom
 and created in him many openings and cavities.
 It is revealed and known before the throne of Your glory
 that were one of them to be ruptured or blocked,
 it would be impossible to survive and stand before You.
 Blessed are You, LORD,
 Healer of all flesh
 who does miracles.

REFLECTION

*"We forget that we have
 a holy body
 no less than a holy spirit."
 (Rav Kook, Orot HaTe'hiya 33)*

Is your body a highly
 efficient scientific machine
 or a miracle from God?
 Can it be both?

Does your human body
 help you to believe in God?

If your human body is a
 gift from God, how would
 that change the way you
 treat your body?

CONNECTION

*"The human body contains 100 trillion cells.
 Within each cell is a nucleus. Within each
 nucleus is a double copy of the human ge-
 nome. Each genome contains 3.1 billion letters
 of genetic code, enough if transcribed to fill a
 library of five thousand books. Each cell, in other
 words, contains a blueprint of the entire body
 of which it is a part. The cumulative force of these
 scientific discoveries is nothing short of wondrous.
 In ways undreamt of by our ancestors, we now
 know to what extent the microcosm is a map
 of the macrocosm. From a single cell, it may be
 possible to reconstruct an entire organism."*

(Rabbi Jonathan Sacks,
 Covenant & Conversation, Emor 5768)

LEARNING

This *berakha* is said after every
 visit to the restroom, to thank
 Hashem for the intricate won-
 ders of the human body. It is

recommended to go to the restroom im-
 mediately after washing your hands in the morn-
 ing, and then say both the *berakha* of *Netilat
 Yadayim* and *Asher Yatzar*.

1. Answer the questions under the "Reflection" section. What is the common theme behind them?
2. What is the image on the page? How is it related to the "Reflection" questions and the "Connection" section?
3. What statement of belief are you making when you make this *beracha*?
4. Describe the emotions that come with the message from this *beracha*.
5. What impact does this *beracha* have on your relationship with yourself (בין אדם לעצמו)?



Revelation: Between Man and God (בין אדם למקום)



Lord, where shall I find You?
High and hidden is Your place.
And where shall I not find You?
Your glory fills infinities of space...
I have sought Your presence
called You with all my heart,
And going out to meet You
I found You coming toward me.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, *Selected Poems of Judah Halevi*, p. 134

1. One of God's names is *Makom*/מקום, (as in *בין אדם למקום*), literally "space". Does this poem help you understand why?
2. "High and hidden is Your place" vs. "And where shall I not find You"? Which one is it? Is God far away and transcendent (beyond our ordinary world) or close and imminent (immediate, close by)?
3. Do you ever feel God "coming toward" you? Where do you go to find God?



In my heart I will build a sanctuary
To God's glorious splendour,
And in the sanctuary I will raise an altar
To the radiance of His majesty.
As fire I will take
The fire of the Binding,
And as a sacrifice I will offer Him
My undivided soul.

Adapted from Rabbi Eliezer Azikri, *Sefer Charedim*

1. Originally we used the *korbanot* in the *Bet HaMikdash* to worship God. What is the message behind that form of worship?
2. Since the destruction of the *Bet HaMikdash* almost 2000 years ago, we replaced that form of worship with prayer. How is prayer also a sacrifice to God?
3. How do you offer God your "undivided soul" in your everyday life?



קדושת השם

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ
וְקְדוּשִׁים בְּכָל יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ סֵלָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ. / המלך הקדוש.

(עמידה, repeat the Amidah.)

REFLECTION

How can I behave today
in a way that reflects
my inner holiness?

Am I behaving
in a way that makes
a kiddush Hashem?

What will you do today
to bring holiness
into the world?

LEARNING

"A person will have to answer for everything that his eye beheld and he did not consume." (Yerushalmi, Kiddushin 4:12)
In Judaism, holiness does not mean denying the physical, rather enjoying that which is permitted to us and up-lifting it to make it spiritual. *Kedusha* is the transformation and the elevation of the mundane to the holy and spiritual.

... A THOUSAND WORDS



HOLINESS

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ You are holy and Your name is holy,
and holy ones praise You daily, Selah!

Blessed are You, LORD,

the holy God. / Between Rosh HaShana & Yom Kippur: the holy King./

(If forgotten, repeat the Amidah.)

CONNECTION

Imagine a city in the middle of a war. The dirt flying in the air. Missiles overhead. Everything in chaos. The smell of chemicals permeating the thick fog that has become the sky and civilians running through the streets in confusion, in panic – a living nightmare. A doctor runs across the blood-stained streets looking for people he can help, wounds he can heal just enough to get people back on their feet so they can keep running, keep living. He tends to a man bleeding from a piece of shrapnel, when he suddenly hears someone call out, "Doctor."

A short distance away he sees the woman calling out. She is hurt and in need of immediate attention. But as soon as he runs toward her, he hears another voice: "David!" He looks over to see his neighbor on the ground with a serious injury. No sooner than two steps to the neighbor's direction, a small voice pierces through the sweaty air and whispers, "Dad." The doctor is paralyzed for a moment before looking for his son amidst the rubble.

"Hashem" is the Jewish People's way of saying Dad.

To most people, the man in the story

was an anonymous person running around the streets – until someone saw him performing a medical act. Then he became "Doctor." To his neighbor, however, he was "David," a name that suggests an attachment that forced him to care just a little bit more. And when he heard "Dad" come through the thick fog, he was paralyzed.

This is the power of a name. It defines the relationship we have with the person and forces us to treat him in a particular way.

"Hashem" is the Jewish People's way of saying Dad. Dad is not the person's legal name, it's not their Hebrew name, it's not their business title. It's shorthand. It's a way to say that we, as Jews, have a nickname for You, God. It's a nickname that suggests both intimacy and respect, like the appellation "Dad." It's a way to tell your father that you love him, but that you still understand he's the father, he's in charge.

Likewise with Hashem: we love You and feel close to You. And at the same time we recognize our distance and who is really in charge.

(Jon Dabach)

1. Look at the list of names in the photograph. What's in a name? What does a name represent? How does your name do that?
2. We generally do not like to pronounce God's name, and instead say *Adonai* (my master) or better still *Hashem* (which just means "the name"). Why do you think this is?
3. What do you think "Holiness" means? If God is holy, and you are created in His image, then are you holy? Do you have to work at it or does it happen automatically?
4. Read the story on the page of the Siddur. It seems that there is a lot in a name. It can define our relationship with a person. Which type of relationship with God do you most connect to?
5. What kind of impact does this *beracha* have on your relationship with God (בין אדם למקום)?



Redemption: Between Man and his Fellow (בין אדם לחבירו).



May it be your will, O Lord our God, to cause to dwell in our lot Love, fellowship, peace and friendship, to widen our boundaries through students, to prosper our goal with hope and with future, to appoint us a share in the garden of Eden, to direct us in your world through good companions and good impulse, That we may rise in the morning and find Our heart awake to fear your name.

Talmud Bavli, Berachot 16b

1. Why do we need to pray for help with finding “Love, fellowship, peace and friendship”? Aren’t these in our own hands? Are these things easy or hard to achieve?
2. Why should we pray to have students if we are not a teacher? Does everyone have “students”? Do you have any “students”?
3. Why do we need to pray for help to find hope? Isn’t that a state of mind that we can control?



Lord and King of Peace,
Who makes peace and creates all things:
Help all of us that we may always hold fast to the attribute of peace,
So that true and abundant peace prevail between man and man, between
husband and wife,
And no strife separate humankind even in thought.
You make peace in Your heaven, You bring contrary elements together:
Extend abundant peace to us and to the whole world,
So that all discords be resolved in great love and peace,
And with one mind, one heart, all come near to You and Your law in truth,
And all form one union to do Your will with a whole heart.
Lord of peace, bless us with peace.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, *Likkutei Tefillot*, I, 95

1. Peace may be achieved when people don’t fight. Who, then, should be responsible for peace, God or man?
2. Do you think peace is hard to achieve? In your school? In your family? In your community? In the world?
3. Is having “one mind and one heart” the same as living in peace?



עַל בֵּן נִקְוָה לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְרֹאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתַפְאֶרֶת עֲזֶךָ
לְהַעֲבִיר גְּלוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ, וְהָאֱלִילִים כְּרוֹת יִכְרְתוּן
לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שִׁדְי.
וְכָל בֶּנִי בָשָׂר יִקְרָאוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל רְשָׁעֵי אָרֶץ.
יִכְרְוּ וְיִדְעוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל
כִּי לָךְ תִּכְרַע כָּל בָּרָךְ, תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל לָשׁוֹן.
לְפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִכְרְעוּ וְיִפְּלוּ
וּלְכָבוֹד שִׁמְךָ יִקְר יִתְנוּ
וְיִקְבְּלוּ כָּלֶם אֶת עַל מַלְכוּתְךָ
וְתִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם מְהֵרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שֶׁלָּךְ הִיא וְלְעוֹלָמִי עַד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד
בְּכִתּוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד:
וְנֹאמַר, וְהָיָה ה' לְמֶלֶךְ עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה ה' אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד:
Some add:
אֲלֵתֵיכָא מִפְּחַד פִּתְאָם וּמִשְׂאֵת דְּשָׁעִים כִּי תִבָּא:
עֲזוּ עֲזָה וְתַפֵּר, דְּבִרּוּ דְּבַר וְלֹא יָקוּם, כִּי עֲמֵנוּ אֵל:
וְעַד-זְקֵנָה אֲנִי הוּא, וְעַד-שִׁיבָה אֲנִי אֶסְבֵּל, אֲנִי עֲשִׂיתִי וְאֲנִי אֲשָׂא וְאֲנִי אֶסְבֵּל וְאֲמַלֵּט:
שמות טו
זכריה יד
משלי ג
ישעיה ח
ישעיה טו

REFLECTION

"[Hillel says]: That which is hateful to you, do not do to your friend. That is the entire Torah. The rest is just explanation. Go and study it!" (Shabbat 31a)

How would you sum up Judaism in one sentence?

... A THOUSAND WORDS



Therefore, we place our hope in You, LORD our God, that we may soon see the glory of Your power, when You will remove abominations from the earth, and idols will be utterly destroyed, when the world will be perfected under the sovereignty of the Almighty, when all humanity will call on Your name, to turn all the earth's wicked towards You. All the world's inhabitants will realise and know that to You every knee must bow and every tongue swear loyalty. Before You, LORD our God, they will kneel and bow down and give honour to Your glorious name. They will all accept the yoke of Your kingdom, and You will reign over them soon and for ever. For the kingdom is Yours, and to all eternity You will reign in glory, as it is written in Your Torah: "The LORD will reign for ever and ever." Ex. 15
And it is said: "Then the LORD shall be King over all the earth; on that day the LORD shall be One and His name One." Zech. 14

Some add:
Have no fear of sudden terror or of the ruin when it overtakes the wicked. Prov. 3
Devise your strategy, but it will be defeated, propose your plan, Is. 8
but it will not stand, for God is with us.
When you grow old, I will still be the same. Is. 46
When your hair turns grey, I will still carry you.
I made you, I will bear you, I will carry you, and I will rescue you.

LEARNING

The two paragraphs of the prayer *Aleinu* represent two distinct but related themes. The first paragraph explores our chosenness in the eyes of Hashem, while the second speaks of our mission in the world – to improve it (*tikkun olam*), which is the reason why we have been chosen. In the words of

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks: "No prayer more eloquently expresses the dual nature of the Jewish People: its singular history as the nation chosen to be God's witness on earth, and its universal aspiration for the time when all the inhabitants of earth will recognise the God in whose image we are formed."

1. What does *Tikkun Olam* mean? How can we do it?
2. Read the Reflection question. Hillel sums up the essence of Judaism. How can that help us achieve *Tikkun Olam*?
3. In what way can we represent God so that His greatness will be recognized by others?
4. The photograph shows the flag of the State of Israel flying among the community of nations outside the United Nations building in New York. What role can Israel play in *Tikkun Olam*?
5. What kind of impact does this *beracha* have on your relationships with other people in your life (בין אדם לחבירו)?

Share your analysis: Come together as a class. Present what you learned about the theme of *tefilla* that was allocated to you, making reference to the supplementary sources and the answers you came up with to the questions accompanying them.



The Assignment



In this unit we have explored the themes of *creation*, *revelation*, and *redemption* in *tefillah* and how they connect to the three paradigm relationships – *between man and himself* (בין אדם לעצמו), *between man and God* (בין אדם למקום) and *between man and his fellow* (בין אדם לחבירו).

Part 1: This assignment is to write your own *tefilla*, with all of these themes contained within it. Try to make your *tefilla* beautiful and expressive of what is in your heart. It may be a poem, or a song, or prose. If you want to explain the meaning behind it you can also write your own commentary on it.

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 3 – Student Guide / Entry Level

לימוד

STUDY

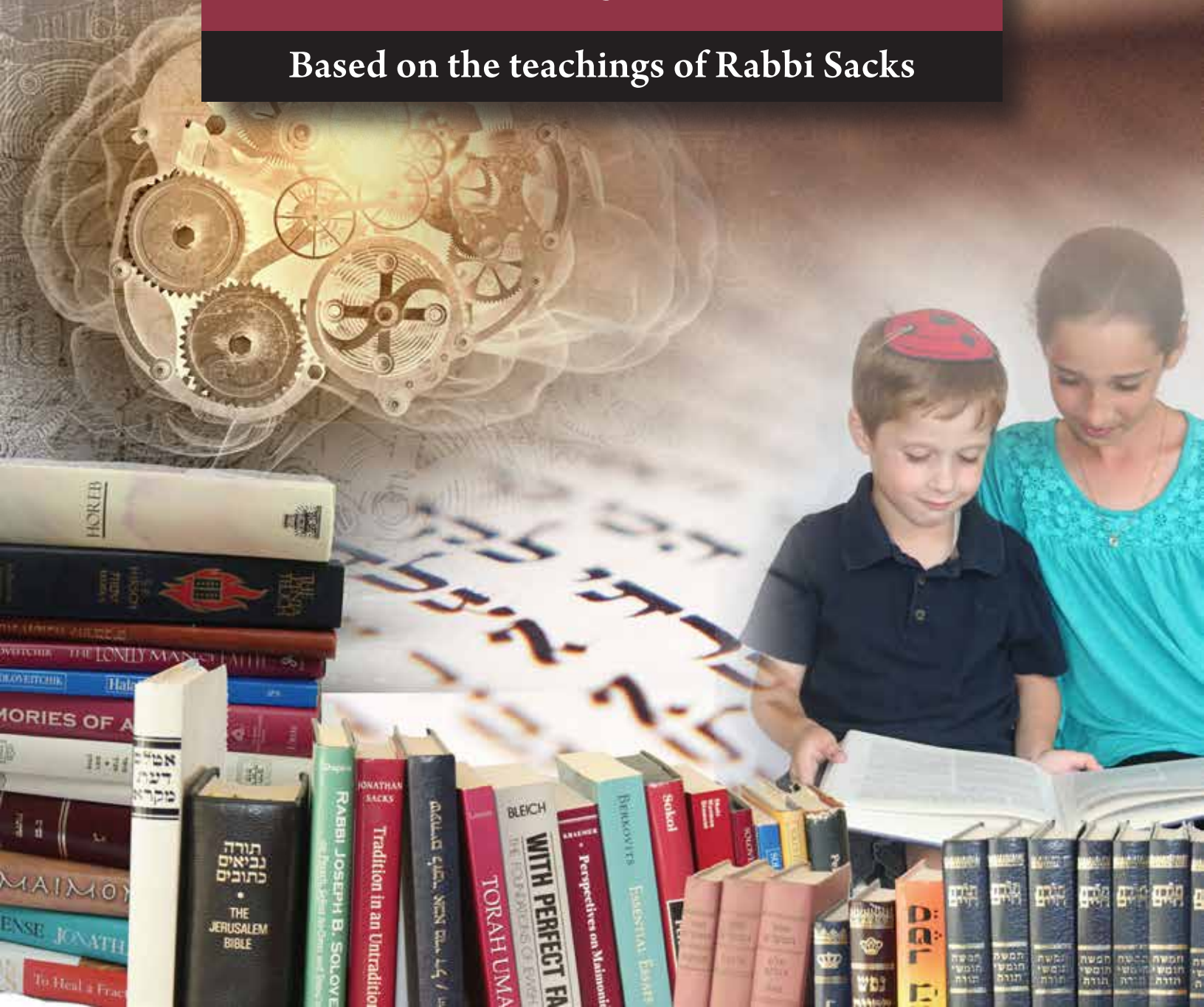
Listening to God

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks

UNIT 3 – Student Guide / Entry Level

לימוד
STUDY
Listening to God

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 3



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.



Jews are the “people of the book.” *Talmud Torah* – studying Torah – is the greatest of all the commands and the secret of Jewish continuity. In the *Shema* we are commanded, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your might.” Then almost immediately it says, “Teach these things repeatedly to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise.” Judaism is a religion of education.

Study is holier even than prayer, for in prayer we speak to God, but in study we listen to God. We strive to understand what God wants from us. We try to make His will ours. For the holiest thing is God’s word. The Torah – God’s word to our ancestors – is our constitution as a nation, our covenant of liberty, the code by which we decipher the mystery and meaning of life.

The words of the Torah span a thousand years, from Moses to Malachi, the first and last of the prophets. For another thousand years, until the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, Jews added commentaries to the Book, and for yet another thousand years they wrote commentaries to the commentaries. Never has there been a deeper relationship between a people and a book. The ancient Greeks, puzzled by the phenomenon of an entire people dedicated to learning, called Jews “a nation of philosophers.” Certainly we are called on to be a nation of students and teachers. In Judaism we not only learn to live; we live to learn. In study, we make Torah real in the mind so that we can make it actual in the world.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

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“people of the book”

1. Have you heard this description of the Jewish people before? What do you think it means?
2. Which book? Could it be more than one book, or just books in general?
3. How do you think the Jewish people earned this description? Do you think it applies just as much to our generation as it does to previous generations?

greatest of all the commands

1. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks describes the *mitzvah* of learning Torah as the “greatest of all the commands”?
2. What exactly is the *mitzvah* of learning Torah? How can we fulfill it?
3. Do you agree that it is the most important of all the *mitzvot*?



secret of Jewish continuity

1. What does “Jewish continuity” mean?
2. Why do we need to be concerned about it?
3. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks describes the *mitzvah* of learning Torah as the “secret of Jewish continuity”?

in study we listen to God

1. Unit 2 of this curriculum, which is about Prayer, is entitled “Talking to God,” and this unit, which is about learning Torah, is entitled “Listening to God.” How is learning Torah listening to God?
2. Which do you think is more important, talking to God or listening to God?
3. Considering the above, do you think studying Torah could be likened to receiving prophecy?

constitution as a nation

1. What is a constitution? (For example, consider the constitution of the United States of America.)
2. How is the Torah our constitution?
3. If you had to sum up the most important ideas contained in the Torah as the constitution of the Jewish people, what would they be?

covenant of liberty

1. What is a covenant (in Hebrew a *brit*/ברית)?
2. What does liberty mean?
3. How does the Torah guarantee liberty?

code by which we decipher the mystery and meaning of life

1. What is the meaning of life according to the Torah?
2. Why is life a mystery?
3. Does life have to have meaning? What would your life be like without meaning?



“a nation of philosophers”

1. What is a philosopher?
2. Why do you think the ancient Greeks thought the Jewish people were a “nation of philosophers”?
3. Is this the same as being a “people of the book”? Can you be one without the other? Does one lead to the other?

nation of students and teachers

1. What is more important, to be a student or to be a teacher?
2. Can you be one without the other?
3. Are you a student, or a teacher, or both? Will this always be the case?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers to the questions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

The Torah is...



Analysis: Take another look at the text and highlight every time Rabbi Sacks describes the Torah, or the *mitzvah* of learning Torah. Make a list of all the descriptions of Torah that you find as you learn the sources in this section.

Jews are the “people of the book.” *Talmud Torah* – studying Torah – is the greatest of all the commands and the secret of Jewish continuity. In the *Shema* we are commanded, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your might.” Then almost immediately it says, “Teach these things repeatedly to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise.” Judaism is a religion of education.

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Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta*, explore the following texts, using the questions below to guide you. Each time you come across another description of the Torah, add it to your list.

HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW



צו מה־אֶהְבֶּתִי תּוֹרַתְךָ כָּל־הַיּוֹם הִיא שִׁיחָתִי:

Oh, how I love your law!
I meditate on it all day long.

קד מה־נִמְלֵצוּ לִחְכִּי אִמְרֹתֶיךָ מִדְּבַשׁ לִפִּי:

How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!

קה גִּדְלֹגְלִי דְבָרְךָ וְאוֹר לְנִתְיָבְתִּי:

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path.

קיא נִחְלָתִי עֲדוּתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם כִּי־שִׂשְׁוֹן לִבִּי הִמָּוָה:

Your statutes are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.

קל פֶּתַח־דְּבָרֶיךָ יֵאִיר מִבֵּין פְּתִיּוֹם:

The unfolding of your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.

קמד צֶדֶק עֲדוּתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם הִבִּינֵנִי וְאֶחֱיָה:

Your statutes are forever right;
give me understanding that I may live.

Tehillim 119:97, 103, 105, 111, 130, 144

1. Why do you think the author of this psalm compares the Torah to honey? Is your experience of learning Torah sweet? If not, do you think it might be one day?
2. What is a heritage? Why would God's "statutes" (laws) bring you joy?
3. How does the Torah bring light into the world?

FIRE



Rav Papa [said] in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish: The Torah that God gave Moshe, was given to him as a white fire engraved with black fire.

Talmud Yerushalmi, Shekalim 6:1

1. How is the Torah like fire?
2. What do you think the "black fire" represents? What does the "white fire" represent?
3. The text describes the gaps between the letters and words of the Torah given to Moshe as being of fire. Can gaps between letters and words also have meaning?



AIR (OXYGEN)

Pappos ben Yehuda came and found Rabbi Akiva, who was convening assemblies in public and engaging in Torah study. Pappos said to him: Akiva, are you not afraid of the empire? Rabbi Akiva answered him: I will relate a parable. To what can this be compared? It is like a fox walking along a riverbank when he sees fish gathering and fleeing from place to place.

The fox said to them: From what are you fleeing?

They said to him: We are fleeing from the nets that people cast upon us.

He said to them: Do you wish to come up onto dry land, and we will reside together just as my ancestors resided with your ancestors?

The fish said to him: You are the one of whom they say, he is the cleverest of animals? You are not clever; you are a fool. If we are afraid in the water, our natural habitat which gives us life, then in a habitat that causes our death, all the more so.

The moral is: So too, we Jews, now that we sit and engage in Torah study, about which it is written: "For that is your life, and the length of your days" (Devarim 30:20). We fear the empire to this extent; if we proceed to sit idle from its study, as its abandonment is the habitat that causes our death, all the more so will we fear the empire.

Talmud Bavli, Berachot 61b

1. Why can't fish live without water? What would life be like without it for the fish?
2. What does the water represent for the fish in the story? What is the message for the Jewish people?
3. What would life be like for the Jewish people without the Torah?



WATER



It is taught in a *baraita* with regard to the verse: “And Moshe led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water” (Shemot 15:22). Those who interpret verses metaphorically said that water here is referring to nothing other than Torah, as it is stated metaphorically, concerning those who desire wisdom: “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come for water” (Yeshayahu 55:1). The *baraita* continues: “The verse means that since the Jews traveled for three days without hearing any Torah they became weary, and therefore the prophets among them arose and instituted for them that they should read from the Torah each Shabbat, and pause on Sunday, and read again on Monday, and pause on Tuesday and Wednesday, and read again on Thursday, and pause on Shabbat eve, so they would not tarry three days without hearing the Torah.”

Talmud Bavli, Bava Kamma 82a

1. What does water represent to a human being?
2. How is the Torah therefore like water?
3. Can you think of any other ways the Torah is like water?



Share your analysis: Join another *chavruta* to form a *chabura*. Share the lists you made of descriptions of the Torah. Are they the same? Which of all the descriptions of Torah most resonated with you? Have you heard the Torah described in any other way? Can you think of another way to describe the Torah?

The People of the Book



Analysis in Chavruta: Together with your *chavruta*, reread Rabbi Sacks' opening words. This time, using a different color, highlight every time Rabbi Sacks describes the Jewish people or Judaism and how it has been influenced by the *mitzvah* of studying Torah.

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Study is holier even than prayer, for in prayer we speak to God, but in study we listen to God. We strive to understand what God wants from us. We try to make His will ours. For the holiest thing is God's word. The Torah – God's word to our ancestors – is our constitution as a nation, our covenant of liberty, the code by which we decipher the mystery and meaning of life.

The words of the Torah span a thousand years, from Moses to Malachi, the first and last of the prophets. For another thousand years, until the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, Jews added commentaries to the Book, and for yet another thousand years they wrote commentaries to the commentaries. Never has there been a deeper relationship between a people and a book. The ancient Greeks, puzzled by the phenomenon of an entire people dedicated to learning, called Jews “a nation of philosophers.” Certainly we are called on to be a nation of students and teachers. In Judaism we not only learn to live; we live to learn. In study, we make Torah real in the mind so that we can make it actual in the world.



Analysis in Chavruta: Now let's try to understand how the Jewish people have earned this reputation. We will do this through analyzing several secondary texts that explore the role of education and Torah learning in Jewish culture and Judaism. By the end of this section you should have a clearer idea of what has led to the Jewish people becoming the "People of the Book." Prepare a brief presentation to be shared with the rest of your class – your thesis on what has led to this phenomenon. Include examples from your own life and your community.

THE THREE CROWNS



With three crowns was Israel crowned – with the crown of the Torah, the crown of the priesthood and the crown of sovereignty. The crown of the priesthood was bestowed on Aaron... The crown of sovereignty was conferred on David... But the crown of the Torah is for all Israel, as it is said, "Moshe commanded us a law, an inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov" (Devarim 33:4). Whoever desires it can win it. Do not suppose that the other two crowns are greater than the crown of the Torah for it is said, "By me, kings reign and princes decree justice. By me, princes rule" (Mishlei 8:15–16). Hence you can infer that the crown of the Torah is greater than the other two crowns.

Rambam, Laws of Torah Study, 3:1

1. Why do you think priesthood, kingship, and Torah scholarship are described as "crowns"?
2. Who has been gifted with each crown? What do these groups represent?
3. Why do you think it is important that only a small group function as the spiritual leadership (priests), and political leadership (the King), but that everyone should have the power of knowledge (Torah learning)?



THE WORLD'S FIRST UNIVERSAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

H.G. Wells noted in his Outline of History that “The Jewish religion, because it was a literature-sustained religion, led to the first efforts to provide elementary education for all children in the community.” Universal compulsory education did not exist in England until 1870; it existed in Israel eighteen centuries earlier. This Talmudic passage gives an overview of how it evolved.

May the name of Yehoshua ben Gamla be remembered for good, for were it not for him, the Torah would have been forgotten from Israel. For at first if a child had a father, his father taught him, and if he had no father he did not learn at all. Then they made an ordinance that teachers of children should be appointed in Yerushalayim. Even then, however, if a child had a father, the father would take him to Yerushalayim to have him taught, but if not, the child would not go. They then ordained that teachers should be appointed in every district, and boys would enter school at the age of sixteen or seventeen. But then, if the teacher punished a child, the child would rebel and leave school. Eventually Yehoshua ben Gamla came and ordained that teachers of young children should be appointed in each district and town, and that children should enter school at the age of six or seven.

Abridged from Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 21a

1. What is universal education? Is there universal education where you live? Why is it important?
2. If we are worried about the Torah being forgotten, why teach it to children? Why not to adults who might have a greater understanding?
3. According to this source, how important is the role of teachers in Jewish history?



COMMUNITIES BUILT AROUND SCHOOLS



The history of the Jews has been a history of communities built around schools. They are the key institutions because they convey learning. Greek civilization survived for five hundred years after the Roman conquest of the Greek city-states, because the Greeks, like the Jews, had developed academies and they could live around those academies. When the academies failed, Greek civilization disappeared. The Jewish people has never allowed its academies to fail.

Daniel J. Elazar, *People and Polity*, p. 489

1. According to this source what is the secret to Jewish continuity?
2. Which Jewish academies is this source referring to? What is learnt in these academies? Do they still exist today?
3. How have the Jewish people managed to ensure its academies have never failed?

NON-JEWISH TESTIMONY



A twelfth century Christian monk wrote the following in one of his commentaries, in an age when most of Europe was illiterate:

The Jews, out of their zeal for God and their love of the Law, put as many sons as they have to letters, that each may understand God's Law . . . A Jew, however poor, if he had ten sons, would put them all to letters, not for gain, as the Christians do, but for the understanding of God's Law; and not only his sons but his daughters.

B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, p. 78

1. According to this source, what is the motivation for Jewish parents to educate their children?
2. Why is it important to understand God's laws?
3. Why do you think the source specifically mentions daughters as well as sons? Do you think this was controversial in the 12th century? Is it controversial today?



JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE SHTETL



From infancy the boy is guided and prodded towards scholarship. In the cradle he will listen to his mother's lullabies: "Sleep soundly at night and learn Torah by day / And thou'lt be a Rabbi when I have grown grey." The most important item in the family budget is the tuition fee that must be paid each term to the teacher of the younger boy's school. "Parents will bend the sky to educate their son." The mother, who has charge of household accounts, will cut the family food costs to the limit if necessary, in order to pay for her sons' schooling. If the worst comes to the worst, she will pawn her cherished pearls in order to pay for the school term. The boy must study, the boy must become a good Jew – for her, the two are synonymous.

Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is with People*, p. 85–87

1. Do you think education is really the most important item in the family budget?
2. Do you think the money spent on your Jewish education is an important use of resources?
3. What message are parents (both in the shtetl and today) sending their children by dedicating their finances to their children's Jewish education?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and share your thesis on how the Jewish people earned the reputation and title of the "People of the Book." Support your thesis with examples from your own life and community.

The Assignment



Final Thoughts: The following text by Rabbi Sacks summarizes the lessons and concepts we have been studying in this unit:

THE SECRET OF JEWISH CONTINUITY



The Israelites, slaves in Egypt for more than two hundred years, were about to go free... On the brink of their release Moshe, the leader of the Jews, gathered them together and prepared to address them. He might have spoken about freedom. He could have given a stirring address about the promised land to which they were traveling, the “land flowing with milk and honey.” Or he might have prepared them for the journey that lay ahead, the long march across the wilderness.

Instead... he spoke about children and the distant future, and the duty to pass on memory to generations yet unborn... About to gain their freedom, the Israelites were told that they had to become a nation of educators.

Freedom, Moshe suggested, is won, not on the battlefield, nor in the political arena, but in the human imagination and will. To defend a land you need an army. But to defend freedom you need education. You need families and schools to ensure that your ideals are passed on to the next generation, and never lost, or despaired of, or obscured. The citadels of liberty are houses of study. Its heroes are teachers, its passion is education and the life of the mind. Moshe realized that a people achieves immortality not by building temples or mausoleums, but by engraving their values on the hearts of their children, and they on theirs, and so on until the end of time.

The Israelites built living monuments – monuments to life – and became a people dedicated to bringing new generations into being, and handing on to them the heritage of the past. Their great institutions were the family and education via the conversation between the generations. In place of temples they built houses of prayer and study. In place of stones they had words and teachings... In that counter-intuitive reversal they discovered the secret of eternity.

A Letter in the Scroll, p. 31–33

In this unit we have explored how the Jewish people have been molded into the “People of the Book” by their passionate commitment to education. This last quote from Rabbi Sacks beautifully and dramatically expresses the role of education in our religion, culture, and history.



Part 1: Working in small groups allocated by your teacher, create a visual representation of the descriptions found in this text. You may choose any form of visual arts (painting/drawing, animation, Power Point Presentation, etc.) to create your visual representation.

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

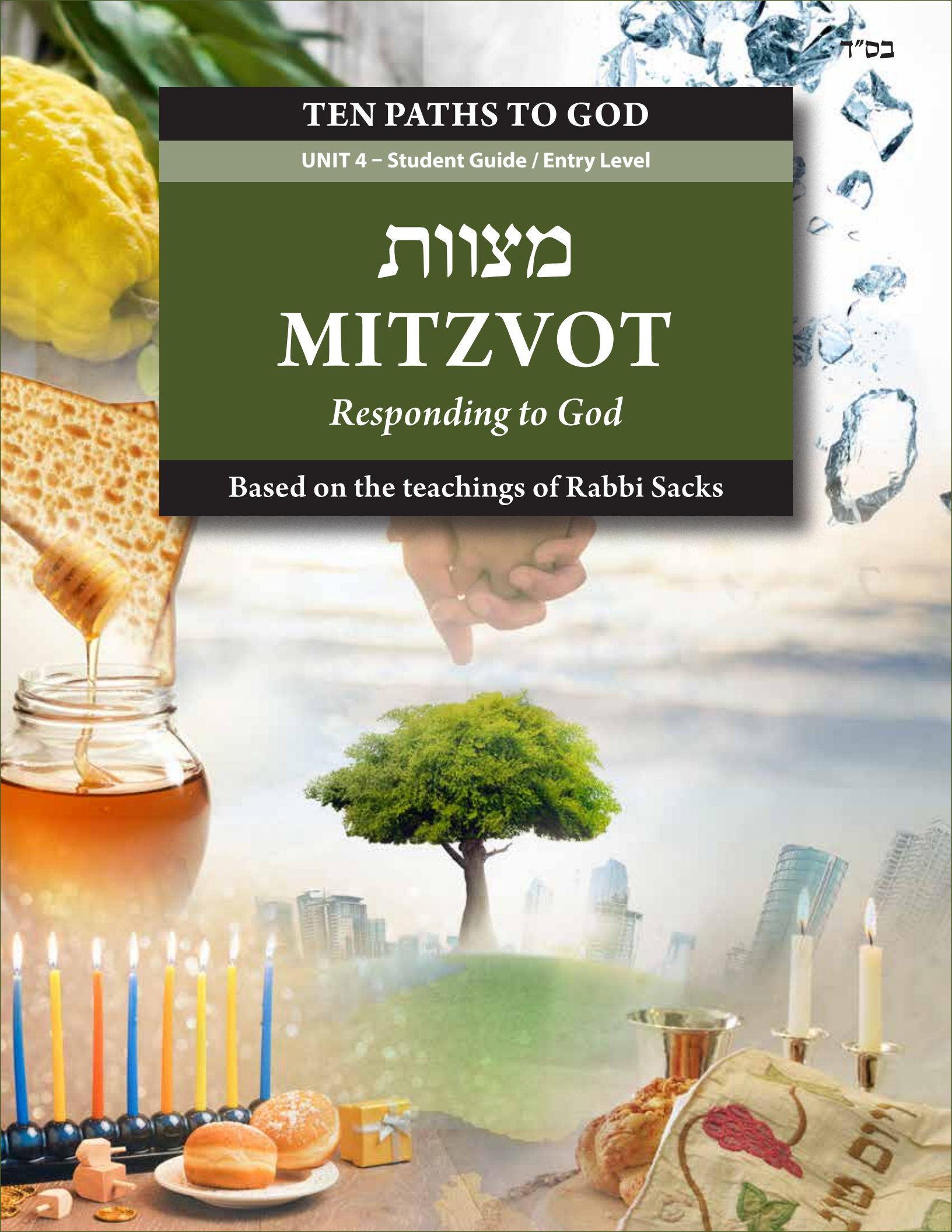
TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 4 – Student Guide / Entry Level

מצוות MITZVOT

Responding to God

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 4



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.

Judaism's genius was to take high ideals and translate them into life by simple daily deeds: the way of *mitzvot*, acting in accordance with God's will. We do not just contemplate truth: we live it.

We don't contemplate creation by studying theoretical physics. We live it by making a blessing over what we eat and drink, acknowledging God as the creator of all we enjoy. We don't think about our responsibility for the environment. We keep Shabbat, setting a limit, one day in seven, to our exploitation of the world. We don't just study Jewish history. On the fasts and festivals, we re-enact it. Truth becomes real when it becomes deed. That is how we transform the world.

There are those who see the world as it is and accept it. That is the stoic way. There are those who see the world as it is and flee from it. That is the mystic, monastic way. But there are those who see the world as it is and change it. That is the Jewish way. We change it through *mitzvot*, holy deeds that bring a fragment of heaven down to earth.

Every *mitzvah* is a miniature act of redemption. It turns something secular into something holy. When we keep *kashrut* we turn food for the body into sustenance for the soul. When we keep Shabbat we sanctify time, making space in our life to breathe and give thanks, celebrating what we have instead of striving for what we do not yet have. When we observe the festivals we sanctify history by turning it into personal memory, forging a connection between our ancestors' past and our present. When we keep the laws of *taharat hamishpacha*, family purity, we turn a physical relationship into a sacred bond of love.

The *mitzvot* bring God into our lives through the intricate choreography of a life lived in accordance with God's will. They are the poetry of the everyday, turning life into a sacred work of art.



Mitzvot teach us that faith is active, not passive. It is a matter of what we do, not just what happens to us. Performing a *mitzvah*, we come close to God, becoming His “partner in the work of creation.” Every *mitzvah* is a window in the wall separating us from God. Each *mitzvah* lets God’s light flow into the world.

Jonathan Sachs



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

Judaism's genius was to take high ideals and translate them into life by simple daily deeds: the way of *mitzvot*, acting in accordance with God's will. **We do not just contemplate truth: we live it.**

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We do not just contemplate truth: we live it.

1. Who does "just contemplate truth"?
2. What does it mean to "live truth"? How do Jews "live truth"?
3. What are the truths that we live? Can you think of some examples?



That is the Jewish way.

1. What is the stoic approach to injustice in the world? (Stoicism is a school of philosophy that believes man should be without passion and accept nature/natural law the way it is.)
2. What is the mystical/monastic approach to injustice in the world? (Monasticism is the way of monasteries, and monks who live a life without physical pleasure in order to immerse themselves in purely spiritual and mystical ways of being.)
3. What is the Jewish approach to injustice in the world?

miniature act of redemption

1. To redeem something is to change for the better. How are the examples of *mitzvot* that Rabbi Sacks gives “miniature acts of redemption”?
2. How can *mitzvot* lead to a much larger act of redemption? How can *mitzvot* redeem our world?
3. Which *mitzvah* can you do today as a miniature act of redemption that will make a small contribution to the ultimate redemption of the world?

The *mitzvot* bring God into our lives

1. How do the *mitzvot* bring God into our everyday lives?
2. What do you think “intricate choreography of a life lived in accordance with God’s will” means?
3. Which *mitzvot* do you do on a regular basis that give your life a rhythm and “choreography” through which you can connect to God?

“partner in the work of creation”

1. Was the world complete after the seven days of creation?
2. What still needs completing today?
3. How does performing *mitzvot* create a partnership between us and God in the work of creation?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers to the questions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

Categorizing the *Mitzvot*



Analysis: Together with your *chavruta*, read the following quote from Rabbi Sacks that describes the three different categories of *mitzvot*. Use the questions below to help you fully understand each of the three categories.



Most of the commandments fall into one of three categories. There are those loosely called *mishpatim*, judgements. These include all the detailed provisions of civil and criminal law, the rules of reciprocal altruism and distributive justice that make up Judaism's social legislation. Then there are *chukim*, statutes, such as the laws against eating milk and meat together, or wearing clothes of mixed wool and linen. These are sometimes thought of as commands that have no reason. Rambam rightly dismisses this idea. Essentially, *chukim* are "laws embedded in nature", and by keeping them we respect the integrity of the natural world. So we do not combine animal (wool) and vegetable (linen) textiles, or mix animal life (milk) with animal death (meat). Behind these and other such commands is the idea that God is the creator of biodiversity rather than hybrid uniformity. By observing them we acquire the habits of treating animals with kindness and the environment with care. Judaism's ecological imperative is a delicate balance between "mastering and subduing" nature (Bereishit 1), and "serving and protecting" it (Bereishit 2). So we have laws against needless waste, the destruction of species and the despoliation and overexploitation of the environment. The general principle is that we are the guardians of the world for the sake of future generations.

The other cluster of commands – known as *edot*, or "testimonies" – have to do with our identity as part of a people and its story. So on Pesach we return to Egypt, eating the bread of affliction and the bitter herbs of slavery; on Shavuot we are at Sinai, hearing the Ten Commandments and sharing in the covenant; and on Sukkot we re-enact the Israelites' journey across the desert with only a hut for a home. The festivals are the supreme transformation of history into memory, from events in the distant past into a personal experience of the present. When I observe the festivals I know, more powerfully than in any other way, that I am not a disconnected atom: I am a letter in the scroll, not yet complete, written by my ancestors, whose past lives on in me.

A Letter in the Scroll, p. 164–165



1. *Mishpatim* include civil and criminal law. Can you give some examples of civil and criminal laws from both the laws of the country where you live and from the Torah?
2. Which *mitzvot* do you think can be described as “distributive justice”?
3. How do the examples of *chukim* “respect the integrity of the natural world”?
4. How do you think the laws of *kashrut* fit into this category?
5. Testimony is when you declare something to be true. What testimony are we giving when we celebrate the biblical festivals?
6. How do the festivals connect us to the Jewish people, past and present?



Share your analysis: Join another *chavruta* to form a *chabura* and share your answers to the questions.

Mitzvot Further Explored



Further analysis: Below is an example of a *mitzvah* from each of the three categories. In your *chabura*, choose one of the examples to explore in more depth. If you have more time, look at the other *mitzvot* presented here also.

MISHPATIM: THE MITZVAH OF TZEDAKAH



The word *Tzedakah* is usually translated as “charity,” but in fact it means social or distributive justice. In biblical law it involved a whole series of institutions that together constituted the first ever attempt at a welfare state. The corners of the field, the dropped sheaf and grapes and olives left from the first picking were to be left for the poor. A tithe was to be given to them in certain years. Every seventh year, debts were cancelled, slaves went free, no work was done on the land, and the produce of the fields belonged to everyone. In the fiftieth year, the jubilee, anyone who had been forced through poverty to sell ancestral land was given it back. *Tzedek*, the Bible’s welfare legislation, is built on the premise that freedom has an economic dimension. Not only does powerless enslave, so too does poverty. So no one is to forfeit his independence or dignity. One may not take a person’s means of livelihood as security for a loan or hold on to items of clothing they need, nor may one delay payment to an employee.

A Letter in the Scroll, p. 120

1. What is the meaning of the root of the word *tzedakah* (tz-d-k)?
2. The *mitzvah* we call *tzedakah* actually includes a number of biblical *mitzvot*. What are they?
3. How is *tzedakah* an example of a *mitzvah* from the category of *mishpatim*?
4. Does the country in which you live achieve distributive justice in the same way that the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* does? How?
5. According to Rabbi Sacks how does *tzedakah* guarantee freedom?



CHUKIM: THE MITZVAH OF KILAYIM (NOT MIXING DIFFERENT SPECIES)



Another group of commandments is directed against interference with nature. The Bible forbids crossbreeding livestock, planting a field with mixed seeds, and wearing a garment of mixed wool and linen. It calls these rules *chukim* or “statutes.” The thirteenth-century scholar Ramban understood this term to mean laws which respect the integrity of nature. To mix different species, he argued, was to presume to be able to improve on the order of creation, and thus an affront to the Creator. Each species has its own internal laws of development and reproduction, and these must not be tampered with: “One who combines two different species thereby changes and defies the work of creation, as if believes that the Holy One, blessed be He, has not completely perfected the world and he now wishes to improve it by adding new kinds of creatures.”

The Dignity of Difference, p. 168

1. What is the mitzvah of *kilayim*?
2. Does it have any practical ramifications for us today?
3. How does it fit into the category of *chukim*?
4. How is this part of Judaism’s environmental ethic?
5. Does your country have any similar laws that protect the environment? Can you think of any examples?



EDOT: THE MITZVOT OF LEIL PESACH



[F]rom the very outset the Bible seems to sense that the journey from slavery to freedom is one we need to travel in every generation. So we were commanded to gather our families together every year at this time and tell the story of what it was like to be a slave and what it felt like to go free. Not just tell the story but act it out as well. We eat *matzah*, the unleavened “bread of affliction.” We sample *maror*, the bitter herbs, so that we can experience the taste of suffering. And we drink four cups of wine, each one a stage on the road to liberation. We tell the story in such a way that each of us feels as if we had lived through persecution and come out the other side as free human beings – as if history had been lifted off the page to become recent memory. That is how we learn to cherish freedom.

Faith in the Future, p. 139

1. Why do we need to make the same journey from slavery to freedom in every generation? How do we do that?
2. How do the *mitzvot* of *Leil HaSeder* help us to experience the story of the Exodus from Egypt?
3. Why is it important to experience the story rather than just learn about it?
4. Why is celebrating Pesach a great example of a *mitzvah* from the category of *edot*?
5. What testimony are we giving when we celebrate Pesach?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and present what you learnt about Rabbi Sacks’ explanation of the *mitzvah* you chose. Describe the category it falls into, and how the *mitzvah* fits that category.

The Assignment



Final Thoughts: In this unit we have considered the role and importance of *mitzvot* in Judaism, and how they fall into three categories: *Mishpatim*, *Chukim* and *Edot*.

However, there is one *mitzvah* that doesn't seem to fit into any category, and according to *chazal* it is equal to all the other *mitzvot*:



We find in the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim that Shabbat is the equivalent of all the *mitzvot*.

Talmud Yerushalmi, Nedarim 3:9

Why is that? Many answers can be given, but Rabbi Sacks explains here that Shabbat falls into **all three** categories of *mitzvot*. (You may find it helpful to refer back to the quote from *A Letter in the Scroll*, where Rabbi Sacks defines the three categories of *mitzvot*.)



Shabbat reminds us that the universe is created – meaning that ultimately it belongs to God and we are merely its guardians. Adam was placed in the Garden to “serve and protect it,” and so are we. One day in seven we must renounce our mastery over nature and the animals, and see the earth not as something to be manipulated and exploited, but as a thing of independent dignity and beauty. It too is entitled to its rest and protection. More powerfully than any tutorial or documentary, Shabbat makes us aware of the limits of human striving. It is a day, if you like, of ecological consciousness.

But it is also a day of history and politics. The Bible tells us to rest because of the exodus from Egypt and liberation from slavery. It is a time of freedom, and the greatest freedom is the freedom to be masters of our own time. On Shabbat we may not work, meaning that one day in seven we are no one's servant except God's. Nor may we force anyone to work for us. Even our servants should be able to rest the way we do.

Tyrannies make people slaves by making them forget the taste of freedom. But no one who observes Shabbat can ever forget what it is to be free. Jews know more than most what it is to have spent long centuries in homelessness and persecution. Yet every week, for a day, however poor they were, they gathered their possessions and celebrated like royalty. Shabbat was their political education, a regular reminder of liberty.

Faith in the Future, p. 136



Part 1: Together with your *chavruta*, plan a *Shabbaton* for your class and write a detailed itinerary for the day. Include short descriptions of the activities that will take place that demonstrate how Shabbat falls into each of the three categories of *mitzvot*: *Mishpatim*, *Chukim*, and *Edot*. Support your explanation with quotes from Rabbi Sacks' texts that we have studied.

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 5 – Student Guide / Entry Level

צדקה TZEDAKAH

Love as Justice

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 5



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.



There are two kinds of *mitzvot*. There are the commands of self-restraint that hold us back from damaging the human or natural environment. And there are the positive commands of love, for the world as God's work, and for human beings as God's image. Of the second, the greatest is *tzedakah*: love as justice, or sometimes translated as "charity".

The world is not always just, or equitable, or fair. Our task is to make it more so, by helping those in need, sharing some of what we have with others. This act of sharing is more than just charity. It is a recognition of the fact that what we have, we have from God, and one of the conditions of God's gifts is that we ourselves give. That way we too become like God, "walking in His ways".

The market creates wealth: that is its virtue. But it does not necessarily distribute it in such a way as to alleviate poverty, granting everyone the means of a dignified life. That is its weakness. So there are two possibilities: either abandon the market, or mitigate its negative effects. The first has been tried, and failed. The second can be done in two ways: through the government by taxation or welfare, or through individuals. Governments can do much, but not everything. *Tzedakah* is Judaism's way of saying that each of us has a part to play. Every one of us must give.

Tzedakah means both justice and charity, because we believe that they go hand in hand. Justice is impersonal, charity is personal. We call God *Avinu Malkenu*, "Our Father, our King". A king dispenses justice, a parent gives a child a gift out of love. That is the meaning of *tzedakah*, an act that combines both justice and love. Giving to others is one of the most beautiful things we can do, and one of the most creative. We create possibilities for other people. We soften some of the rough edges of the world. We help alleviate poverty and pain. We give God the sacrifice He most desires of us: that we honor His image in other people.

Nothing more marks Judaism as a religion of love than its emphasis on *tzedakah*. We do not accept poverty, hunger, homelessness or disease as God's will. To the contrary, God's will is that we heal these fractures in



His world. As God feeds the hungry, so must we. As God heals the sick, so must we. We become good by doing good. We walk in God's ways by acting out of love.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

There are two kinds of *mitzvot*. There are the commands of self-restraint that hold us back from damaging the human or natural environment. And there are the positive commands of love, for the world as God's work, and for **human beings as God's image**. Of the second, the greatest is ***tzedakah*: love as justice** or sometimes translated as "charity".

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human beings as God's image

1. If God has no physical presence, how can humans be "God's image"? What does it mean to be created in God's image?
2. How does the belief that all humans are created in God's image affect the way we behave?
3. Why does the belief that all humans are created in God's image lead to human dignity and the protection of human rights?

tzedakah: love as justice

1. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks says *tzedakah* comes from love? Can we be commanded to love something? Why then is *tzedakah* commanded?
2. How can love lead to justice?
3. How does the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* protect the dignity of human beings and ensure justice?

That way we too become like God, "walking in His ways".

1. "Walking in His ways" is a philosophical concept called *Imitatio Dei* (imitating God). Why should we "walk in God's ways" and imitate God?
2. How is giving *tzedakah* imitating God?
3. What else do we do to imitate God?

The market creates wealth: that is its virtue.

1. The "market" means a free economy (as in most western countries) where government interferes as little as possible, allowing market forces to play out. How does that create wealth?
2. Is this a good thing? What do you think the Torah view would be of a market economy?
3. What are the drawbacks of a free (market) economy?



through the government by taxation or welfare, or through individuals

1. How can the government address the downside of a free economy such as poverty and other injustices?
2. Is taxation the same as *tzedakah*? If you pay your taxes, do you still need to give *tzedakah*?
3. Who do you think is more effective at addressing injustice from unequal wealth distribution, governments or individuals?

an act that combines both justice and love

1. How is *tzedakah* the act of both a father and a king?
2. Is the welfare state (governments collecting money from taxes and spending that money on its citizens) more like a king dispensing justice, or a father giving a present?
3. Is an individual giving *tzedakah* more like a king dispensing justice or a father giving a present?

God's will is that we heal these fractures in His world.

1. What are the "fractures in God's world"?
2. How can we heal them?
3. Why do we have to heal them? Why can't God? Can we partner with God in this? How?

Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and share your answers to the questions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?



The Core Concepts



Exploration of the Core Concepts: Together with your *chavruta* join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group). Look at the supplementary sources provided below for each of the core concepts highlighted in the text. Your teacher will tell you which core concept to look at first. Make sure you understand it fully, and write down any questions you have.

Explain how the supplementary text helps you understand the core concept it is connected to. Use the questions to guide your discussion and analysis.

There are two kinds of *mitzvot*. There are the commands of self-restraint that hold us back from damaging the human or natural environment. And there are the positive commands of love, for the world as God's work, and for human beings as God's image. Of the second, the greatest is *tzedakah*: love as justice or sometimes translated as "charity".

The world is not always just, or equitable, or fair. Our task is to make it more so, by helping those in need, sharing some of what we have with others. This act of sharing is more than just charity. It is a recognition of the fact that **what we have, we have from God**, and one of the conditions of God's gifts is that we ourselves give. That way we too become like God, "walking in His ways".

The market creates wealth: that is its virtue. But it does not necessarily distribute it in such a way as to alleviate poverty, granting everyone the means of **a dignified life**. That is its weakness. So there are two possibilities: either abandon the market, or mitigate its negative effects. The first has been tried, and failed. The second can be done in two ways: through the government by taxation or welfare, or through individuals. Governments can do much, but not everything. **Tzedakah is Judaism's way of saying that each of us has a part to play.** Every one of us must give.

Tzedakah means both justice and charity, because we believe that they go hand in hand. Justice is impersonal, charity is personal. We call God *Avinu Malkenu*, "Our Father, our King". A king dispenses justice, a parent gives a child a gift out of love. That is the meaning of *tzedakah*, an act that combines both justice and love. Giving to others is one of the most beautiful things we can do, and one of the most creative. We create possibilities for other people. We soften some of the rough edges of the world. We help alleviate poverty and pain. We give God the sacrifice He most desires of us: that we honor His image in other people.

Nothing more marks Judaism as a religion of love than its emphasis on *tzedakah*. We do not accept poverty, hunger, homelessness or disease



as God's will. To the contrary, God's will is that we heal these fractures in His world. As God feeds the hungry, so must we. As God heals the sick, so must we. **We become good by doing good. We walk in God's ways by acting out of love.**



The Ethics of Materialism

what we have, we have from God

1. Is everything we have from God? What about the things we have worked hard for?
2. How does this understanding, that all our material wealth is from God, change the way we live our lives?
3. How does *halacha* help remind us of this?

TREASURES OF SOULS



Our masters taught: it is related of King Monabaz [king of Adiabene in the first century CE who converted to Judaism] that during years of scarcity he spent all his own treasures and the treasures of his fathers on charity. His brothers and other members of his family reproached him: “Your fathers stored away treasures, adding to the treasures of their fathers, and you squander them!” He replied: “My fathers stored away for the world below, while I am storing away for the world above. My fathers stored away in a place where the hand of others can prevail, while I have stored away in a place where the hand of others cannot prevail. My fathers stored away something that produces no fruit, while I have stored away something that does produce fruit. My fathers stored away treasures of money, while I have stored away treasures of souls.”

Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 11a

ABRAVANEL: WE OWN WHAT WE ARE WILLING TO SHARE



The fifteenth century Jewish diplomat and scholar Don Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508), chancellor to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Castile, was once asked by the king how much he owned. He named a certain sum. “But surely,” the king said, “you own much more than that.” “You asked me,” Abravanel replied, “how much I owned. The property I have, I do not own. Your majesty may seize it from me tomorrow. At best I am its temporary guardian. The sum I mentioned is what I have given away in charity. That merit alone, neither you nor any earthly power can take away from me.” We own what we are willing to share.

Adapted from Abraham J. Twerski, *Do Unto Others*, pp. 26–27

1. These two sources are about leaving a lasting legacy. King Monabaz and the Abravanel believe that material wealth is not a lasting legacy. Why not? Do you agree with them?
2. According to these texts, what can be a lasting legacy?
3. What will your legacy be?



The Dignity of Human Beings

a dignified life

1. What is a “dignified life”? What is not a “dignified life”?
2. Do you need to be wealthy to have a dignified life?
3. Do you need justice to lead a dignified life?

RAMBAM’S EIGHT LEVELS OF TZEDAKAH

There are eight degrees of charity, one higher than the other.

The highest degree, exceeded by none, is that of one who assists a poor person by providing him with a gift or a loan or by accepting him into a business partnership or by helping him find employment – in a word by putting him in a situation where he can dispense with other people’s aid...

A step below this is one who gives alms to the needy in such a way that the giver does not know to whom he gives and the recipient does not know from whom he takes. This exemplifies doing a good deed for its own sake. One example was the Hall of Secrecy in the Beit HaMikdash, where the righteous would place their gift clandestinely and where poor people from noble families could come and secretly help themselves to aid. Close to this is putting money in a charity box...

One step lower is where the giver knows to whom he gives, but the poor person does not know from whom he receives. Thus the great sages would go and secretly put money into poor people’s doorways...

A step lower is when the poor person knows from whom he is taking, but the giver does not know to whom he is giving. Thus the great sages would tie coins in their scarves, which they would fling over their shoulders, so that the poor could help themselves without suffering shame.

Lower than this, is where someone gives the poor person a gift before he asks.

Lower still is one who gives only after the poor person asks.

Lower than this is one who gives less than is fitting, but does so with a friendly countenance.

The lowest level is one who gives ungraciously.

Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Mattenot Ani'im* 10: 7–14

1. Which important values at the heart of this *mitzvah* do you think may have influenced Rambam when he compiled these eight levels of *tzedakah*?
2. According to these values, how is entering a business relationship with a poor person the highest level of *tzedakah*?
3. Why is anonymity important for the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*?



Responsibility

Tzedakah is Judaism's way of saying that each of us has a part to play.

1. Why is it our responsibility to address injustice within our community, and in society as a whole?
2. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks believes that we can play a role that even governments cannot?
3. What about God? Why isn't it His responsibility? Why can't we just pray for God to help instead?

DO NOT BE HARD-HEARTED

וּבִיְהִיָּה בֶן אֲבִיּוֹן מֵאַחַד אֶחָיֶךָ שְׁעִירֶיךָ בָּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ לֹא תֵאֱמָן
ח אֶת־לִבְּךָ וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת־יְדֶיךָ מֵאֶחָיֶךָ הָאֲבִיּוֹן: כִּי־פָתַח תִּפְתָּח אֶת־יָדְךָ לוֹ וְהֶעֱבַט תַּעֲבִיטֵנוּ
ט דֵּי מַחֲסֹרֹו אֲשֶׁר יִחְסֹר לוֹ: הַשְׁמֹר לָךְ פְּוִי־יִהְיֶה דְבָר עִם־לִבְּךָ בְּלִיעַל לֵאמֹר קִרְבָּה שְׁנַת־הַשְּׁבַע
י שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה וְרָעָה עֵינֶיךָ בְּאֶחָיֶךָ הָאֲבִיּוֹן וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי וְהָיָה בְּךָ חַטָּא: נָתַן
תִּתֵּן לוֹ וְלֹא־יִרָע לִבְּךָ בַּתְּתִיבָה לוֹ כִּי בְּגִלְלֹו הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה יִבְרַכְךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּבְכָל־
יא מִשְׁלַח יָדְךָ: כִּי לֹא־יִחַדֵּל אֲבִיּוֹן מִקְרֹב הָאָרֶץ עַל־פִּנְ אֲנֹכִי מִצְוָה לֵאמֹר פָּתַח תִּפְתָּח אֶת־יָדְךָ
לְאֶחָיֶךָ לְעֹנֶיךָ וּלְאֲבִינֶךָ בָּאֶרֶץ:

If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your poor brother. Rather be open-handed and freely lend him whatever he needs... Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed towards your brothers and towards the poor and needy in the land.

Devarim 15:7-11

לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגִמּוֹר

He used to say: It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.

Mishna Avot 2:16

1. Is being open-hearted and open-handed the same thing? Can you be one without the other?
2. What if you are also poor? Do poor people also have to give *tzedakah*?
3. Can our small contributions through *tzedakah* really make a difference?



Tzedakah as a vehicle for our spiritual and moral growth

We become good by doing good. We walk in God's ways by acting out of love.

1. Why doesn't the Torah leave it to us to decide how to be a good person? Why does it need to tell us how?
2. Is love an emotion that can be commanded? Why does the Torah tell us how to show love?
3. Does acting like God bring us closer to God? How?

ADMITTED TO THE DIVINE PRESENCE



R. Dostai son of R. Yannai taught: Consider the difference between the Holy One and a king of flesh and blood. If a man brings a present to the king, it may or may not be accepted. Even if it is accepted, it remains doubtful whether the man will be admitted into the king's presence. Not so with the Holy One. A person who gives even one small coin to a beggar is deemed worthy of being admitted to behold the Divine presence, as it is written, "I, through charity, shall behold your face" (Tehillim 17:15). R. Eleazar used to give a coin to a poor man and only then say his prayers, because, he said, it is written, "I, through charity, shall behold your face."

Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 10a

THE STRONGEST THING



There are ten strong things in the world:
Rock is strong, but iron breaks it.
Iron is strong, but fire melts it.
Fire is strong, but water extinguishes it.
Water is strong, but the clouds carry it.
The clouds are strong, but the wind drives them.
The wind is strong, but man withstands it.
Man is strong, but fear weakens him.
Fear is strong, but wine removes it.
Wine is strong, but sleep overcomes it.
Sleep is strong, but death stands over it.
What is stronger than death?
Acts of charity (*tzedakah*), for it is written,
"Tzedakah delivers from death" (Mishlei 10:2).

Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 10a



ISRAEL'S TWO SEAS



There is a fascinating feature of the geography of the land of Israel. It contains two seas: the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is full of life: fish, birds, vegetation. The Dead Sea, as its name implies, is not. Yet they are fed by the same river, the Jordan. The difference is that the Sea of Galilee receives water at one end and gives out water at the other. The Dead Sea receives but does not give. The Jordan ends there. To receive but not to give is, in Jewish geography as well as Jewish psychology, simply not life. To live is to give.

Covenant & Conversation, Pekudei (5771)

1. What message about the importance of *tzedakah* do these sources present?
2. Why do you think Rabbi Eleazar would always give *tzedakah* before praying?
3. How can a *mitzvah* that asks us to look after our fellow man also bring us closer to God?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and present your approach to the core concept allocated to you, making reference to the supplementary sources, and the answers you came up with to the questions accompanying them. As a class, consider what you have learned about the four core concepts.

The Assignment



Final Thoughts: In this unit we have explored the core values behind the *mitzvah* of *Tzedakah*.

1. **The ethics of materialism** – that our material wealth comes from God and does not really belong to us.
2. **Responsibility** – that every one of us has the responsibility to be a social activist and “heal our fractured world” by addressing injustice in society, including poverty.
3. **The dignity of human beings** – injustice, and poverty as an example of injustice, is a compromise on the dignity of the human being, and *tzedakah* should address that by protecting the dignity of every member of society.
4. ***Tzedakah* is a vehicle for our spiritual and moral growth** – we become good people and can connect to God through doing acts of kindness, and that is why the Torah requires us to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.



Part 1: Design a *tzedakah* campaign for your school community. Working in small groups allocated by your teacher, create a proposal for a *tzedakah* campaign to help those in need in your community. Your proposal should reflect the four core values of *tzedakah* identified in this chapter.

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

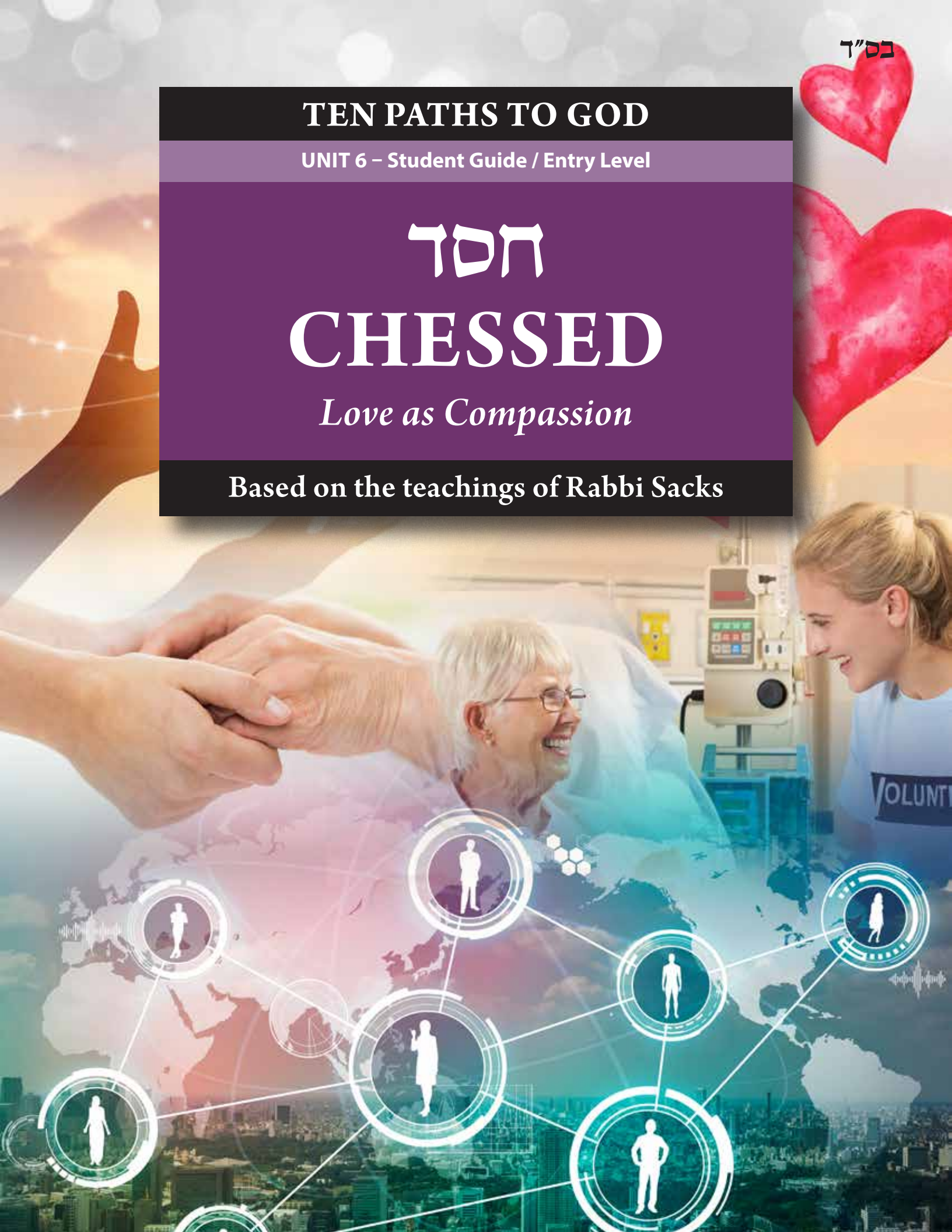
TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 6 – Student Guide / Entry Level

חסד CHESSED

Love as Compassion

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 6



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.



Tzedakah is the gift of money or its equivalent. But sometimes that is not what we most need. We can suffer emotional as well as physical poverty. We can be depressed, lonely, close to despair. We may need company or comfort, encouragement or support. These too are human needs, no less real for being untranslatable into the language of politics or economics.

That is what *chessed* is about: emotional support, loving-kindness, love as compassion. It is what we mean when we speak of God in Psalm 147 as one who 'heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds'. It includes hospitality to the lonely, visiting the sick, comforting the bereaved, raising the spirits of the depressed, helping people through crises in their lives, and making those at the margins feel part of the community.

It is *tzedakah's* other side. *Tzedakah* is done with material goods, *chessed* with psychological ones: time and care. *Tzedakah* is practical support, *chessed* is emotional support. *Tzedakah* is a gift of resources, *chessed* a gift of the person. Even those who lack the means to give *tzedakah* can still give *chessed*. *Tzedakah* rights wrongs; *chessed* humanizes fate.

Avraham and Sarah were chosen because of their *chessed* to others. Rut became the ancestress of Israel's kings because of her *chessed* to Naomi. At the heart of the Judaic vision is the dream of a society based on *chessed*: society with a human face, not one dominated by the competition for wealth or power. *Chessed* is the mark of a people joined by covenant. Covenant creates society as extended family; it means seeing strangers as if they were our long-lost brothers or sisters. A community based on *chessed* is a place of grace, where everyone feels honored and everyone is at home.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

Tzedakah is the gift of money or its equivalent. But sometimes that is not what we most need. **We can suffer emotional as well as physical poverty.** We can be depressed, lonely, close to despair. We may need company or comfort, encouragement or support. These too are human needs, no less real for being untranslatable into **the language of politics or economics**.

That is what *chessed* is about: **emotional support, loving-kindness, love as compassion**. It is what we mean when we speak of God in Psalm 147 as one who 'heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds'. It includes hospitality to the lonely, visiting the sick, comforting the bereaved, raising the spirits of the depressed, helping people through crises in their lives, and making **those at the margins** feel part of the community.

It is *tzedakah's* other side. ***Tzedakah* is done with material goods, *chessed* with psychological ones**: time and care. *Tzedakah* is practical support, *chessed* is emotional support. *Tzedakah* is a gift of resources, *chessed* a gift of the person. Even those who lack the means to give *tzedakah* can still give *chessed*. *Tzedakah* rights wrongs; ***chessed* humanizes fate**.

Avraham and Sarah were chosen because of their *chessed* to others. Rut became the ancestress of Israel's kings because of her *chessed* to Naomi. At the heart of the Judaic vision is the dream of **a society based on *chessed***: society with a human face, not one dominated by the competition for wealth or power. *Chessed* is the mark of a people joined by covenant. **Covenant creates society as extended family**; it means seeing strangers as if they were our long-lost brothers or sisters. A community based on *chessed* is a place of grace, **where everyone feels honored** and **everyone is at home**.

We can suffer emotional as well as physical poverty.

1. What do you think "emotional poverty" means? What can cause emotional poverty?
2. Do you think emotional poverty is worse in this generation than previous times? Why do you think that might be?
3. How can we treat emotional poverty?



the language of politics or economics

1. What is “the language of politics or economics”? What is the government and the economy generally concerned with?
2. Why do you think emotional needs are not the concern of government or economics?
3. Do you think the political system or the economy should be more concerned with the emotional wellbeing of those in society?

emotional support, loving-kindness, love as compassion

1. What do these three terms mean?
2. How do they differ from each other?
3. Who can and should be the recipients of these?

those at the margins

1. What does it mean to be at the margins of society?
2. What kind of people might be at the margins of society?
3. What do they all have in common?

Tzedakah is done with material goods, *chessed* with psychological ones

1. What are material goods? Give examples.
2. What are psychological goods? Give examples.
3. Which can make the most impact for those in need?

chessed humanizes fate

1. What does fate mean?
2. To humanize something is to make it feel human, so that it becomes something that we can all relate to. What do you think Rabbi Sacks means when he says “*chessed* humanizes fate”?
3. What message are you giving someone else when you show them *chessed*? How can this help them deal with their fate?

a society based on *chessed*

1. What values are at the center of *chessed*?
2. What would a society based on these values look like?
3. Is our society based on these values today? Can you think of some examples?



Covenant creates society as extended family

1. What is a covenant? What is a society based on a covenant?
2. When you see strangers in the street, do you consider them part of your extended family? Should you?
3. What do you think needs to change so that members of society feel more like an extended family?

where everyone feels honored

1. What does it mean to feel honored?
2. What does it take to make someone feel that way?
3. How can a community ensure that this happens?

everyone is at home

1. What does it mean to feel at home?
2. What does it take to make someone feel that way?
3. What is the difference between feeling at home and feeling honored? Is there a connection?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and share your answers to the questions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

Stories of *Chessed*



Exploring the core concepts through stories of *chessed*: Together with your *chavruta* join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group). Your teacher will assign you one of the stories below. Read through the story and consider the following questions:

1. Who is the hero of the story?
2. What values did you find modeled in the story?
3. What did the agent of *chessed* hope to achieve by the act of *chessed* they performed? Do you think they achieved it?
4. How do you think the recipient of the act of *chessed* felt at the end of the story?
5. According to this story, how would you define *chessed*?
6. Can you find any of the ideas you considered in the story about *chessed* within the opening text from Rabbi Sacks?

Then, in your *chabura* prepare to tell the story to the rest of the class, followed by your analysis of the story and responses to these questions.

STORY 1: A POOR MAN'S FUNERAL

Once two Jews died in Brisk on the same day. In the morning a poor shoemaker who had lived out his life in obscurity died, while about noontime a wealthy prominent member of the community passed away. According to the *halachah*, in such a case the one who dies first must be buried first. However the members of the burial society, who had received a handsome sum from the heirs of the rich man, decided to attend to him first, despite the fact that he had died later, for who was there to plead the cause of the poor man? When Rav Chaim [of Brisk] was informed about the incident, he sent a messenger of the court to warn the members of the burial society to desist from their disgraceful behavior. The members of the burial society, however, refused to heed the directive of Rav Chaim and began to make the arrangements for the burial of the rich man. Rav Chaim then arose, took his walking stick, trudged over to the house of the deceased, and chased all the attendants outside. Rav Chaim prevailed – the poor man was buried before the rich man.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halachic Man*, p. 95



STORY 2: AND MAYBE EVEN HIGHER



Every Friday morning before dawn, the Rebbe of Nemirov would disappear. He could be found in none of the town's synagogues or houses of study. The doors of his house were open but he was not there. Once a Lithuanian scholar came to Nemirov. Puzzled by the Rebbe's disappearance he asked his followers, 'Where is he?' 'Where is the Rebbe?' they replied. 'Where else but in heaven? The people of the town need peace, sustenance, health. The Rebbe is a holy man and therefore he is surely in heaven, pleading our cause.'

The Lithuanian, amused by their credulity, determined to find out for himself. One Thursday night he hid himself in the Rebbe's house. The next morning before dawn he heard the Rebbe weep and sigh. Then he saw him go to the cupboard, take out a parcel of clothes and begin to put them on. They were the clothes, not of a holy man, but of a peasant. The Rebbe then reached into a drawer, pulled out an axe, and went out into the still dark night. Stealthily, the Lithuanian followed him as he walked through the town and beyond, into the forest. There he began chopping down a tree, hewing it into logs, and splitting it into firewood. These he gathered into a bundle and walked back into the town.

In one of the back streets, he stopped outside a run-down cottage and knocked on the door. An old woman, poor and ill, opened the door. 'Who are you?' she said. 'I am Vassily,' the Rebbe replied. 'I have wood to sell, very cheap, next to nothing.' 'I have no money,' replied the woman. 'I will give it to you on credit,' he said. 'How will I be able to pay you?' she said. 'I trust you – and do you not trust God? He will find a way of seeing that I am repaid.' 'But who will light the fire? I am too ill.' 'I will light the fire,' the Rebbe replied, and he did so, reciting under his breath the morning prayers. Then he returned home.

The Lithuanian scholar, seeing this, stayed on in the town and became one of the Rebbe's disciples. After that day, when he heard the people of the town tell visitors that the Rebbe ascended to heaven, he no longer laughed, but added: 'And maybe even higher.'

Adapted from a short story by Y.L. Peretz



STORY 3: THE KINDNESS OF A STRANGER



In 1966 an 11-year-old black boy moved with his parents and family to a white neighborhood in Washington. Sitting with his two brothers and two sisters on the front step of the house, he waited to see how they would be greeted. They were not. Passers-by turned to look at them but no one gave them a smile or even a glance of recognition. All the fearful stories he had heard about how whites treated blacks seemed to be coming true. Years later, writing about those first days in their new home, he says, 'I knew we were not welcome here. I knew we would not be liked here. I knew we would have no friends here. I knew we should not have moved here...'

As he was thinking those thoughts, a white woman coming home from work passed by on the other side of the road. She turned to the children and with a broad smile said, 'Welcome!' Disappearing into the house, she emerged minutes later with a tray laden with drinks and cream-cheese and jelly sandwiches which she brought over to the children, making them feel at home. That moment – the young man later wrote – changed his life. It gave him a sense of belonging where there was none before. It made him realize, at a time when race relations in the United States were still fraught, that a black family could feel at home in a white area and that there could be relationships that were color-blind. Over the years, he learned to admire much about the woman across the street, but it was that first spontaneous act of greeting that became, for him, a definitive memory. It broke down a wall of separation and turned strangers into friends.

The young man, Stephen Carter, is now a law professor at Yale, and he eventually wrote a book about what he learned that day. He called it *Civility*. The name of the woman, he tells us, was Sara Kestenbaum, and she died all too young. He adds that it was no coincidence that she was a religious Jew. 'In the Jewish tradition,' he notes, such civility is called '*chessed* – the doing of acts of kindness – which is in turn derived from the understanding that human beings are made in the image of God.' He adds, 'Civility itself may be seen as part of *chessed*: it does indeed require kindnesses toward our fellow citizens, including the ones who are strangers, and even when it is hard.'

Stephen Carter, *Civility*, pp. 61–71



STORY 4: THE HEALING POWER OF KINDNESS



In late summer of 1999 I was in Pristina making a television program about the aftermath of the Kosovo campaign. Outside every church was a NATO tank. At the start of the conflict it had been the Serbian Christians who had attacked mosques. Now they feared reprisals from the returning refugees. The mood was tense. Murders were taking place every night. Revenge was in the air. The most important task was to establish order and a return to civil peace.

I interviewed General Sir Michael Jackson, then head of the NATO forces. To my surprise, he thanked me for what ‘my people’ had done. The Jewish community had taken charge of the city’s 23 primary schools. It was, he said, the most valuable contribution to the city’s welfare. When 800,000 people have become refugees and then return home, the most reassuring sign that life has returned to normal is that the schools open on time. That, he said, we owe to the Jewish people. Meeting the head of the Jewish community later that day, I asked him how many Jews were there currently in Pristina. His answer? Eleven.

The story, as I later uncovered it, was fascinating. In the early days of the conflict, the State of Israel had, along with many international aid agencies, sent a field medical team to work with the Kosovan Albanian refugees. Immediately they noticed something others had missed. The aid agencies were concentrating, not unnaturally, on the adults. There was no one working with the children. Traumatized by the conflict and far from home, they were running wild.

The team phoned back to Israel and asked for young volunteers. Virtually every youth group in Israel, from the most secular to the most religious, sent out teams of youth leaders at two-week intervals. They worked with the children, organizing summer camps, sports competitions, drama and music events and everything else they could think of to make their temporary exile feel like a summer holiday. At all levels it was an extraordinary effort. The Kosovan Albanians were Muslims, and for many of the Israeli youth workers it was their first contact and friendship with children of another faith. Their effort won high praise from UNICEF, the United Nations children’s organization. It was in the wake of this that ‘the Jewish people’ – Israel, the American-based ‘Joint’ and other Jewish agencies – were asked to supervise the return to normality of the school system in Pristina.

That episode taught me many things: the force of *chesed*, acts of kindness; the beauty and healing power of kindness extended across the borders of faith; and the way young people can rise to great moral achievements if we set them a challenge. The entire relief effort in Kosovo was a wonderful convergence of many people and agencies, from many faiths and nations.

Rabbi Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World*, pp. 94–95



STORY 5: DARCHEI SHALOM, 'THE WAYS OF PEACE'



April 2002: another suicide bomb had exploded in Israel, and I had been interviewed for my reactions by the BBC. A few days later I received a letter from a lady in Kent. This is what she wrote:

Having listened to you on the radio today, and hearing your concern for your people, I felt prompted to write you a letter of comfort.

You see, I am a gentile. I was born in 1943 and [years later] I met a Jewish woman who made a great difference in my life.

I was then in my mid-twenties, the victim of a broken marriage and with a small son to care for. I was seeking employment in South London as a hairdresser to pay for our rooms, and a child-minder.

The unemployment agency sent me to a salon. A large motherly woman greeted me at the interview. Her first words were, 'Are you in trouble, my dear?'

I was given employment in her salon. Then she offered to house us in the rooms above the shop, furnishing them with carpets and furniture from her own home. She thought – then she employed two girls from Leeds to share the flat and so reduce my rent. She also found a very kind child-minder for my son. This Proverbs 31 lady [the famous chapter beginning, 'A woman of worth, who can find?'] also spoke wisdom into my life. I shall always remember her kindness.

On the television news we all saw the dreadful pictures of the bus destroyed in Jerusalem on the eve of the Sabbath. At the sight of the plaited loaf lying in the dust, I felt as if a knife had gone through me as tears ran down my face – for the loaf represents family, unity, the common humanity we all share and which is oh, so fragile.

Please Rabbi Sacks, accept an outstretched hand to you: peace within your borders, comfort for your people, security within your walls. These are my prayers.

Ibid, pp. 97–98



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share the stories you read, together with your analysis. Discuss what the stories all had in common. What did you learn about *chessed* from these stories? Did you find any of these ideas within the opening text from Rabbi Sacks?

The Assignment



Part 1: Tell your own *chessed* story: Working in small groups allocated by your teacher, write your own story about when you performed an act of *chessed*. But this cannot be a story from your past. It must be about an act of *chessed* performed after studying this unit. Firstly, together with your friends, plan an act of *chessed* worthy of a story to be told to your class. This could be within your school community, or in the wider community. Then, after you have done this act of *chessed*, sit down in your group and write all the details of the story, from planning to execution, reflecting on how your act was received and the impact it made.

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 7 – Student Guide / Entry Level

אמונה FAITH *Love as Loyalty*

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 7



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.



Judaism is an unusual, subtle, profoundly humane faith that challenges the conventional wisdom of the ages. Faith is the courage Avraham and Sarah showed when they heard the call of God and left behind all they had known to travel to an unknown destination. Faith led more than a hundred generations of our ancestors to continue that journey, knowing all the risks yet believing that there is no greater privilege than to be part of it. Faith is the voice that says, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for You are with me.'

Faith sustained Jews in the dark days of persecution. It led them never to give up hope that one day they would return to Israel, to Jerusalem and to freedom. Jews kept faith alive, and faith kept the Jewish people alive.

Faith is not certainty. It is the courage to live with uncertainty. It is not knowing all the answers. It is often the strength to live with the questions. It is not a sense of invulnerability. It is the knowledge that we are utterly vulnerable, but that it is precisely in our vulnerability that we reach out to God, and through this learn to reach out to others, able to understand their fears and doubts. We learn to share, and in sharing discover the road to freedom. It is only because we are not gods that we are able to discover God.

God is the personal dimension of existence, the 'Thou' beneath the 'It', the 'Ought' beyond the 'Is', the Self that speaks to self in moments of total disclosure. Opening ourselves to the universe we find God reaching out to us. At that moment we make the life-changing discovery that though we seem utterly insignificant, we are utterly significant, a fragment of God's presence in the world. Eternity preceded us, infinity will come after us, yet we know that this day, this moment, this place, this circumstance, is full of the light of infinite radiance, whose proof is the mere fact that we are here to experience it.

Faith is where God and human beings touch across the abyss of infinity. *Emunah* means faithfulness, love-as-loyalty. The closest analogue is marriage: a mutual commitment, entered into in love, binding the partners together in fidelity and trust. God chose us – we chose God, and though



our relationship has sometimes been tense and troubled, the bond between us is unbreakable.

Knowing, we are known. Feeling, we are felt. Acting, we are acted upon. Living, we are lived. And if we make ourselves transparent to existence, then our lives too radiate that Divine presence which, celebrating life, gives life to those whose lives we touch.

Faith is the space we create for God.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

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Faith is the courage Avraham and Sarah showed

1. Is it courageous to have faith in God? Why?
2. Why did Avraham and Sarah need the courage of faith to do what they did?
3. Do you know anyone who made a similar journey? Did they need the courage of faith?

‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for You are with me.’

1. Do you know who wrote this originally? Can you find its source?
2. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks chose this quote to make his point?
3. During which periods of Jewish history could this quote be an appropriate description of the courage to find faith? Have you ever experienced anything in your life that makes this quote resonate personally?

return to Israel, to Jerusalem and to freedom

1. Why were these things something that Jews needed to have faith in?
2. Rabbi Sacks says faith meant that Jews never gave up hope for these things. Is there a difference between faith and hope?
3. Now we have these things, do we need to have faith in anything else?

the strength to live with the questions

1. What questions are there without answers that need faith to live with?
2. Do you have any questions that cannot be answered? How do you feel about these questions?
3. Does Judaism have all the answers?



the 'Thou' beneath the 'It'

"I and Thou" is a book and system of thought by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. He believes that we can interact with the world as an object (*I-It*) or in a relationship (*I-Thou*) and for man the ultimate meaningful relationship is the *I-Thou* with God.

1. What would a relationship with God be like if it was *I-It*?
2. What would a relationship with God be like if it was *I-Thou*?
3. Which one most accurately describes your relationship with God?

the 'Ought' beyond the 'Is'

1. The "is" is the reality of our world. What is that reality?
2. The "ought" is what the world could and should be like. How is it different from the "is"?
3. Why does God represent the "ought"?

a fragment of God's presence in the world

1. How are we "a fragment of God's presence in the world"?
2. Why does that make us "utterly significant"?
3. How does this knowledge change the way we live our lives?

Emunah means faithfulness, love-as-loyalty

1. What is the difference between *faith* and *faithfulness*?
2. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks defines *Emunah/faithfulness* as love-as-loyalty?
3. How does one show faithfulness to God? How does He show the same to us?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

Exploring our Faith through the Core Concepts



Exploration of the Core Concepts: Together with your *chavruta* join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group). Look at the supplementary sources provided below for each of the core concepts highlighted in the text. Your teacher will tell you which core concept to look at first. Make sure you understand it fully, and write down any questions you have. Explain how the supplementary source helps you understand the core concept it is connected to. Use the questions to guide your discussion and analysis.

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Faith is the space we create for God.

Faith sustained Jews in the dark days of persecution.

Faith as defiance

WHOM THEN SHALL I FEAR?

לְדוֹד יְהוָה אֹרִי וְיִשְׁעִי מִמֶּנִּי אֵינִי יִהְיֶה מְעוֹזִי מִמֶּנִּי אֶפְחָד: בְּקֶרֶב עָלִי מִרְעִים לֹאֲכָל
אֶת־בָּשָׂרִי צָרִי וְאֵיבִי לִי הֵמָּה כְּשֶׁלּוֹ וְנָפְלוּ: אֶסְתַּחֲנֶה עָלֵי מַחֲנֶה לֹא־יִירָא לִבִּי אֶסְתַּקּוֹם עָלֵי
מִלְחָמָה בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בֹטָח:

The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men close in on me to devour my flesh it is they, my enemies and foes, who stumble and fall. Should an army besiege me, my heart would not fear. Should war break out against me, still I would be confident.

Tehillim 27:1–3

RABBI JOSEPH SCHNEERSON: TWO WORLDS, ONE GOD

Rabbi Joseph Schneerson ran a seminary in Russia. When the Communists came to power they ordered all religious seminaries to close. Rabbi Schneerson defied the order and continued teaching religion.

One day a government officer confronted him and ordered him to close his school. The Rebbe refused. The officer pulled out a gun and said, ‘You will close the school or you will be killed.’ Rabbi Schneerson showed no emotion and quietly responded, ‘The school will remain open.’

The officer could not help being impressed by the Rabbi’s calm demeanor and complete lack of fear. ‘Don’t you take me seriously?’ he asked. ‘Aren’t you afraid of dying?’

The Rabbi responded calmly, ‘Someone who has only one world and many gods is afraid of dying. Someone who has two worlds and only one God has no fear.’

Rabbi Schneerson’s yeshiva remained open. In 1940 he transplanted it



to the United States. Today it has branches throughout the world. Russian communism is no more.

Adapted from Abraham J. Twerski, Do Unto Others, pp. 158–59

1. In your opinion, what are the darkest days of Jewish history? Do these dark times challenge your faith?
2. Are there periods of Jewish history that reinforce your faith?
3. Does the quote from Tehillim resonate with you? Do you think it would have been a source of strength for you if you had lived during the darkest days of Jewish history?
4. Do you find Rabbi Schneerson's profound courage and faith in the face of such danger an inspiration? Do you think you would have been able to show similar courage?
5. What does the conclusion of the story (that the yeshiva remained open until today, while Russian communism is no more) say about Rabbi Schneerson's faith? Does that impact your own faith?

It is the courage to live with uncertainty.

A faith of questions – living with uncertainty

DID YOU ASK A GOOD QUESTION TODAY?



Isidore Rabi, winner of a Nobel Prize in physics, was once asked why he became a scientist. He replied, 'My mother made me a scientist without ever knowing it. Every other child would come back from school and be asked, "What did you learn today?" But my mother used to ask a different question. "Izzy," she always used to say, "Did you ask a good question today?" That made the difference. Asking good questions made me a scientist.'

Judaism is a religion of questions. The greatest prophets asked questions of God. The Book of Iyov, the most searching of all explorations of human suffering, is a book of questions asked by man, to which God replies with a string of questions of His own. The seder service on Pesach begins with four questions asked by a child.

When I first went to study at a yeshivah I was struck by the way the teacher's face would light up when we asked a question. *Du fregst a gutte kashe*, 'You raise a good objection,' was his highest form of praise. Abraham Twerski, an American psychiatrist, tells of how, when he was young, his instructor would relish challenges to his arguments. In his broken English he would say, 'You right! You a hundred prozent right! Now I show you where you wrong.'

Religious faith, in Judaism, is not naïve or blind. Every question asked



in reverence is the start of a journey towards God. When faith suppresses questions, it dies. When it accepts superficial answers, it begins to wither. Faith is not opposed to doubt. What it is opposed to is the shallow certainty that what we understand is all there is.

Jonathan Sacks, *Celebrating Life*, pp. 79–81

1. Rabbi Sacks says faith is the courage to live with uncertainty. What uncertainties in life do you think he is referring to?
2. Why does it take courage to live with uncertainty? What is the alternative?
3. Why ask questions that have no answers?
4. Why would faith (or faith leaders) wish to suppress questions? Does Judaism suppress questions?
5. What questions do you have? If you could stand in the presence of God and ask any questions at all, what would you ask?

though our relationship has sometimes been tense and troubled

Faith as defiance against God

A JEW I SHALL REMAIN

Solomon ibn Verga, (Spain/Italy, 15th–16th Century), was one of the rare Jewish historians of the Middle Ages. In his account of the Spanish Expulsion, he told this story:

I heard from some of the elders who came out of Spain that one of the boats was infested with the plague, and the captain of the boat put the passengers ashore at some uninhabited place. There, most of them died of starvation, while some of them gathered all their strength to set out on foot in search of some settlement.

There was one Jew among them who struggled on afoot together with his wife and two children. The wife grew faint and died, because she was not accustomed to so much difficult walking. The husband carried his children along until both he and they fainted from hunger. When he regained consciousness, he found that his two children had died.

In great grief he rose to his feet and said: 'O Lord of all the universe, You are doing a great deal that I might even desert my faith. But know You of a certainty that – even against the will of heaven – a Jew I am and a Jew I shall remain. And neither that which You have brought upon me nor that which You may yet bring upon me will be of any avail.'





Thereupon he gathered some earth and some grass, and covered the boys, and went forth in search of a settlement.

Solomon ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehudah*, pp. 89–94,
cited in Nahum Glatzer, *A Jewish Reader*, p. 204

1. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks says “our relationship has sometimes been tense and troubled”?
2. Do you sometimes have a tense and troubled relationship with God? Why?
3. Do you also feel your bond with God is unbreakable?
4. The Jew in the story is angry at God. Why do you think that is?
5. Is he rebelling against God, or showing loyalty to God? Could it be both?

celebrating life, gives life to those whose lives we touch

Faith as inspiration to others

TO LIGHT A FIRE

Some people wear their faith like an overcoat. It only warms them, but does not benefit others at all. But some light a fire, and also warm others.

Menachem Mendl of Kotzk (*The Kotzker Rebbe*)

1. How can the way we live and celebrate our lives inspire others to live their lives?
2. How can we make our faith a fire to warm others rather than a coat to just warm ourselves?

The miracle of faith to inspire

Faith after the Holocaust

Rabbi Yekutiel Halberstam, the Klausenberger Rebbe, lived through the Warsaw Ghetto, the work camps, the death march to Dachau, and then Auschwitz itself. He survived, but his wife and eleven children did not. In Auschwitz, he vowed that if he survived he would dedicate himself to life. He resolved to build a hospital that would honor the image of God in every human being. It took him fifteen years to raise the money, but eventually he built the Laniado Hospital in Netanya, Israel, dedicated to treating everyone alike, Jew and Arab, Israeli and Palestinian. This is what he taught his followers after the Holocaust:



The biggest miracle of all is the one that we, the survivors of the Holocaust, after all that we witnessed and lived through, still believe and have faith in the Almighty God, may His name be blessed. This, my friends, is the miracle of miracles, the greatest miracle ever to have taken place.

Yaffa Eliach, *Chassidic Tales of the Holocaust*, p. 228

1. Do you find survivors of the Holocaust inspiring? How so?
2. Some survivors lost their faith because of their experiences during the Holocaust. Does this take away from the miracle the Klausenberger Rebbe is describing?
3. Why do you think building the Laniado Hospital was so important to him after he settled in Netanya?

Faith is the space we create for God.

Faith is making space for God

WHERE WE LET HIM IN

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk (1787–1859) was one of the most remarkable figures of the Jewish mystical movement known as Chassidism. Angular, unconventional, passionate in his search for truth, he spent his life ‘wrestling with God and with men’.

On one occasion, at the third Shabbat meal, when the atmosphere of the holy day is at its most intense, the Rebbe turned to his disciples and asked, ‘Where does God live?’

They were stunned by the strangeness of the question. ‘What does the Rebbe mean, “Where does God live?” Where does God *not* live? Surely we are taught that there is no place devoid of His presence. He fills the heavens and the earth.’

‘No,’ said the Rebbe. ‘You have not understood. *God lives where we let Him in.*’

God is always here, but we sense Him only when we search. He teaches, but only when we are ready to learn. He speaks, but only when we listen. The question is never, Where is God? It is always, Where are we? The problem of faith is not God but humankind. The task of faith is to create an openness in the soul through which the Divine presence can enter. God lives where we let Him in.

Adapted from a well-known Chassidic tale





1. What do you think Rabbi Sacks means by “Faith is the space we create for God”? Why do we need to make space for God?
2. What do you think the Kotzker Rebbe meant when he said “God lives where we let him in”?
3. “God is always here, but we sense Him only when we search”. Are you searching for God? Where?
4. Where can you sense God? Where do you make space for Him?
5. Do you find faith easy to come by? Do you find it needs constant hard work?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class. Present your approach to the core concept allocated to you, making reference to the secondary texts and the answers you came up with to the questions accompanying them.

If you feel comfortable during the discussion, share with the class your own faith journey. These questions may help you:

1. Do you find faith, and a relationship with God, easy to come by?
2. What is the source of your faith?
3. What are the biggest challenges to your faith?
4. Sometimes there are questions of faith that we just can't answer. Do you find yourself seeking answers to such questions?
5. If so, how do you reconcile those questions with your faith?
6. Do you find Jewish history a challenge to your faith, or a source of strength?
7. Have you found the sources that you have studied in this unit challenging to your faith, or have they helped to strengthen it?

The Assignment



Part 1: Become a Faith Researcher. Faith is a unique journey for each person, but are there any common aspects shared among us? In this unit we have explored our own faith journeys and the faith of our class mates. For this assignment you will research the faith of a range of people by collecting answers to the questionnaire below. Gather the data and analyze the responses you were given. For example, are you able to identify any patterns in the data? Did you find anything surprising? How did the answers given by the participants in the survey compare with your own answers, and with the discussions that you and your classmates had in class about these topics?

Your sample (the group of people you are researching) must include at least one religious leader (for example a rabbi), a teacher from your school, a grandparent, a parent, a friend, and finally, yourself. You may include as many people as you like in your research.

How you collect the data is up to you. Options include personal interviews, emailing the questionnaire, or creating an online questionnaire.

Your final product should include a summary of the answers you collected, a paragraph of analysis for each question, and an overall conclusion of the results of your survey.

Faith Questionnaire:

1. Name (optional)
2. What is your relationship to the researcher?
3. Where do you live?
4. Describe yourself as a Jew.
5. Do you find faith, and a relationship with God, easy to come by?
6. What is the source of your faith?
7. What are the biggest challenges to your faith?
8. Sometimes there are questions of faith that we just can't answer. Do you find yourself seeking answers to such questions?
9. If so, how do you reconcile those questions with your faith?
10. Do you find Jewish history a challenge to your faith, or a source of strength?



Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

בס"ד

TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 8 – Student Guide / Entry Level

ישראל ISRAEL *The Jewish Land*

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 8



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.

No religion in history has been as closely tied to a land as has Judaism. That connection goes back almost 4,000 years, from the first words of God to Avraham: 'Leave your country, your birthplace and your father's house and go to the land I will show you.' No sooner had he arrived than God said: 'To your offspring I will give this land.' Seven times God promised the land to Avraham, and promised it again to Yitzchak and Yaakov.

The word *teshuvah*, often translated as 'repentance', literally means 'homecoming' in a double sense: spiritually to God, and physically to the land of Israel. For Israel is the Jewish people's place of destiny: a tiny land for a tiny people, yet one whose role in religious history is vast. It is the land to which Moshe and the Israelites travelled across the desert, the land from which they were exiled twice, the land to which our ancestors journeyed whenever they could and which they never voluntarily left, never relinquished. Jewish history is the story of the longing for a land.

The holy land remains the place where Jews were summoned to create a society of justice and compassion under the sovereignty of God. And though it was subsequently held holy by Christianity and Islam, the centers of these other faiths were elsewhere: for Western Christians, Rome, for Eastern Christians, Constantinople, and for Muslims, Mecca and Medinah. There are 56 Islamic states today, 82 Christian ones, but only one Jewish state. It is the only place on earth where Jews are a majority, where they enjoy self-rule, where they are able to build a society and shape a culture as Jews.

The Balfour Declaration in 1917, subsequently ratified by the League of Nations, long before the Holocaust, was an attempt to rectify the lingering denial of a nation's right to its land and the subsequent persecution of Jews in country after country, century after century, in a history of suffering that has no parallel.

The Jews who returned were not strangers, outsiders, an imperial presence, a colonial force. They were the land's original inhabitants: the only people in 4,000 years who created an independent nation there. All other occupiers of the land – from the Assyrians and Babylonians to the

Ottomans and the British – were imperial powers, who ruled the land as a district of their vast realms. The Egyptians did not offer the Palestinians a state when they ruled Gaza between 1948 and 1967; neither did the Jordanians when they ruled the West Bank during those years. The only nation to have offered Palestinians a state is the State of Israel. And every day, we pray for its peace.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

No religion in history has been as closely tied to a land as has Judaism. That connection goes back almost 4,000 years, from the **first words of God to Avraham**: ‘Leave your country, your birthplace and your father’s house and go to the land I will show you.’ No sooner had he arrived than God said: ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ Seven times God promised the land to Avraham, and promised it again to Yitzchak and Yaakov.

The word *teshuvah*, often translated as ‘repentance’, literally means **‘homecoming’** in a double sense: spiritually to God, and physically to the land of Israel. For Israel is the Jewish people’s place of destiny: a tiny land for a tiny people, yet one whose role in religious history is vast. It is the land to which Moshe and the Israelites travelled across the desert, the land from which they were exiled twice, the land to which our ancestors journeyed whenever they could and which they never voluntarily left, never relinquished. **Jewish history is the story of the longing for a land.**

The holy land remains the place where Jews were summoned to create a society of justice and compassion under the sovereignty of God. And though it was subsequently held holy by Christianity and Islam, the centers of these other faiths were elsewhere: for Western Christians, Rome, for Eastern Christians, Constantinople, and for Muslims, Mecca and Medinah. There are 56 Islamic states today, 82 Christian ones, but only one Jewish state. **It is the only place on earth where Jews are a majority**, where they enjoy self-rule, **where they are able to build a society and shape a culture as Jews.**

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first words of God to Avraham

1. What is the implication that the first words God spoke to Avraham were, 'Leave your country, your birthplace and your father's house and go to the land I will show you'?
2. What is the meaning of these words?
3. Why do you think God decided to begin his relationship with Avraham with these words and this command? What does this mean for us?

'homecoming'

1. The literal meaning of the word *teshuvah* is 'return'. How is repentance a 'return'? What are we returning to?
2. Rabbi Sacks translates the word *teshuvah* as 'homecoming'. After we have done true *teshuvah* we are said to have 'returned'. How is this return like a homecoming?
3. Rabbi Sacks connects the 'homecoming' of *teshuvah* with the physical return to the Land of Israel. Can you explain the connection?

Jewish history is the story of the longing for a land.

1. Can you support this claim with proof from Jewish history?
2. Can you find proof of this in *halacha* and Jewish rituals?
3. Can you explain why the Jewish people never gave up on returning to their land?

It is the only place on earth where Jews are a majority

1. What are the effects of being a minority?
2. Why is it important to be a majority? What are the benefits?
3. How do you feel living as a minority in your country? Would you like to one day live in Israel because it has a Jewish majority? Why?



where they are able to build a society and shape a culture as Jews

1. Can Jews build a society, and shape the culture of that society, when they live in the diaspora?
2. What would a Jewish society look like?
3. Is Israel a Jewish society today? How so?

The Balfour Declaration

1. The Balfour Declaration was the first time since the birth of modern Zionism that a world power had recognized the Jewish people's claim to a homeland in *Eretz Yisrael*. Why did we need a world power to recognize this right?
2. On what basis did the Jewish people have a right to a land over which we had not been sovereign for 2000 years?
3. It is now over a hundred years since the Balfour Declaration. Do you think the world has come to terms with this right?

They were the land's original inhabitants

1. What does Rabbi Sacks mean when he claims that the Jews who heeded the call of modern Zionism and began returning to *Eretz Yisrael* from the 1880s onward were 'the land's original inhabitants'?
2. Who disagrees with Rabbi Sacks on this point? What is the basis of their argument?
3. What are your thoughts on this?

The only nation to have offered Palestinians a state is the State of Israel.

1. Why do you think no Palestinian state was created while other Arab nations were in power in this land?
2. Why do you think the State of Israel made these painful concessions to the Palestinian people, offering to help create a Palestinian state? Why do you think the Palestinian leadership rejected the offer?
3. What do you think needs to happen for peace to finally be achieved in the Land of Israel?

Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?



The Core Concepts



Exploration of the Core Concepts: Together with your *chavruta*, consider the five core concepts contained in the opening text. Use the questions to guide your discussion and analysis.

No religion in history has been as closely **tied to a land** as has Judaism. That connection goes back almost 4,000 years, from the first words of God to Abraham: **'Leave your country, your birthplace and your father's house and go to the land I will show you.'** No sooner had he arrived than God said: **'To your offspring I will give this land.'** Seven times God promised the land to Abraham, and promised it again to Yitzchak and Yaakov.

The word *teshuvah*, often translated as 'repentance', literally means 'homecoming' in a double sense: spiritually to God, and physically to the land of Israel. For **Israel is the Jewish people's place of destiny**: a tiny land for a tiny people, yet one whose role in religious history is vast. It is the land to which Moshe and the Israelites travelled across the desert, the land from which they were exiled twice, the land to which our ancestors journeyed whenever they could and which they never voluntarily left, never relinquished. Jewish history is the story of the longing for a land.

The holy land remains the place where Jews were **summoned to create a society of justice and compassion** under the sovereignty of God. And though it was subsequently held holy by Christianity and Islam, the centers of these other faiths were elsewhere: for Western Christians, Rome, for Eastern Christians, Constantinople, and for Muslims, Mecca and Medinah. There are 56 Islamic states today, 82 Christian ones, but only one Jewish state. It is the only place on earth where Jews are a majority, where they enjoy self-rule, where they are able to build a society and shape a culture as Jews.

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state when they ruled Gaza between 1948 and 1967; neither did the Jordanians when they ruled the West Bank during those years. The only nation to have offered Palestinians a state is the State of Israel. And every day, we pray for its peace.

tied to a land

1. In what way is Judaism 'tied to a land'?
2. If Judaism is so closely tied to a land, how do you think it has survived for so many generations in exile?
3. Do you think a Judaism in the diaspora is in anyway inferior to Judaism practiced in *Eretz Yisrael*?

'Leave your country, your birthplace and your father's house and go to the land I will show you.'

1. What *mitzvah* is Avraham being asked to perform here?
2. What were the challenges facing Avraham's *aliyah*? Are they the same challenges as those faced by *olim* today?
3. What reasons can you think of for making *aliyah*? Assuming you were living in the diaspora, could you imagine making *aliyah* yourself?

'To your offspring I will give this land.'

1. To which generation of Avraham's descendants do you think God is promising the land?
2. Why do you think God did not give the land to Avraham there and then?
3. Has this promise been fulfilled in history? When?

Israel is the Jewish people's place of destiny

1. What is destiny?
2. What is the Jewish people's destiny? How does it involve Israel?
3. What is your destiny? How does it correlate with your vision for the Jewish people?

summoned to create a society of justice and compassion

1. What would a society based on these ideas look like? How do you build such a society?
2. Do you think that the modern State of Israel is a society of justice and compassion?
3. Why has God summoned the Jewish people to do this?

Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and share your answers to the questions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?



As a class, consider the following meta-questions (big picture questions):

1. Why is *Eretz Yisrael* so central to Judaism?
2. What is the national mission of the Jewish people and how is it connected to having our own land?
3. Are we fulfilling this mission in our land today? If not, what can we do to achieve it?

The Miracle of the Rebirth of Israel



Together with your *chavruta* join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group). Examine the following texts from *The Jonathan Sacks Haggadah*. Here Rabbi Sacks describes some of the miracles of the founding of the modern State of Israel, and discusses who was behind them. Use the guiding questions that follow each text to help you with your analysis, and at the same time consider these general underlying questions:

1. What is your definition of a miracle?
2. Can a miracle be man-made? If it can, is it still divine in origin?
3. If the story of the State of Israel is miraculous in nature, how does that impact the way we think of it?



So Zionism was born. It would be hard to find any other movement that brought together so many dissonant, competing visions. There were utopian religious Zionists like Rav Kook, and practical religious Zionists like Rabbi Reines. Among the secularists were political Zionists like Herzl, cultural Zionists such as Ahad ha-Am, Nietzscheans like Berdichevski, Tolstoyans of the caliber of Aaron David Gordon, and dozens of others, each with their own carefully wrought utopia. They clashed, at times vehemently. Yet out of their clamorous discord came one of the most astonishing achievements of all time.

The creation of the State of Israel was fraught with difficulty. Despite the Balfour Declaration (1917), in which Britain, the new mandatory power in Palestine, promised Jews a national home, there was intense opposition – from the Arab world, other international forces, from politicians in Britain, and at times from Jews themselves. For thirty years, various compromises were proposed, all accepted by Jews and rejected by their opponents. On the day the State was proclaimed, it was attacked on all fronts by its neighbors. Since then it has lived under constant threat of war, violence, terror and delegitimization. Yet it has achieved wondrous things.

The Jonathan Sacks Haggadah, pp. 51–52

1. Is it a miracle that so many different Zionists with such divergent views managed to join together to build the State of Israel?
2. What does 'utopia' mean? What does it mean that a Zionist philosophy is 'utopian'?
3. Which groups of people does Rabbi Sacks list as opposing the creation of the State of Israel? Why did each group oppose it?



4. Why do you think Israel has lived in a constant state of war ever since its creation?
5. Is it possible that this constant threat of war has had any advantage for Israel achieving 'wondrous things'?



Through it Hebrew, the language of the Bible, was reborn as a living tongue. Jewish communities under threat have been rescued, including those like the Jews of Ethiopia who had little contact with other Jews for centuries. Jews have come to Israel from over a hundred countries, representing the entire lexicon of cultural diversity. A desolate landscape has bloomed again. Jerusalem has been rebuilt. The world of Torah scholarship, devastated by the Holocaust, has been revived and the sound of learning echoes throughout the land. Economically, politically, socially and culturally, Israel's achievements are unmatched by any country of its age and size. The sages said that, at the crossing of the Red Sea, the simplest Jew saw miracles that the greatest of later prophets were not destined to see. That, surely, was the privilege of those who witnessed Israel's rebirth and youth. The messiah has not come. Israel is not yet at peace. The *Beit Hamikdash* has not been rebuilt. Our time is not yet redemption. Yet many, if not all, of the prayers of two thousand years have been answered...

Ibid, p. 52

1. Was the rebirth of the ancient language of the Bible into a modern vibrant language a miracle?
2. Why do you think the State of Israel feels a responsibility for the safety of Jews around the world, such as the Ethiopian Jewish community?
3. How did the Jews in Israel make the desert bloom? Is that a miracle?
4. Are there miracles in Israel's economic, political, social and cultural history?
5. Which of our prayers of two thousand years have not yet been answered? Does that change the way we see Israel?



The Irish historian Conor Cruise O'Brien once remarked that Jews who see themselves as unreligious are sometimes very religious indeed. That was true of Hess, Pinsker, Herzl, Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion and many other heroes and pioneers of the return to Zion. They were not 'spiritual' nor did they observe many of the commandments. But the vision of the prophets and the covenant of Jewish history flowed through their veins. God works through people; sometimes, so the prophets taught, without their conscious knowledge and consent. It is difficult to reflect deeply on the rebirth of Israel without sensing the touch of heaven in the minds of men and women, leading them to play their parts in a drama so much greater than any individual could have executed, even conceived. The historian Barbara Tuchman, writes, 'Viewing this strange and singular history one cannot escape the impression that it must contain some special significance for the history of mankind, that in some way, whether one believes in divine providence or inscrutable circumstance, the Jews have been singled out to carry the tale of human fate.'

Ibid, p. 53

1. Do you think aspects of secular Zionism can be considered 'religious'?
2. What is the 'vision of the prophets and the covenant of Jewish history'?
3. What does Rabbi Sacks mean when he says the secular Zionists had the 'touch of heaven' in their minds? How do you think they would feel if they were to hear Rabbi Sacks' view of them?
4. Do you think that God has directed history through people who are not necessarily religious or aware of their religious impact?
5. Do you think that Jewish history contains 'some special significance for the history of mankind'? What do you think that significance might be?



Who then wrote the script of the Jewish drama? God, or the Jewish people? Or was it, as the sages taught, an inextricable combination of both: God as he was heard by the people, and the people as they responded to God? Isaac Bashevis Singer came close when he said, 'God is a writer and we are both the heroes and the readers.' One thing is certain, that without Pesach, celebrated over the centuries, the State of Israel would not have been born. The prophets were right: the exodus of the past contained within it the exodus of the future; and I, born in the same year as the State, can only say, 'Blessed are you, O Lord... who kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this day.'

Ibid, pp. 51–53

1. 'Who then wrote the script of the Jewish drama?' How would you answer this question?
2. What does it mean to be both the hero and the reader of Jewish history?
3. If God is the writer, can we still really be the heroes?
4. What connection do you think Rabbi Sacks is making between Pesach and the birth of the State of Israel?
5. Rabbi Sacks concludes this essay with the *beracha* of *Shehecheyanu*. What profound statement is he making about the State of Israel?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the texts from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

Include your responses to the following questions in the class discussion:

1. What is your definition of a miracle?
2. Can a miracle be man-made? If it is, does that still make it divine in origin?
3. If the story of the State of Israel is miraculous in nature, how does that impact the way we think of it?

The Assignment



In this unit we have explored the role of the Land of Israel in Judaism and the destiny of the Jewish people. We have also considered the story of the modern State of Israel and reflected on its miraculous nature, and the possible role of man and God in this story.

Part 1: You are a Paranormal Activity Investigator, and your client has asked you to research the history of the modern State of Israel for evidence of miraculous activity. Choose three examples of events in Israel's history and describe what happened. Then, for each event you have chosen give two sides of the argument – firstly demonstrating God's hand in the miracle, and conversely, how this could be seen as the work of purely human effort. Your final paragraph should be your own conclusions, whether the history of the State of Israel points towards the hand of God, man's ingenuity and effort, or a combination of both.

Here are some examples of events from Israel's history you may wish to research (but there are many others you could present instead):

- The rebirth of Hebrew as a modern language
- The UN Partition Plan vote of 1947
- The War of Independence
- The immigration and absorption of a million refugees in the first decade of Israel's existence
- The Six-Day War
- The settling of the Negev desert and making it bloom
- The rescue of Jewish communities around the world, including Yemen, Iraq, Ethiopia, and Russia
- Israel's economic boom in the last two decades

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 9 – Student Guide / Entry Level

קידוש השם KIDDUSH HASHEM

The Jewish Task

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 9



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.



The way of Judaism is particular, but the concern of Judaism is universal. Avraham was promised that ‘Through you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’ Yeshayahu said that we are called on to be God’s ‘witnesses’. Our message is not for ourselves alone.

How so? We do not seek to convert others. We believe that the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come. But we do seek to be living examples, reflections of God’s light, an inspiration to others to find their own way to God. That, we believe, is the only way of honoring the fact, after Babel, of a world of many cultures and civilizations. God is one; we are many, and we must learn to live together in peace. That is why we do not seek to impose our faith on others. Truth is communicated by influence not power, by example not by force or fear.

Others have understood this about us. Winston Churchill, for example, said that the West owes to the Jews ‘a system of ethics which, even it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be incomparably the most precious possession of mankind, worth in fact the fruits of all other learning and wisdom put together’.

At a time when we have witnessed the resurgence of antisemitism, the world’s oldest hatred, it is important to know that yes, we have enemies, but we also have friends. We have critics, but there are those who, without seeking to become Jewish, have drawn inspiration from Jewish life. We owe it to them, not just to ourselves, to be faithful to our task: to be God’s ambassadors on earth.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

The way of Judaism is particular, but **the concern of Judaism is universal**. Avraham was promised that “Through you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” Yeshayahu said that we are called on to be God’s ‘witnesses’. Our message is not for ourselves alone.

How so? We do not seek to convert others. We believe that **the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come**. But we do seek to be **living examples**, reflections of God’s light, an inspiration to others to find their own way to God. That, we believe, is the only way of honoring the fact, after Bavel, of a world of many cultures and civilizations. God is one; we are many, and we must **learn to live together in peace**. That is why we do not seek to impose our faith on others. Truth is communicated by influence not power, by example not by force or fear.

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At a time when we have witnessed the resurgence of antisemitism, the world’s oldest hatred, it is important to know that yes, we have enemies, but we also have friends. We have critics, but there are those who, without seeking to become Jewish, have drawn inspiration from Jewish life. We owe it to them, not just to ourselves, to be faithful to our task: to be **God’s ambassadors on earth**.

The way of Judaism is particular

1. A particular culture (or system of belief) is one that belongs to one group of people (perhaps a religious group or ethnic community). Can you give some examples?
2. What then is a universal culture or belief? Can you give some examples?
3. Can those who are not part of our “particular” people also live the “way of Judaism”?

the concern of Judaism is universal

1. What is the “concern of Judaism”?
2. How is it universal?
3. Do you think Judaism is the only source for the universal values that it espouses?



the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come

1. According to Judaism, how does someone who is not Jewish gain a share in the world to come?
2. What is the Jewish definition of “righteous”?
3. Does Judaism encourage non-Jewish people to convert to Judaism? Why?

living examples

1. What do we seek to be a “living example” of? How can we achieve that?
2. What does the term *Kiddush Hashem* mean literally? What do you think it means for us in the context we are studying? Is it the same as being a living example?
3. What impact do you think we can have by being a living example to the world?

learn to live together in peace

1. Humanity is highly diverse, full of different kinds of people. Do you think humanity can learn to live together in peace? How?
2. Does humanity live in peace today, in our generation? Why do you think that is?
3. What messages are contained in Judaism that could help the world to learn to live together in peace?

the most precious possession of mankind

1. Why do you think Winston Churchill (British Prime Minister during the Second World War) describes a Jewish system of ethics as “the most precious possession of mankind”?
2. Can you think of some examples of Jewish ethics?
3. The “supernatural” here refers to God. What do you think Churchill meant when he said, “even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural” it would still be considered the most precious possession of mankind?

God’s ambassadors on earth

1. What does the job of being an ambassador involve? How can we do that job for God?
2. Why should we be God’s ambassadors on earth?
3. Do you think you are fulfilling this mission?

Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?



The Jewish National Mission



Exploring the concept of a 'Jewish mission': Together with your *chavruta* consider the following biblical quote, using the questions that follow to help your analysis. Then look at the supplementary sources to explore how Rabbi Sacks understands the Jewish national mission is to be “living examples” and “God’s ambassadors on earth”. Use the questions to guide your discussion and analysis.

THE COVENANT AT SINAI: A HOLY NATION



וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַתָּה
אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה לְכָל־אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי לְמֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַתָּה אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה לְכָל־אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי לְמֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
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You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Shemot 19:4–6

1. The term *Am Segula* does not actually mean a “chosen people,” even though it is often translated that way. Here it is translated as “treasured possession”. Are these two terms connected?
2. What do you think it means to be a chosen people? What have we been chosen for?
3. What do you think it means to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation”? What does it mean to be holy? Were the priests holier than the rest of the people? Are Jews holier than the rest of the world?



That is the meaning of ‘a holy nation’. The holy, in the Bible, simply means *God’s domain* – those points in time and space at which His presence is peculiarly visible. That is what Yeshayahu means when he says of Israel: ‘You are My witness – declares the Lord – that I am God’ (Yeshayahu 43:10) ... There is no assertion in the Bible that the Israelites are inherently better or more moral than others. Their vocation represents not a privilege but a responsibility. It confers no material advantages, only the religious life itself...

... Israel’s role is to be an example: no more, no less. That is how Rambam’s son Avraham interprets, in his father’s name, the phrase ‘a kingdom of priests’:



“The priest of any congregation is its leader, its most honored individual and the congregation’s role-model through whom they learn to follow in the right path. [In calling on Israel to be ‘a kingdom of priests’ it was as if God said to them], ‘Become leaders of the world through keeping my Torah, so that your relationship to [humanity] becomes that of a priest to his congregation, so that the world follows in your path, imitates your deeds and walks in your ways.’”

To Heal a Fractured World, pp. 65–67

1. How does Rabbi Sacks explain the concept that the Jewish people are a “chosen people”?
2. What does the word ‘vocation’ mean? What do you think is the vocation of the Jewish people?
3. How does Rambam, according to his son, explain what it means to be a “kingdom of priests”?



God, the creator of humanity, having made a covenant with all humanity, then turns to one people and commands it to be different *in order to teach humanity the dignity of difference*. Biblical monotheism is not the idea that there is one God and therefore one truth, one faith, one way of life. On the contrary, it is the idea that *unity creates diversity*. That is the non-Platonic miracle of creation. What is real, remarkable and the proper object of our wonder is not the quintessential leaf but the 250,000 different kinds there actually are; not the idea of a bird but the 9,000 species that exist today; not the metalanguage that embraces all others, but the 6,000 languages still spoken throughout the world . . . Judaism is about the miracle of unity that creates diversity.

The Dignity of Difference, p. 53

1. From this quote, together with the opening text for the unit, what do you think is the core message of Judaism that we must model as “living examples”?
2. Where in the Torah do we find this core value?
3. In what ways do you think we can model this value?



[Our] destiny was to create a society that would honor the proposition that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. It would be a place in which the freedom of some would not lead to the enslavement of others . . . Judaism is the code of a self-governing society. We tend to forget this, since Jews have lived in dispersion for two thousand years, without the sovereign power to govern themselves, and because modern Israel is a secular state. Judaism is a religion of redemption rather than salvation. It is about the shared spaces of our collective lives, not an interior drama of the soul . . . because Judaism is also the code of a society, it is also about the social virtues: righteousness (*tzedek/tzedakah*), justice (*mishpat*), loving-kindness (*chesed*) and compassion (*rachamim*). These structure the template of biblical law, which covers all aspects of the life of society, its economy, its welfare systems, its education, family life, employer–employee relations, the protection of the environment and so on . . . None of this was possible without a land . . .

Judaism is the constitution of a self-governing nation, the architectonics of a society dedicated to the service of God in freedom and dignity. Without a land and state, Judaism is a shadow of itself. In exile, God might still live in the hearts of Jews but not in the public square, in the justice of the courts, the morality of the economy and the humanitarianism of everyday life. Jews have lived in almost every country under the sun. In four thousand years, only in Israel have they been a free, self-governing people. Only in Israel are they able, if they so choose, to construct an agriculture, a medical system, an economic infrastructure in the spirit of the Torah and its concern for freedom, justice and the sanctity of life. Only in Israel can Jews today speak the Hebrew of the Bible as the language of everyday speech. Only there can they live Jewish time within a calendar structured according to the rhythms of the Jewish year. Only in Israel can Jews live Judaism in anything other than an edited edition. In Israel, and only there, Jews can walk where the prophets walked, climb the mountains Avraham climbed, lift their eyes to the hills that David saw, and continue the story their ancestors began.

Future Tense, pp. 135–136

1. How do you think people would treat each other if they believed that all of mankind is created in the image of God?
2. "Judaism is the constitution of a self-governing nation". This means that there are laws in Judaism that help create a just society that protects all of its citizens. Can you give examples of such laws in Judaism that other religions do not necessarily have?



3. Rabbi Sacks argues that the ultimate fulfillment of the destiny of the Jewish people is to build a society based on these values, and that this can only be done in Israel. What do you think leads him to this view? Do you agree?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

As a class, consider the following meta-questions (big picture questions):

1. What is the national mission of the Jewish people?
2. How do we fulfill the national mission of the Jewish people? Where can we best fulfill this mission?
3. Are we fulfilling this mission in our land today? If not, what can we do to achieve it?



Israel Among the Nations



Analysis: Together with your *chavruta* join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group). The supplementary sources below have been written by non-Jewish people and describe how they have been inspired by the Jewish people. Your teacher will inform you which of the texts to look at first.

Imagine you are a member of a university debating team. Use the texts your group has been assigned to formulate an argument opposing the following motion:

“This house believes the Jewish people are a parasite nation living off the cultures of the host societies among which it has been dispersed, while making little or no contribution to those societies.”

When analysing the texts, address the following questions:

1. What did the author find most inspiring about the Jewish people?
2. What did the author find most amazing about the Jewish people (or Jewish history)?
3. From the way the author describes the impact of the Jewish people on society, would you say that the Jewish people have been a *Kiddush Hashem*?

ROUSSEAU: AN ASTONISHING PHENOMENON

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) was one of the most influential political thinkers in modern times: his book, “The Social Contract”, helped inspire the French Revolution. After his death, the following note was discovered among his unpublished papers.

But an astonishing and truly unique spectacle is to see an expatriated people, who have had neither place nor land for nearly two thousand years, a people mingled with foreigners, no longer perhaps having a single descendant of the early races, a scattered people, dispersed over the world, enslaved, persecuted, scorned by all nations, nonetheless preserving its characteristics, its laws, its customs, its patriotic love of the early social union, when all ties with it seem broken. The Jews provide us with an astonishing spectacle: the laws of Numa, Lycurgus, Solon are dead; the very much older laws of Moses are still alive. Athens, Sparta, Rome have perished and no longer have children left on earth; Zion, destroyed, has not lost its children.

They mingle with all the nations and never merge with them; they no longer have leaders, and are still a nation; they no longer have a homeland, and are always citizens of it... Any man whosoever he is, must acknowledge this as a unique marvel, the causes of which, Divine or human, certainly





deserve the study and admiration of the sages, in preference to all that Greece and Rome offer of what is admirable in the way of political institutions and human settlements.

The manuscript is to be found in the public library at Neuchâtel
(Cahiers de brouillons, notes et extraits, no. 7843)

PRESIDENT JOHN ADAMS: JEWS AND CIVILIZATION

John Adams (1735–1826) was America’s first Vice-President (1789–1797), and second President (1797–1801).

I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation. If I were an atheist, and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations. If I were an atheist of the other sect, who believe or pretend to believe that all is ordered by chance, I should believe that chance had ordered the Jews to preserve and propagate to all mankind the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent, wise, almighty sovereign of the universe, which I believe to be the great essential principle of all morality, and consequently of all civilization.

President John Adams to F.A. Vanderkemp, February 16, 1809,
in *The Works of John Adams*, ed. C.F. Adams, vol. 9, pp. 609–10

LEO TOLSTOY: AS EVERLASTING AS ETERNITY ITSELF

Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), author of “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenina”, was perhaps the greatest novelist of all time. In 1877 he had an intense religious experience and thereafter devoted most of his life to religion and a new vision of society which influenced some of the early Zionists, as well as Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

The Jew is that sacred being who has brought down from heaven the everlasting fire and has illuminated with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religions . . . The Jew is the emblem of eternity. He whom neither slaughter nor torture of thousands of years could destroy, he whom neither fire nor sword nor inquisition was able to wipe off the face of the earth, he who was the first to produce the oracles of God, he who has been for so long the guardian of prophecy, and who has transmitted it to the rest of the world – such a nation cannot be destroyed. The Jew is as everlasting as eternity itself.

Letter found in the archives of the Bulgarian statesman F. Gabai.
Text in Allan Gould, *What did they think of the Jews*, pp. 180–181



MARK TWAIN: ALL THINGS ARE MORTAL BUT THE JEW



Mark Twain was the pen name of American novelist Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910). The following famous passage is taken from a magazine article he wrote in 1899 in answer to a request to clarify his views about the Jews.

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way.

Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk.

His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it.

The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind.

All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?

Mark Twain, Concerning the Jews, Harper's Magazine, June 1899

NICOLAI BERDYAEV: THE REFUTATION OF MATERIALISM



Nicolai Berdyaev (1874–1948) was a Marxist who held the chair of philosophy at the University of Moscow. In later life he rejected Marxism and became increasingly devoted to religion. In "The Meaning of History" he tells of how he came to realize that the history of the Jews refuted the Marxist belief that the destiny of civilizations was ruled by material forces alone.

I remember how the materialist interpretation of history, when I attempted in my youth to verify it by applying it to the destinies of peoples, broke down in the case of the Jews, where destiny seemed absolutely inexplicable from the materialistic standpoint... Its survival is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon demonstrating that the life of this people is governed



by a special predetermination, transcending the processes of adaptation expounded by the materialistic interpretation of history. The survival of the Jews, their resistance to destruction, their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions and the fateful role played by them in history: all these point to the particular and mysterious foundations of their destiny.

Nicolai Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History*, 1936, pp. 86–87

PAUL JOHNSON: THE PURPOSE AND DESTINY OF HISTORY



Paul Johnson (1928–) is a Catholic historian, former editor of the New Statesman, and author of “A History of the Jews”, from which these passages are taken.

No people has ever insisted more firmly than the Jews that history has a purpose and humanity a destiny. At a very early stage in their collective existence they believed they had detected a Divine scheme for the human race, of which their own society was to be a pilot. They worked out their role in immense detail. They clung to it with heroic persistence in the face of savage suffering. Many of them believe it still. Others transmuted it into Promethean endeavors to raise our condition by purely human means. The Jewish vision became the prototype for many similar grand designs for humanity, both divine and man-made. The Jews, therefore, stand right at the center of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose...

All the great conceptual discoveries of the intellect seem obvious and inescapable once they have been revealed, but it requires a special genius to formulate them for the first time. The Jews had this gift. To them we owe the idea of equality before the law, both divine and human; of the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person; of the individual conscience and so of personal redemption; of the collective conscience and so of social responsibility; of peace as an abstract ideal and love as the foundation of justice, and many other items which constitute the basic moral furniture of the human mind. Without the Jews it might have been a much emptier place.

Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 2, 585



THOMAS CAHILL: SHAPERS OF THE WEST



Thomas Cahill, a Catholic historian, studied Judaism for two years in preparation for his book “The Gifts of the Jews”, from which the following passages are taken.

The Jews started it all – and by ‘it’ I mean so many of the things we care about, the underlying values that make all of us, Jew and gentile, believer and atheist, tick. Without the Jews, we would see the world through different eyes, hear with different ears, even feel with different feelings...

For better or worse, the role of the West in humanity’s history is singular. Because of this, the role of the Jews, the inventors of Western culture, is also singular: there is simply no one else remotely like them; theirs is a unique vocation. Indeed, as we shall see, the very idea of vocation, of a personal destiny, is a Jewish idea.

The Jews gave us the Outside and the Inside – our outlook and our inner life. We can hardly get up in the morning or cross the street without being Jewish. We dream Jewish dreams and hope Jewish hopes. Most of our best words, in fact – new, adventure, surprise; unique, individual, person, vocation; time, history, future; freedom, progress, spirit; faith, hope, justice – are the gifts of the Jews.

Thomas Cahill, The Gifts of the Jews, pp. 3, 240–41





ANDREW MARR: STORIES FOR THE REST OF US



Andrew Marr (1959–) is a journalist, political philosopher and broadcaster. The following is taken from an article he wrote for The Observer.

The Jews have always had stories for the rest of us. They have had their Bible, one of the great imaginative works of the human spirit. They have been victim of the worst modernity can do, a mirror for Western madness. Above all they have had the story of their cultural and genetic survival from the Roman Empire to the 2000s, weaving and thriving amid uncomprehending, hostile European tribes.

This story, their post-Bible, their epic of bodies, not words, involved an intense competitive hardening of generations which threw up, in the end, a blaze of individual geniuses in Europe and America. Outside painting, Morris dancing and rap music, it's hard to think of many areas of Western endeavor where Jews haven't been disproportionately successful. For non-Jews, who don't believe in a people being chosen by God, the lesson is that generations of people living on their wits and hard work, outside the more comfortable mainstream certainties, will seed Einsteins and Wittgensteins, Trotskys and Seiffs. Culture matters...

The Jews really have been different; they have enriched the world and challenged it.

Andrew Marr, The Observer, Sunday May 14, 2000



Share your analysis: Come together as a class. Share your analysis of the texts you were assigned, and state your argument opposing the motion "This house believes the Jewish people are a parasite nation living off the cultures of the host societies among which it has been dispersed, while making little or no contribution to those societies." Make sure you use the quotes you have studied here to form the basis for your argument.

The Assignment



In this unit we have considered the national mission of the Jewish people: to model the values of the Torah by creating a model society in Israel. We have also considered how individual Jews have done this through their contributions to society.

Part 1: Working in pairs, create a presentation of the top ten contributions Jews have made to the world. First, research the most famous Jews and how they have impacted the world, and then choose your top ten. Rank your list, starting with number ten and working up to your number one choice. Your presentation must be visual, in whichever digital format you choose, for example PowerPoint, Prezi, or creating a video.

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 10



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.



For every Jew today there are roughly 155 Christians and 120 Muslims. More than three thousand years later, the words of Moshe in *Sefer Devarim* remain true: 'The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of peoples.' We were then. We are now.

Why did God choose this tiny people for so great a task, to be His witnesses in the world, the people who fought against the idols of the age in every age, the carriers of His message to humanity? Why are we so few? Why this dissonance between the greatness of the task and the smallness of the people charged with carrying it out?

There is a strange passage in the Torah in *Shemot* 30:12: 'When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the Lord a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no mishap (*negef*) will come on them when you number them.' The implication is unmistakable. It is dangerous to count Jews. Centuries later, King David ignored the warning and disaster struck the nation. So why is it dangerous to count Jews?

Nations take censuses on the assumption that there is strength in numbers. The larger the people, the stronger it is. And that is why it is dangerous to count Jews. If Jews ever believed that their strength lay in numbers, we would give way, God forbid, to despair. In Israel they were always a minor power surrounded by great empires. In the Diaspora, everywhere, they were a minority.

Where then did Jewish strength lie if not in numbers? The Torah gives an answer of surpassing beauty. God tells Moshe: Do not count Jews. Ask them to give, and then count the contributions. In terms of numbers we are small. But in terms of our contributions, we are vast. In almost every age, Jews have given something special to the world: the Torah, the literature of the prophets, the poetry of the Psalms, the rabbinic wisdom of *Mishnah*, *Midrash* and *Talmud*, the vast medieval library of commentaries and codes, philosophy and mysticism.

Then, as the doors of Western society opened, Jews made their mark in one field after another: in business, industry, the arts and sciences, cinema, the media, medicine, law and almost every field of academic life. They



revolutionized thought in physics, economics, sociology, anthropology and psychology. Jews have won Nobel Prizes out of all proportion to our numbers.

The simplest explanation is that to be a Jew is to be asked to give, to contribute, to make a difference, to help in the monumental task that has engaged Jews since the dawn of our history, to make the world a home for the Divine presence, a place of justice, compassion, human dignity and the sanctity of life. Though our ancestors cherished their relationship with God, they never saw it as a privilege. They knew it was a responsibility. God asked great things of the Jewish people, and in so doing, made them great.

When it comes to making a contribution, numbers do not count. What matters is commitment, passion, dedication to a cause. Precisely because we are so small as a people, every one of us counts. We each make a difference to the fate of Judaism and the Jewish people. Zechariah said it best: 'Not by might nor by power but by My spirit, says the Almighty Lord.'

Physical strength needs numbers. The larger the nation, the more powerful it is. But when it comes to spiritual strength, you need not numbers but a sense of responsibility. You need a people, each of whom knows that he or she must contribute something to the Jewish, and to the human story. The Jewish question is not, What can the world give me? It is, What can I give to the world? Judaism is God's call to responsibility.

Jonathan Sacks



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

For every Jew today there are roughly 155 Christians and 120 Muslims. More than three thousand years later, the words of Moshe in *Sefer Devarim* remain true: 'The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of peoples.' We were then. We are now.

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Then, as the doors of Western society opened, Jews made their mark in one field after another: in business, industry, the arts and sciences, cinema, the media, medicine, law and almost every field of academic life. They revolutionized thought in physics, economics, sociology, anthropology and psychology. Jews have won Nobel Prizes out of all proportion to our numbers.

The simplest explanation is that to be a Jew is to be asked to give, to contribute, to make a difference, to help in the monumental task that has engaged Jews since the dawn of our history, to make the world a home for the Divine presence, a place of justice, compassion, human dignity and the sanctity of life. Though our ancestors cherished their relationship with God, they never saw it as a privilege. They knew it was a responsibility. God asked great things of the Jewish people, and in so doing, made them great.

When it comes to making a contribution, numbers do not count. What matters is commitment, passion, dedication to a cause. **Precisely because we are so small as a people, every one of us counts.** We each make a difference to the fate of Judaism and the Jewish people. Zechariah said it best: 'Not by might nor by power but by My spirit, says the Almighty Lord.'

Physical strength needs numbers. The larger the nation, the more powerful it is. But when it comes to spiritual strength, you need not numbers but a sense of responsibility. You need a people, each of whom knows that he or she must contribute something to the Jewish, and to the human story. The Jewish question is not, What can the world give me? It is, What can I give to the world? **Judaism is God's call to responsibility.**



Why did God choose this tiny people

1. When was the Jewish people chosen?
2. What does being chosen mean to you? Are you comfortable with the idea of a chosen people?
3. Just how small is this people? Compare the number of Jewish people to the population of the country you live in.

so great a task

1. What task was the Jewish people chosen for?
2. Why do you think Rabbi Sacks describes this as a “great” task?
3. How do you think we are doing with this task?

Why are we so few?

1. Do you think there are factors, for example events in Jewish history, that can explain why the Jewish people are so few in number?
2. Do you think a larger people would have an advantage in fulfilling this “great task”?
3. Do you think our small number may be an important part of God’s plan for the Jewish people and its national mission?

Ask them to give

1. What are Jews asked to give in order to be counted?
2. Rabbi Sacks says there is an inherent message in this *mitzvah*. What is it?
3. Can you explain what it means that the Jewish people’s strength is not in numbers, but rather in what they give?

in terms of our contributions, we are vast

1. Rabbi Sacks lists many contributions that the Jewish people have given to the world. What are they?
2. Why do you think he calls these “vast”?
3. Do you think we have contributed to the world beyond our numbers? Can you give proof to support your opinion?



Precisely because we are so small as a people, every one of us counts.

1. Do you feel as if you are a member of a small people?
2. If so, how does that impact the way you live your life?
3. Does it encourage you to feel a sense of “commitment, passion, and dedication to a cause”? Why?

Judaism is God’s call to responsibility.

1. What does Rabbi Sacks mean by a “call to responsibility”? Responsibility to do what?
2. Do you feel that sense of responsibility?
3. Where do you find this call to responsibility within Judaism? Can you give examples?

Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?



The Core Concepts



Exploration of the Core Concepts: Together with your *chavruta*, examine the following quote from a short pamphlet entitled *From Renewal to Responsibility*, written by Rabbi Sacks to mark the beginning of his second decade as Chief Rabbi. Then look at the supplementary sources provided below for each of the core concepts highlighted in the text. Make sure you understand it fully, and write down any questions you have. Explain how the supplementary sources help you understand the core concept they are connected to. Use the questions to guide your discussion and analysis.

A BLESSING TO OTHERS



To be a Jew is to be alert to the poverty, the suffering, the loneliness of others. Karl Marx called religion ‘the opium of the people’. No religion is less so than Judaism. Opium de-sensitizes us to pain. Judaism sensitizes us to it.

No Jew who has lived Judaism can be without a social conscience. **To be a Jew is to accept responsibility.** The world will not get better of its own accord. Nor will we make it a more human place by leaving it to others – politicians, columnists, protestors, campaigners – making them our agents to bring redemption on our behalf. Life is God’s question; our choices are the answer.

To be a Jew is to be a blessing to others. That is what God told Avraham in the first words he spoke to him, words that four thousand years ago set Jewish history into motion. ‘Through you,’ He said, ‘all the families on earth will be blessed.’ To be a Jew is not to ask for a blessing. It is to be a blessing.

Judaism is about creating spiritual energy: the energy that, if used for the benefit of others, changes lives and begins to change the world. Jewish life is not the search for personal salvation. It is a restless desire to change the world into a place in which God can feel at home. **There are a thousand ways in which we help to do this**, and each is precious, one not more so than another.

When we give, when we say, **‘If this is wrong, let me be among the first to help put it right,’** we create moments of imperishable moral beauty. We know how small we are, and how inadequate to the tasks God has set us. Even the greatest Jew of all time, Moshe, began his conversation with God with the words, **‘Who am I?’** But it is not we who start by being equal to the challenge; it is the challenge that makes us equal to it. We are as big as our ideals. The higher they are, the taller we stand.

From Renewal to Responsibility



To be a Jew is to accept responsibility.

1. What does it mean to accept responsibility? Who and what do we have to take responsibility for?
2. Why does the world need fixing? What needs fixing? Why do you need to be the one to fix it?

SHARING A FATE



A man in a boat began to bore a hole under his seat. His fellow passengers protested. 'What concern is it of yours?' he responded, 'I am making a hole under my seat, not yours.' They replied, 'That is so, but when the water enters and the boat sinks, we too will drown.'

Vayikra Rabba, 4:6

THE GREAT PRINCIPLE



All Israel are responsible for one another.

Sifra, Bechukotai, 2:7

NO ONE LEFT TO SPEAK UP



In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.

Pastor Martin Niemöeller, First They Came...

1. Can you apply the message of the man in the boat to today, and to your own life?
2. Why are all members of the Jewish people responsible for one another? Do you think we are also responsible for non-Jewish neighbors and friends? What about non-Jewish strangers?
3. What is the message of the famous quote from Martin Niemöeller?
4. Each one of these quotes speaks about a different kind of responsibility. Can you explain the differences between them? (Clue: try using the words passive and active, and negative and positive actions)
5. Do you feel a sense of responsibility? To what?



There are a thousand ways in which we help to do this

1. Name three.
2. How can you as an individual fix the world? What can you do today to help fix the world?

OUR NEXT ACT CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

Throughout the year, everyone should see himself and the world as if evenly poised between innocence and guilt. If he commits a sin he tilts the balance of his fate and that of the world to guilt, causing destruction. If he performs a good deed he shifts the balance of his fate and that of the world to innocence, bringing salvation and deliverance to others. That is the meaning of [the biblical phrase] 'the righteous person is the foundation of the world' (*Mishlei* 10: 25), namely that by an act of righteousness we influence the fate of, and save, the world.

Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah, 3:4

THE STARFISH

An old man was walking on the beach at dawn when he noticed a young man picking up starfish stranded by the retreating tide, and throwing them back into the sea one by one. He went up to him and asked him why he was doing this. The young man replied that the starfish would die if left exposed to the morning sun. 'But the beach goes on for miles, and there are thousands of starfish. You will not be able to save them all. How can your effort make a difference?' The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. 'To this one,' he said, 'it makes a difference.'

Loren Eiseley, The Star Thrower

A SMALL ACT OF CIVILITY

In 1966 an 11-year-old black boy moved with his parents and family to a white neighborhood in Washington. Sitting with his two brothers and two sisters on the front step of the house, he waited to see how they would be greeted. They were not. Passers-by turned to look at them but no one gave them a smile or even a glance of recognition. All the fearful stories he had heard about how whites treated blacks seemed to be coming true. Years later, writing about those first days in their new home, he says, 'I knew we were not welcome here. I knew we would not be liked here. I knew we would have no friends here. I knew we should not have moved here.'



As he was thinking those thoughts, a white woman coming home from work passed by on the other side of the road. She turned to the children and with a broad smile said, 'Welcome!' Disappearing into the house, she emerged minutes later with a tray laden with drinks and cream-cheese and jelly sandwiches which she brought over to the children, making them feel at home. That moment – the young man later wrote – changed his life. It gave him a sense of belonging where there was none before. It made him realize, at a time when race relations in the United States were still fraught, that a black family could feel at home in a white area and that there could be relationships that were color-blind. Over the years, he learned to admire much about the woman across the street, but it was that first spontaneous act of greeting that became, for him, a definitive memory. It broke down a wall of separation and turned strangers into friends.

The young man, Stephen Carter, is now a law professor at Yale, and he eventually wrote a book about what he learned that day. He called it *Civility*. The name of the woman, he tells us, was Sara Kestenbaum, and he adds that it was no coincidence that she was a religious Jew. 'In the Jewish tradition,' he notes, 'such civility is called *Chessed* – the doing of acts of kindness – which is in turn derived from the understanding that human beings are made in the image of God.'

Jonathan Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World*, pp. 45–45

1. Why do you think Rambam encourages us to think that the fate of the world is in our hands and based on our very next act?
2. What is the message of the 'Star Thrower'? How can you apply that message to your life?
3. How did Sara Kestenbaum change the world?
4. How can small acts change the world? Why is that important to realize?
5. What small act to change the world can you do today?

'If this is wrong, let me be among the first to help put it right,'

1. Why be the first? What do you benefit from this?
2. Are there occasions when standing by, and letting others more qualified attend to a situation, might actually be the right thing to do? Is it wrong to stand by and watch others more qualified get there first?

DO NOT BE A BY-STANDER

Do not stand idly by when your brother's life is in danger. I am the Lord.

Vayikra 19:16





MORDECHAI AND ESTHER: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY



When Esther's words were reported to Mordechai, he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house, you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will come from elsewhere, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?'

Megillat Esther 4:12–14

THE RIGHTEOUS DO NOT COMPLAIN



The pure and righteous do not complain about wickedness: they increase righteousness. They do not complain about heresy: they increase faith. They do not complain about ignorance: they increase wisdom.

R. Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohen Kook, Arpilai Tohar, pp. 27–28

1. What is a by-stander? What is wrong with being a by-stander? How can you balance that with what we discussed in the previous question – that sometimes we have to let others more qualified do the job?
2. Mordechai asks Esther to hear her calling, to step up to her destiny in history. Do you have a calling? What do you think your role in history could be?
3. The idea contained in Rabbi Kook's quote could also be said in the form of a well-known saying: "If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem." What does that mean?
4. What is the danger in always thinking that someone else will do it?
5. How can you step up today and take responsibility for something?

'Who am I?'

1. Are we inadequate to the task of changing the world? If so, then why bother trying?
2. Does the knowledge that even Moshe doubted his own abilities help you? How?

"I WILL BE WITH YOU"



But Moshe said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?"

And He said, "I will be with you; that shall be your sign that it was I who sent you. And when you have freed the people from Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

Shemot 3:11–12



HILLEL'S WISDOM



Hillel used to say: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?

Pirkei Avot, 1: 14

IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO COMPLETE THE TASK



Rabbi Tarfon said: The day is short, the task is great, the laborers are lazy, the reward is much, and the Master insistent. He used to say: It is not for you to complete the task, but neither are you free to stand aside from it.

Pirkei Avot, 2: 20–21

1. How did God answer Moshe, and how did this help? Does it help you?
2. Hillel teaches three very important lessons. What are they? Which of these are critical to the theme of this unit?
3. If we cannot complete the job, why start it?
4. Do you believe you can change the world? How?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your answers. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

The Assignment



Final Thoughts: The following text, by Rabbi Sacks, summarizes the lessons and concepts we have been studying in this unit, and may be used as the basis for the final assignment:



In 1888, Alfred Nobel, the man who invented dynamite, was reading his morning papers when, with a shock, he found himself reading his own obituary. It turned out that a journalist had made a simple mistake. It was Nobel's *brother* who had died.

What horrified Nobel was what he read. It spoke about “the dynamite king” who had made a fortune from explosives. Nobel suddenly realized that if he did not change his life, that was all he would be remembered for. At that moment he decided to dedicate his fortune to creating five annual prizes for those who’d made outstanding contributions in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and peace. Nobel chose to be remembered not for selling weapons of destruction but for honoring contributions to human knowledge. The question Yom Kippur forces on us is not so much “Will we live?” but “How will we live?” For what would we wish to be remembered?

The Koren Yom Kippur Machzor

Part 1: Write your own obituary. How do you want to be remembered? Write an obituary looking back on your life (of 120 years!) based on all the things you plan to accomplish in your lifetime. What impact have you made on the world?

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.

TEN PATHS TO GOD

EPILOGUE – Student Guide

להיות יהודי WHY I AM A JEW

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks



Introduction

Congratulations! You have explored all ten of Rabbi Sacks' Ten Paths to God! In this concluding unit you will have the opportunity to further reflect on each of the Ten Paths, and tie them together to help you create your own personal approach to what it means to be a Jew. First, let's see how Rabbi Sacks explains why he is proud to be a Jew.

Watch: The opening video "Why I am a Jew"



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each phrase or sentence that refers to one of the Ten Paths from the units you have studied in this curriculum.

Use the questions that follow the text to help you understand its message.



The deepest question any of us can ask is: 'Who am I?' To answer it we have to go deeper than 'Where do I live?' or 'What do I do?' The most fateful moment in my life came when I asked myself that question and knew the answer had to be: I am a Jew. This is why.

I am a Jew not because I believe that Judaism contains all there is of the human story; I admire other traditions and their contributions to the world. Nor am I a Jew because of anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism. What happens to me does not define who I am; ours is a people of faith, not fate. Nor is it because I think that Jews are better than others, more intelligent, creative, generous or successful. It's not Jews who are different, but Judaism. It's not so much what we are but what we are called on to be.

I am a Jew because, being a child of my people, I have heard the call to add my chapter to its unfinished story. I am a stage on its journey, a connecting link between the generations. The dreams and hopes of my ancestors live on in me, and I am the guardian of their trust, now and for the future.

I am a Jew because our ancestors were the first to see that the world is driven by a moral purpose, that reality is not a ceaseless war of the elements, to be worshipped as gods, nor history a battle in which might is right and power is to be appeased. The Judaic tradition shaped the moral civilization of the West, teaching for the first time that human life is sacred, that the individual may never be sacrificed for the mass, and that rich and poor, great and small, are all equal before God.

I am a Jew because I am the moral heir of those who stood at the foot of Mount Sinai and pledged themselves to live by these truths for all time. I am the descendant of countless generations of ancestors who, though



sorely tested and bitterly tried, remained faithful to that covenant when they might so easily have defected.

I am a Jew because of Shabbat, the world's greatest religious institution, a time in which there is no manipulation of nature or our fellow human beings, in which we come together in freedom and equality to create, every week, an anticipation of the messianic age.

I am a Jew because our nation, though at times it suffered the deepest poverty, never gave up on its commitment to helping the poor, or rescuing Jews from other lands, or fighting for justice for the oppressed, and did so without self-congratulation, because it was a *mitzvah*, because a Jew could do no less.

I am a Jew because I cherish the Torah, knowing that God is to be found not just in natural forces but in moral meanings, in words, texts, teachings and commands, and because Jews, though they lacked all else, never ceased to value education as a sacred task, endowing the individual with dignity and depth.

I am a Jew because of our people's passionate faith in freedom, holding that each of us is a moral agent, and that in this lies our unique dignity as human beings; and because Judaism never left its ideals at the level of lofty aspirations, but instead translated them into deeds which we call *mitzvot*, and a way, which we call the *halacha*, and thus brought heaven down to earth.

I am proud, simply, to be a Jew.

I am proud to be part of a people who, though scarred and traumatized, never lost their humor or their faith, their ability to laugh at present troubles and still believe in ultimate redemption; who saw human history as a journey, and never stopped traveling and searching.

I am proud to be part of an age in which my people, ravaged by the worst crime ever to be committed against a people, responded by reviving a land, recovering their sovereignty, rescuing threatened Jews throughout the world, rebuilding Jerusalem, and proving themselves to be as courageous in the pursuit of peace as in defending themselves in war.

I am proud that our ancestors refused to be satisfied with premature consolations, and in answer to the question, 'Has the Messiah come?' always answered, 'Not yet.'

I am proud to belong to the people Israel, whose name means "one who wrestles with God and with man and prevails." For though we have loved humanity, we have never stopped wrestling with it, challenging the idols of every age. And though we have loved God with an everlasting love, we have never stopped wrestling with Him, nor He with us.

I admire other civilizations and traditions, and believe each has brought something special into the world, *aval zeh shelanu*, "but this is ours". This



is my people, my heritage, my faith. In our uniqueness lies our universality. Through being what we alone are, we give to humanity what only we can give.

This, then, is our story, our gift to the next generation. I received it from my parents, and they from theirs, across great expanses of space and time. There is nothing quite like it. It changed, and still challenges, the moral imagination of mankind.

I want to say to Jews around the world: Take it, cherish it, learn to understand and to love it. Carry it and it will carry you. And may you in turn pass it on to future generations. For you are a member of an eternal people, a letter in their scroll. Let their eternity live on in you.

Jonathan Sacks

1. How would you answer the question, "Who are you?"
2. Why do you think some Jews only remain Jewish because of anti-Semitism? Why do you think Rabbi Sacks rejects this approach?
3. Do you think Jews are "better" than non-Jews? What is it, then, that makes us different?
4. Have you thought about the chapter in Jewish history that you will write – what Rabbi Sacks calls your "letter in the scroll"? What would you like it to be?
5. What does Rabbi Sacks say our ancestors were the first to realize about the world?
6. Why do you think being a link in the chain of generations of Jews is a compelling reason for Rabbi Sacks to remain Jewish?
7. What aspects of Judaism does Rabbi Sacks provide as reasons for why he is proud to be a Jew?
8. According to Rabbi Sacks, how have the Jewish people responded to tragedy and suffering in Jewish history?
9. "Through being what we alone are, we give to humanity what only we can give." What is it that the Jewish people uniquely contribute to humanity?
10. How would you answer the question, "Why are you a Jew"?

The Final Assignment



Why are you a Jew? This final unit is designed to help you see the entire curriculum as a whole, and tie all the units together. The best way to do this is to consider your own connection to each of the Ten Paths that we have explored together, and the role they play in your Jewish identity, belief and practice. The final assignment will give you the opportunity to present this in a creative and exciting way, through answering the question, “Why am I a Jew?” in much the same way that Rabbi Sacks answered it in the video.

Watch the “Why I am a Jew” video again. In a small group, appointed by your teacher, create your own “Why I am a Jew” video. It does not need to be animated, but should contain some visual aspect, as well as narration (either as text or voice-over), exploring the reasons why you are proud to be a Jew. You must relate to each of the ten unit themes that we have studied in this curriculum at some point in your video. You may also feel free to include elements of Jewish identity not covered by Rabbi Sacks in this curriculum – there are, after all, many paths to God.

Your teacher will then send a selection of the videos that your class produces to Rabbi Sacks, and he will choose from those which videos he would like to share with the public. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see which videos he chose!

To help you create your video based on your connection to each of the Ten Paths, we are going to briefly revisit each unit, and see how they connect to Rabbi Sacks’ video “Why I am a Jew”.

At the beginning of this unit you were asked to highlight any phrases or sentences from the text that refer to one of the Ten Paths to God that you have studied in this curriculum. Here is the text again, with ten phrases that are connected to the Ten Paths highlighted for you. Each of these phrases will be our starting point to review one of the ten units.

The deepest question any of us can ask is: ‘Who am I?’ To answer it we have to go deeper than, ‘Where do I live?’ or ‘What do I do?’ The most fateful moment in my life came when I asked myself that question and knew the answer had to be: **I am a Jew**. This is why.

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The Way of Identity: On Being a Jew

I am a Jew

1. What were the seven core concepts that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
2. Of all the supplementary sources that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most as a source of your own Jewish identity? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit "The Way of Identity: On Being a Jew".
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of Prayer: Speaking to God

one who wrestles with God

1. What were the nine key terms that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
 - viii.
 - ix.
2. Of all the supplementary sources (including the *tefillot*) that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through prayer? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit “The Way of Prayer: Speaking to God”.
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of Study: Listening to God

cherish the Torah

1. What were the nine key terms that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
 - viii.
 - ix.
2. Of all the supplementary sources that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through learning Torah? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit “The Way of Study: Listening to God”.
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of *Mitzvot*: Responding to God

translated them into deeds which we call *mitzvot*

1. What were the nine key terms that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
 - viii.
 - ix.
2. Of all the supplementary sources that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through performing *mitzvot*? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit “The Way of *Mitzvot*: Responding to God”.
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of *Tzedakah*: Love as Justice

human life is sacred

1. What were the four core concepts that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
2. Of all the supplementary sources that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through performing acts of *tzedakah*? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit “The Way of *Tzedakah*: Love as Justice”.
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of *Chessed*: Love as Compassion

fighting for justice for the oppressed

1. What were the ten key terms that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
 - viii.
 - ix.
 - x.
2. Of all the stories that we read in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through performing acts of *chessed*? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit “The Way of *Chessed*: Love as Compassion”.
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of Faith: Love as Loyalty

my faith

1. What were the five core concepts that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
2. Of all the supplementary sources that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through the way of faith? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit “The Way of Faith: Love as Loyalty”.
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of Israel: The Jewish Land

reviving a land, recovering their sovereignty

1. What were the five core concepts that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
2. Of all the extracts from the *Rabbi Sacks' Haggadah* that we explored in this unit, which one inspires you the most and strengthens your relationship with God through the land of Israel? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit "The Way of Israel: The Jewish Land".
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of *Kiddush Hashem*: The Jewish Task

what we are called on to be

1. What were the seven key terms that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
2. Of all the supplementary sources that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through the way of *Kiddush Hashem*? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit “The Way of *Kiddush Hashem*: The Jewish Task”.
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



The Way of Responsibility: The Jewish Future

who saw human history as a journey

1. What were the four core concepts that we elicited from the words of Rabbi Sacks in the pamphlet entitled *From Renewal to Responsibility*, quoted in this unit?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
2. Of all the supplementary sources that we explored in this unit, which one speaks to you the most in terms of your relationship with God through the way of responsibility? Why?
3. Write one paragraph summarizing the message of the unit "The Way of Responsibility: The Jewish Future".
4. How can the themes contained in this unit lead you to a stronger connection to God?
5. Do these ideas contribute to your own sense of Jewish identity and explain why you are proud to call yourself a Jew? How?



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