

Jonathan Sacks
THE RABBI SACKS LEGACY

SEFIRAT HA'OMER CALENDAR 5785

Counting towards Shavuot
with thoughts and inspiration
from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

COVER ART: "ON THE WAY TO SINAI" BY YORAM RAANAN

DAY 1

16 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 13 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם יוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“Time is not a series of moments traced on the face of a watch, always moving yet always the same. Instead it is a journey with a starting point and a destination, or a story with a beginning, middle and end. Each moment has a meaning, which can only be grasped if we understand where we have come from and where we are going to.”

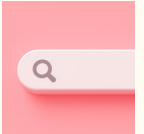


DAY 2

17 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 14 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁנַיִם יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Judaism is a faith that, more than any other, values the mind, encouraging questions and engaging us at the highest level of intellectual rigour. Every question asked in reverence is the start of a journey towards God, and it begins with the habit that, on Pesach, Jewish parents teach their children: to ask, thereby to join the never-ending dialogue between human understanding and Heaven.”



DAY 3

18 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 15 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁלוֹשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“There is a profound difference between history and memory. History is his story – an event that happened sometime else to someone else. Memory is my story – something that happened to me and is part of who I am. History is information. Memory, by contrast, is part of identity.”



DAY 4

19 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 16 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. In April 1943, seven hundred and fifty Jewish fighters led the first organised retaliation against the Nazis... Here were young Jews who knew the chances of survival or success in battle were minimal. And yet, despite lacking in weaponry and combat knowledge, they fought and died for a cause greater than themselves. Their determination was as unshakeable then as it is inspirational to us now.”

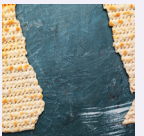


DAY 5

20 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 17 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם חֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“No civilisation, no faith, has been as child-centered as Judaism. As a result, none has stayed so perennially young, so self-renewing through time. On Pesach, telling our story to our children, we relive the secret of Jewish renewal.”

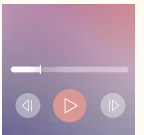


DAY 6

21 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 18 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שֵׁשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“When language aspires to the transcendent and the soul longs to break free of the gravitational pull of the earth, it modulates into song. Words are the language of the mind. Music is the language of the soul.”



DAY 7

22 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 19 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שִׁבְעָה יָמִים שֶׁהֵם שְׁבוּעַת אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“We know in our heart of hearts that what really brings happiness, what makes a life worthwhile, is giving to others. That is the great difference between material goods and spiritual goods. With material goods, the more we share, the less we have. With spiritual goods – kindness, friendship, generosity, compassion – the more we share the more we have. The more we give, the more we grow.”



DAY 8

23 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 20 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׂמוֹנֶה יָמִים
שֶׁהֵם שְׁבֻעַת אֶחָד וְיוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“The focal point of Jewish life is the transmission of a heritage across the generations. Time and again in the Torah we are drawn to dramas of the next generation. Judaism’s focus is its children.”



DAY 9

24 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 21 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם תְּשַׁעָּה יָמִים
שֶׁהֵם שְׁבֻעַת אֶחָד וְשְׁנַיִם יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“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.”



DAY 10

25 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 22 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים
שֶׁהֵם שְׁבֻעַת אֶחָד וְשְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“The work of a team, a partnership, a collaboration with others who have different gifts or different ways of looking at things, is always greater than any one individual can achieve alone.”



DAY 11

26 NISSAN 5785 • YOM HASHOAH
NIGHT OF 23 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם אֶחָד עָשָׂר יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁבֻעַת אֶחָד וְאַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“The Shoah survivors are among the most inspiring people I have had the privilege to meet. Remarkably, despite coming eyeball to eyeball with the Angel of Death, despite the unimaginable losses each of them suffered, so many of them fulfilled the words of Moses’ great command uvacharta bachayim, ‘choose life’. In doing so, they chose life not just for themselves, but for their children, grandchildren, and all future generations.”



DAY 12

27 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 24 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁבֻעַת אֶחָד וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Judaism is a sustained meditation on the power of words to heal or harm, mend or destroy. Just as God created the world with words, so we create, and can destroy, relationships with words.”



DAY 13

28 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 25 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁבֻעַת אֶחָד וְשִׁשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Faith does not render us invulnerable to tragedy but it gives us the strength to mourn and then, despite everything, to carry on.”

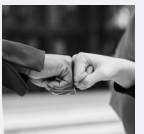


DAY 14

29 NISSAN 5785
NIGHT OF 26 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁנַיִם שְׁבֻעוֹת לְעוֹמֵר

“Respect others even if they disrespect you.”



DAY 15 30 NISSAN 5785 • ROSH CHODESH
NIGHT OF 27 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם
שָׁהֵם שְׁנֵי שָׁבוּעוֹת וְיוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“In the midst of what can sometimes seem to be the dark and chaos of the human world, our task is to create order and light.”



DAY 16 1 IYAR 5785 • ROSH CHODESH
NIGHT OF 28 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שֵׁשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם
שָׁהֵם שְׁנֵי שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשְׁנֵי יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“The moon, endlessly reborn after seeming to decline, is a symbol of the Jewish people who have seemed at times to face eclipse, yet they too have recovered and given light at dark times.”



DAY 17 2 IYAR 5785 • YOM HAZIKARON -
NIGHT OF 29 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שִׁבְעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם
שָׁהֵם שְׁנֵי שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשִׁלְשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“On Yom HaZikaron we remember the members of the Israel Defence Forces who fell in action, and also all those killed by terrorist attacks in Israel. What our enemies killed, we keep alive in the only way we can: in our minds, our memories, and in our land, the State of Israel.”



DAY 18 3 IYAR 5785 • YOM HA'ATZMAUT
NIGHT OF 30 APRIL 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר יוֹם
שָׁהֵם שְׁנֵי שָׁבוּעוֹת וְאַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

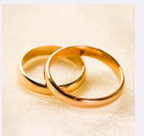
“Only in Israel can a Jew speak a Jewish language, see a Jewish landscape, walk where our ancestors walked, and continue the story they began. We give thanks to God for bringing the land back to the people, and the people back to the land – the land where our people was born in ancient times, and reborn in ours.”



DAY 19 4 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 1 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם תְּשַׁעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם
שָׁהֵם שְׁנֵי שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“To take someone else's hand and begin a journey together into the undiscovered country called the future: that is marriage, love sanctified by the mutual gift of trust.”



DAY 20 5 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 2 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם עֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שָׁהֵם שְׁנֵי שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשִׁשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Judaism is a constant dialogue between past and present, and since the present always changes, there is always a new juxtaposition, a new facet of the story. The sages said, ‘There is no house of study without chiddush, some new interpretation.’ The story of Pesach never grows old, because the struggle for freedom never ends, and therefore each generation adds its own commentary to the old-new story.”



DAY 21 6 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 3 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם אֶחָד וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שָׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעוֹמֵר

“Where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.”



DAY 22

7 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 4 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְיוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“We are today consuming our children’s tomorrow.
Before it is too late we must learn environmental habits
of reverence, responsibility, and restraint.”



DAY 23

8 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 5 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשְׁנַיִם יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“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 human heritage, leaving the world better than it would have been had they not existed. The Jewish question is not, What can the world give me? It is, What can I give to the world?”



DAY 24

9 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 6 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“A people driven by hate are not – cannot be – free. Had the people carried with them a burden of hatred and a desire for revenge, Moses would have taken the Israelites out of Egypt, but he would not have taken Egypt out of the Israelites. They would still be there, bound by chains of anger as restricting as any metal. To be free you have to let go of hate.”



DAY 25

10 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 7 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם חֲמִשָּׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְאַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“We can face any future without fear so long as we know we will not face it alone.”



DAY 26

11 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 8 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שֵׁשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Science takes things apart to see how they work.
Religion puts things together to see what they mean.
And we need them both, the way we need the two hemispheres of the brain.”



DAY 27

12 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 9 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שִׁבְעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשִׁבְעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“A society is strong when it cares for the weak, rich when it cares for the poor,
and invulnerable when it takes care of the vulnerable.”



DAY 28

13 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 10 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁמוֹנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם אַרְבָּעָה שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעוֹמֵר

“God asks us not to understand but to heal; not to accept suffering but to diminish it.”



DAY 29

14 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 11 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם תִּשְׁעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם אַרְבַּעַת שָׁבוּעוֹת וְיוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“The Siddur is our book of faith, the map of the Jewish mind, the music of the Jewish soul. Prayer is that time beyond time, space beyond space, where our finitude meets God’s infinity, and we’re brushed by the wings of the Divine Presence.”



DAY 30

15 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 12 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם אַרְבַּעַת שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשָׁנֵי יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“After the Tower of Babel, the human condition has meant a world in which, though there is only one God, there are many languages and cultures, each with something unique to contribute to our collective heritage. We tell different stories, practise different ways of life, yet we are all created in God’s image. There are many faiths but only one world in which we must learn to live together.”



DAY 31

16 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 13 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם אֶחָד וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם אַרְבַּעַת שָׁבוּעוֹת וּשְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“To defend a country you need an army. But to defend a civilisation you need schools. You need education as the conversation between the generations... We need to teach our children the story of which we and they are a part, and we need to trust them to go further than we did, when they come to write their own chapter.”



DAY 32

17 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 14 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם אַרְבַּעַת שָׁבוּעוֹת וְאַרְבַּעַת יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Community is society with a human face – the place where we know we’re not alone.”



DAY 33

18 IYAR 5785 • LAG BA'OMER
NIGHT OF 15 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם אַרְבַּעַת שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Deep down, without knowing it, every Jew longs to keep the Torah and come close to God with a love that burns like fire. The mystical task is to take a journey into the interior of the self, and rescue that love from its hiddenness.”

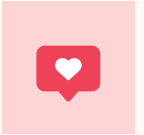


DAY 34

19 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 16 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם אַרְבַּעַת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם אַרְבַּעַת שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשִׁשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Greater by far than the love we receive is the love we give.”



DAY 35

20 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 17 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם חֲמִשָּׁה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעוֹמֵר

“Keep learning. I learnt this from Florence in Newcastle, whom I last met the day she celebrated her 105th birthday. She was still full of energy and fun. “What’s the secret?” I asked her. “Never be afraid to learn something new,” she said. Then I realised that if you are willing to learn, you can be 105 and still young. If you are not, you can be 25 and already old.”

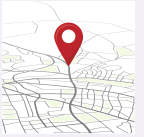


DAY 36

21 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 18 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שֵׁשֶׁה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְיוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“Remember your destination. This will help you to distinguish between an opportunity to be seized and a temptation to be resisted.”

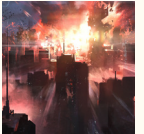


DAY 37

22 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 19 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שִׁבְעָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וּשְׁנֵי יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“No soul was ever saved by hate. No truth was ever proved by violence. No redemption was ever brought by holy war. No religion won the admiration of the world by its capacity to inflict suffering on its enemies. What terrorists seek to destroy, we will continue to build: community, democracy, tolerance, respect for each other and for the sanctity of life.”



DAY 38

23 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 20 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁמוֹנֶה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וּשְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Judaism is the open-ended, mutually-binding conversation between Heaven and Earth.”



DAY 39

24 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 21 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם תְּשַׁע וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְאַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“What the Sabbath does for human beings and animals, the sabbatical and jubilee years do for the land. The earth too is entitled to its periodic rest.”



DAY 40

25 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 22 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“More than the Bible is interested in the home God made for humanity, it is concerned with the home humanity makes for God.”



DAY 41

26 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 23 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם אֶחָד וְאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשֵׁשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“You are as great as your ideals. If you truly believe in something beyond yourself, you will achieve beyond yourself.”



DAY 42

27 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 24 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁנַיִם וְאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעוֹמֵר

“Non-Jews respect Jews who respect Judaism, and they are embarrassed by Jews who are embarrassed by Judaism.”



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר

Counting towards Shavuot, with thoughts and inspiration from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

DAY 43 28 IYAR 5785 • YOM YERUSHALAYIM
NIGHT OF 25 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְיוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

“At the heart of Jewish faith is Jerusalem, the holy city whose name is peace. Has a people ever loved a city so deeply for so long? Almost every prayer in the Jewish prayer book includes a prayer for Jerusalem... And though all that remains of the Temple is one wall, still to stand and pray in that spot is to feel the presence of three thousand years of Jewish prayers and tears and hopes.”



DAY 44 29 IYAR 5785
NIGHT OF 26 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשְׁנַיִם יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“In a religion that focuses on holy words, and that is almost without holy objects, the Torah scroll is the nearest Judaism comes to a physical object that has sanctity. Judaism is the story of the love between a people and a book, the Book of books.”



DAY 45 1 SIVAN 5785 • ROSH CHODESH
NIGHT OF 27 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם חֲמִשָּׁה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשִׁלְשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“The Jewish people is compared to the moon because, whereas the sun shines with its own light, the moon shines with reflected light. So too with Israel: the light with which we shine comes not from ourselves but from God, of whose glory we are but a reflection.”



DAY 46 2 SIVAN 5785
NIGHT OF 28 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שֵׁשָׁה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וָאַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“The appearance of antisemitism is always an early warning sign of a dangerous dysfunction within a culture, because the hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews.”



DAY 47 3 SIVAN 5785
NIGHT OF 29 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שִׁבְעָה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“In a world where religion is too often associated with extremism, with harshness, with prejudice, and with violence, we would do well to remember that essential message of Shavuot epitomised in the book of Ruth, that at the heart of faith is that faithfulness that binds us to one another in the love that is loyalty, and the loyalty that is love.”



DAY 48 4 SIVAN 5785
NIGHT OF 30 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם שְׁמוֹנֶה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשֵׁשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

“Thirty-three centuries after they were first given, the Ten Commandments remain the simplest, shortest guide to the creation of a good society.”



DAY 49 5 SIVAN 5785
NIGHT OF 31 MAY 2025

הַיּוֹם תְּשַׁעָה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם
שֶׁהֵם שִׁבְעָה שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעוֹמֵר

“To be a Jew is to inherit a faith from those who came before us, to live it and to hand it on to those who will come after us. To be a Jew is to be a link in the chains of the generations.”

