



DISCUSSION-BASED RESOURCE FOR THE RABBI SACKS GLOBAL DAY OF LEARNING



TORAH AS *Conversation*

This year's Global Day of Learning marks Rabbi Sacks' fifth yahrzeit with the theme "Torah as Conversation", and celebrates the posthumous publication of his commentary in the Koren Shalem H'mash – a powerful expression of his lifelong mission to bring Torah into conversation with the world.

As in previous years, hundreds of schools and communities worldwide will come together to honour Rabbi Sacks' life, Torah, and enduring impact. It is powerful to know that people of all ages across the world will be exploring the same ideas from Rabbi Sacks.

This is a suggested outline of what you may wish to explore, but feel free to adapt it.

Who Was *Rabbi Sacks*?

WATCH this short video about the life of Rabbi Sacks,
entitled *A Teacher, a Leader, and a Moral Voice*:

WWW.RABBISACKS.ORG/VIDEOS/A-TEACHER-A-LEADER-AND-A-MORAL-VOICE



DISCUSS the video:



- What are your general impressions of Rabbi Sacks from this video?
- What did you learn about Rabbi Sacks?
- Share something you noticed in the video that interested you.
- Share something you noticed in the video that surprised you.

CHOOSE some more analytical questions for discussion:



- Discuss what the following descriptions of Rabbi Sacks mean to you:
Teacher / Leader / Moral Voice
- Who did Rabbi Sacks impact, in each of these three roles?
- Which locations (countries and places) did you notice in the video?
What can we learn about Rabbi Sacks from these?
- Which famous people did you notice in the video?
What does that tell you about Rabbi Sacks?
- What titles did Rabbi Sacks have, and what do they mean?
- How many books do you think you saw in the video?
What does that tell us about Rabbi Sacks?

Why Are We Learning in Rabbi Sacks' *Memory*?

When someone we love passes away, there is a special mitzvah to learn Torah in their memory. It helps us remember them, expresses how much we miss them, and asks Hashem to care for them in heaven.

It is especially meaningful to do this when the words of Torah actually came from them, as in this case with Rabbi Sacks. Today, we will have conversations in our class to learn from each other and to learn together an idea that Rabbi Sacks taught.

DISCUSS how we can learn something from every person (see the Mishna in Pirkei Avot (4:1) where a wise person is defined as someone who learns from all people).



- Can you learn something from every single person?
- What can you learn from your classmates today?
- Why is conversation a good way to learn from other people?

The Bridge Across Time (APPROX. 10 MINUTES)

WATCH this animated video entitled The Bridge Across Time, which was created to mark the fifth yahrzeit of Rabbi Sacks, furthering this beautiful message on Jewish continuity, Jewish learning, and 'Torah as Conversation':

🔗 WWW.RABBISACKS.ORG/VIDEOS/THE-BRIDGE-ACROSS-TIME-ANIMATION



DISCUSS the animation:



- Why does Rabbi Sacks describe learning Torah as “a bridge across time”?
- Does this happen easily, or do we have to work to make the Torah “the bridge”?
- In the video Rabbi Sacks describes learning Torah as being part of “an ongoing conversation”. Why is “conversation” a good word to describe learning Torah? Who is the conversation between?

EXPLAIN that Rabbi Sacks wrote a weekly Dvar Torah on the parsha for many years, which was read by thousands of people all over the world, and is still read every week. He called these essays “**Covenant & Conversation**”. He explains why he chose this name for them in the following quote:

I have called these studies “**Covenant & Conversation**” because this, for me, is the essence of what Torah learning is – throughout the ages, and for us, now. The text of Torah is our covenant with God, our written constitution as a nation under His sovereignty. **The interpretation of this text has been the subject of an ongoing conversation for as long as Jews have studied the Divine word, a conversation that began at Sinai thirty-three centuries ago and has not ceased since.** Every age has added its commentaries, and so must ours. Participating in that conversation is a major part of what it is to be a Jew. For we are the people who never stopped learning the Book of Life, our most precious gift from the God of life. (From the Introduction to *Covenant & Conversation: Genesis*)

DISCUSS the quote:



- Why did Rabbi Sacks choose the name “**Covenant & Conversation**” for his essays on the parsha?
- What kinds of people have been involved in this conversation?
- Do you feel like you have been part of this conversation?
- Who will be part of the conversation after you?

Within this discussion is the powerful idea that when we learn and discuss Torah, we become part of the same conversation as our parents, grandparents, ancestors, and the famous commentators from Jewish history, going all the way back to Moshe himself.



Cards and Conversation

(APPROX. 15 MINUTES)

Cards & Conversation: Chumash Edition is a new learning resource designed to spark meaningful conversations, inspired by the wisdom of Rabbi Sacks. Based on Rabbi Sacks' commentary in the Koren Sacks Humash, each card draws on the weekly Torah portion and brings together three elements:

- A MEANINGFUL QUOTE FROM RABBI SACKS' COMMENTARY
- A BIG JEWISH QUESTION TO SPARK DISCUSSION
- A POWERFUL IMAGE TO EXPLORE AND INTERPRET



You can download the full set of cards,
and request to have a pack sent to you, here:

@ WWW.RABBISACKS.ORG/CARDS-AND-CONVERSATION

STEP 1

Divide students into *chavrutot* (pairs) or groups of three. Give each group one *Cards & Conversation* card. Begin with the side showing the illustration and question. Give them five minutes to discuss the question, explore the image, and consider how the two are connected.

STEP 2

Have each group turn the card over and read Rabbi Sacks' quote. Invite them to discuss what it means, ensuring they understand it fully. Encourage them to reflect on how this quote deepens or changes their earlier conversation.

STEP 3

Bring the class back together. Ask a few groups to share their card and reflections – both the ideas they discussed and how the conversation itself affected them.

If you wish to extend this section of the class, have groups exchange cards and repeat Steps 1–3 with a new card.

CONCLUSION

End by reflecting together on the value of conversation as a form of Jewish learning. While we certainly learn from books and teachers, the traditional method in Judaism is *chavruta* – learning in dialogue with a peer. Give students a final opportunity to share what they noticed about learning through conversation and how it felt to take part in this classic Jewish practice.

REFLECT



- How did it feel to have a conversation on an idea from the Torah or Rabbi Sacks?
- What was most meaningful for you?
- Were there any challenges?
- How can you continue this conversation?



The Rabbi Sacks Legacy perpetuates the timeless and universal wisdom of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks as a teacher of Torah, a leader of leaders, and a moral voice.

Explore the digital archive, containing much of Rabbi Sacks' writings, broadcasts, and speeches at www.rabbisacks.org, and follow The Rabbi Sacks Legacy on social media @RabbiSacks.