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Books by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (with abstracts)

Publishers listed are UK, US and Israel only. Many of Rabbi Sacks' books have been translated into numerous foreign languages including Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

- **[Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence](#). Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2015; Schocken, New York, 2015. Received 2015 American National Jewish Book Award.**

Despite predictions of continuing secularization, the twenty-first century has witnessed a surge of religious extremism and violence in the name of God. In this book, Sacks explores the roots of violence and its relationship to religion, focusing on the historic tensions between the three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Drawing on arguments from evolutionary psychology, game theory, history, philosophy, ethics and theology, Sacks shows how a tendency to violence can subvert even the most compassionate of religions. Through a close reading of key biblical texts at the heart of the Abrahamic faiths, Sacks then challenges those who claim that religion is intrinsically a cause of violence, and argues that theology must become part of the solution if it is not to remain at the heart of the problem.

- **[Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible](#). Koren, Jerusalem, 2015.**

In this companion volume to the Covenant & Conversation series, Sacks mines the weekly Torah portions for insights into the nature of power, authority, and leadership. Based on the understanding that no man is born a leader, the book explores the principles, and perils, of becoming one.

- **[Covenant and Conversation: Leviticus](#). Koren, Jerusalem, 2015.**

A collection of Sacks' essays on the weekly Torah portion in Leviticus, available in book form for the first time. The third volume in the five-volume series.

- **[The Koren Sacks Pesach Mahzor](#). Koren, Jerusalem, 2013. Received 2014 American National Jewish Book Award.**

Sacks' translation and commentary clarify the prayers and explore the themes of the Pesach festival, from slavery to nationhood, and from exile to freedom.

- **[The Koren Sacks Yom Kippur Mahzor](#). Koren, Jerusalem 2012.**

A companion to the *Koren Sacks Rosh Hashana Mahzor*, part of a growing body of work produced by the Koren-Sacks partnership. It brings out the inner meaning of the Yom Kippur prayers by aligning the Hebrew and English texts, highlighting key words, distinguishing poetry from prose, and using beautiful fonts designed by master typographer Eliyahu Koren.

- [**The Koren Sacks Rosh Hashana Mahzor.**](#) Koren, Jerusalem 2011.

A new High Holiday prayer book. After an introduction of the themes of the day, Sacks' commentary blends insights from *Tanakh* (the canon of the Hebrew Bible) and classical sources with his own observations. An eloquent, contemporary translation makes the prayers accessible and meaningful, and a sophisticated design brings out the power and poetry of the text.

- [**The Great Partnership: God, Science and the Search for Meaning.**](#) Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2011; Schocken, New York, 2012.

Sacks moves beyond the tired arguments of militant atheists such as Dawkins and Hitchens to explore how religion has always played a valuable part in human culture and, far from being dismissed as redundant, must be allowed to temper and develop scientific understanding in order for us to be fully human. Ranging around the world to draw comparisons from different cultures, and delving deep into the history of language and of western civilization, Sacks shows how the predominance of science-oriented thinking is embedded deeply even in our religious understanding, and calls on us to recognize the centrality of relationship to true religion, and thus to see how this core value of relationship is essential if we are to avoid the natural tendency for science to rule our lives rather than fulfilling its promise to set us free. Science can reveal how the universe works, he notes, but the meaning of the universe can only be explained by something outside the universe.

- [**Covenant and Conversation: Exodus.**](#) Koren, Jerusalem, 2010.

A collection of Sacks' essays on the weekly Torah portions within Exodus, available in book form for the first time. Sacks fuses Jewish tradition, Western philosophy and literature to present a highly developed understanding of the human condition under God's sovereignty. The second volume in a five-volume series.

- [**Future Tense.**](#) Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2009; Schocken, New York, 2010.

A systematic study of the major problems confronting Jews and Judaism in the 21st century. We are in danger, says Sacks, of forgetting what Judaism's place is within the global project of humankind. The Jewish people exist for a reason, and it is not for themselves alone. They must recommit themselves to their foundational purpose: to the task of creating a just world in which the divine presence can dwell among us all. Without compromising one iota of Jewish faith, Rabbi Sacks declares that Jews must stand alongside their friends – Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and secular humanist – in defense of freedom against those who desecrate life. And they should do this not to win friends or the admiration of others but because it is what a people of God is supposed to do. Sacks' message is *tikkum olam* – using Judaism as a blueprint for repairing an imperfect world.

- [**Covenant and Conversation: Genesis.**](#) Koren, Jerusalem 2009. Received 2009 American National Jewish Book Award.

The Torah is an encounter between past and present, moment and eternity, which frames Jewish consciousness. In this first volume of a five-volume collection of *parashat hashavua* (weekly Torah portions), Sacks explores these intersections as they relate to universal concerns of freedom, love, responsibility, identity and destiny.

- [**The Koren Sacks Siddur.**](#) Koren, Jerusalem 2009.

The first new Orthodox Hebrew/English siddur (daily prayer book) in a generation and the only Orthodox siddur that includes prayers for the state of Israel, its soldiers and national holidays; a *halakhic* (Jewish law and tradition) guide for visitors; prayers following childbirth and upon the birth of a daughter; a modern translation and transliteration; and citations of modern authorities.

- [*The Home We Build Together*](#). Continuum, London, 2007.

Sacks' thesis on the future of British society and the dangers facing liberal democracy. A counterweight to his earlier book, *The Dignity of Difference*, Sacks makes the case for 'integrated diversity' within a framework of shared political values. 'Multiculturalism has run its course, and it is time to move on'.

- [*The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*](#). HarperCollins, London, 2006

The Hebrew Daily Prayer Book is the official prayer book for all Orthodox Jews in the UK. This edition features commentary from Sacks, whose sensible and sensitive approach brings new insights into the most familiar things.

- [*To Heal A Fractured World*](#). Continuum, London, 2005; Schocken, New York, 2005.

Sacks makes an impassioned plea for the return of religion to its true purpose – as a partnership with God in the work of ethical and moral living. What are our duties to others, to society, and to humanity? How do we live a meaningful life in an age of global uncertainty and instability? Sacks offers answers to these questions by looking at the ethics of responsibility. He argues that in today's religious and political climate, it is more important than ever to return to the essential understanding that 'it is by our deeds that we express our faith and make it real in the lives of others and the world.'

- [*From Optimism to Hope*](#). Continuum, London 2004.

A compilation of Sacks' commentaries for the BBC Thought for the Day programme on Radio 4.

- [*The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*](#). HarperCollins, London 2003; Continuum, New York 2003.

An insightful commentary to the Koren Haggada, together with illuminating essays on the themes and motifs of the Festival of Freedom. Sensitively translated, the traditional texts are carefully balanced alongside Rabbi Sacks' contemporary ideas. With essay titles as diverse as "Pesach, Freud, and Jewish Identity" and "Pesach and the Rebirth of Israel," as well as explorations of the role of women in the Exodus, and the philosophy of leadership and nation-building, this Haggada is a thought-provoking companion at the Seder table.

- [*The Dignity of Difference*](#). Continuum, London / New York / Toronto, 2002. Received the 2004 Grawemeyer Award for Religion (USA).

The year 2001 began as the United Nations Year of Dialogue between Civilizations. By its end, the phrase that came most readily to mind was 'the clash of civilizations.' The tragedy of September 11 intensified the danger caused by religious differences around the world. As the politics of identity begin to replace the politics of ideology, can religion become a force for peace? This book is Rabbi Sacks' radical proposal for reconciling hatreds. It was the first major statement by a Jewish leader on the ethics of globalization, and marked a paradigm shift in the approach to religious coexistence. Sacks argues that we must do more than search for values common to all faiths; we must also reframe the way we see our differences.

- [*Radical Then, Radical Now*](#). Continuum, London, 2001. Published in the USA as: *A Letter in the Scroll*. The Free Press, New York, 2000. Received 2000 National Jewish Book Award (USA).

Originally written as a wedding gift for the author's son, this is a testimony to the resilience of the Jewish people who have, through their endurance of four thousand years of persecution and exile, earned a unique place in history. Without land or power, they created an identity for themselves through their shared dreams of freedom, justice, dignity and human rights. Sacks reminds readers of the legacy of those dreams and of our responsibility to our fellow man.

- [**Celebrating Life**](#). Continuum, London, 2006; original publication 2000.

Following the loss of his father, Sacks began to learn how to celebrate life in a new way. He discovered where happiness lives, often in unexpected places, through family, community, friendship and responsibilities. He also found it through a renewed relationship with God who speaks to our deepest needs. Drawn in part from his columns in *The Times* newspaper.

- [**The Politics of Hope**](#). Vintage, London, 2000; original publication 1997.

The view has prevailed, on the left and the right, that society is sustained by two institutions, the market and government – the homes, respectively, of individual and the state. This has led to the breakdown of third sector institutions like the family and the community, places where we find identity, meaning, security and trust. Here Sacks proposes a new understanding of society, based on covenant as well as contract. This, he argues, creates a new politics of responsibility in which families, neighborhoods, communities, voluntary organizations and religious groups all have a part to play. How, he asks, do we move from social breakdown to the politics of hope?

- [**Community of Faith**](#). Peter Halban, London, 1995.

For the 125th anniversary of the United Synagogue, Sacks wrote a new evaluation of the role of the synagogue in Jewish life today. He explores the choices faced by religious leadership in the modern world, and the ways in which the synagogue embodies a living community of faith.

- [**Faith in the Future**](#). Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1995.

Sacks addresses some of the major themes of our time: the fragmentation of our common culture, the breakdown of family and community, the lack of moral direction, and the waning of religious belief. How, he asks, can we construct a humane social order that honors human dignity and difference, one in which we can be both true to ourselves and a blessing to others? In the confusing state of post-industrial societies in the post-Cold War situation, can we give those who come after us a coherent map of hope?

- [**Will We Have Jewish Grandchildren?**](#) Vallentine Mitchell, London, 1994.

Sacks looks at the challenge of how to maintain Jewish identity in the 21st century.

- [**One People: Tradition, Modernity and Jewish Unity**](#). The Littman Library, London, 1993.

The first book-length study of the major problem confronting the Jewish future: the availability or otherwise of a way of mending the schisms between Reform and Orthodox Judaism, between religious and secular Jews in Israel, and between Israel itself and the diaspora – all of which have been deepened by the fierce and continuing controversy over the question of ‘who is a Jew?’

- [**Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust**](#). Manchester University Press, 1992.

In this study of Jewish thought in the two decades prior to its publication, Sacks explores how Jews have sought ways back to tradition in an untraditional age. He addresses a crucial dilemma for Jews and Judaism today. The Holocaust and the birth of the state of Israel have combined to create strong contemporary awareness of peoplehood – of Jews as sharing a common history, destiny and responsibility. But can there be peoplehood across the deep religious and cultural divisions that are the heritage of the Jewish encounter with modernity? Drawn from the 1989 Sherman Lectures at Manchester University.

- [**The Persistence of Faith**](#). Continuum, London, 2005; original publication 1991.

Based on Sacks' 1990 BBC Reith Lectures in which he challenged the view that religious faith in Europe was in a state of terminal decline. Sacks argues that faiths must remain open to criticism, keep alive their separate communities, and contribute more to national debates on moral issues. Faiths must also learn to get along better. His thesis is that we still live under a Biblical canopy and that a cohesive morality needs the uniting

bonds of faith. Confidence in a faith is a subtle quality and lack of it shows in many ways, some contradictory. Sacks has that confidence and the quiet charisma to communicate it. The subject of this book – religions and ethics – is good ground for him to build on: The Jewish contribution to ethics is distinctly rational and has a long and illustrious tradition. Moral philosophy is after all a Jewish preoccupation.

- [*Arguments for the Sake of Heaven*](#). Jason Aronson, London, 1991.

What is the future of the Jewish people? Sacks explores the contemporary issues that are influencing Judaism and the controversies that are affecting its destiny. The issues of conversion and the question of “Who is a Jew?” have produced a schism between Orthodoxy and Reform. Religious and secular Jews in Israel have clashed. The relationship between Orthodox and liberal Jews, as well as between Israel and the diaspora, has become strained. How have these conflicts arisen? What events and influences have caused Jewish identity to be interpreted in such different and distinct ways? Most importantly, how will these diverse visions affect Judaism in the coming decades?

- [*Tradition in an Untraditional Age*](#). Vallentine Mitchell, London, 1990.

In the last two centuries Jewish thought has had to respond to dramatic events and transformations: the emergence of Jews into open societies, secularization, assimilation and anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and the State of Israel. This book explores these challenges through a study of the work of four great Jewish thinkers: Rabbis Samson Raphael Hirsch, Moses Sofer, Abraham Isaac Kook and Joseph Soloveitchik. It includes studies of the Holocaust, Jewish-Christian dialogue, Jewish economic ethics and religious alienation and return, and also sets out an agenda for future Jewish thought.

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