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Fact Sheet – Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

March 8, 1948: Jonathan Sacks born in London, the eldest of four children of Louis (d.1996), a businessman who sold cloth in a small shop in London's East End, and Louisa "Libby" Frumkin (d. 2010), who worked in her family's wine business. Both parents are active as volunteers in their synagogue. A family of modest means, his parents instill in him enormous devotion to education, Judaism and wider society, a blend of secularism and religion that would become the template of his lifelong pursuits.

1952-1959: Attends Saint Mary's Primary School in the Finchley area of North London, near the family's home.

1959-1966: Attends Christ's College School, Finchley. Although a Christian institution, about half of the students are Jewish yet none of the school's teachers are, so he helps organize and lead morning assemblies for the Jewish students. Beginning at age 15 he increasingly embraces this role, later crediting it as instrumental in preparing for a life of outreach. The teachers' respect for and encouragement of his faith also prove influential in his understanding that difference does not have to mean division.

1966: Enters Gonville & Caius College, one of the oldest colleges at the University of Cambridge, and studies for a philosophy degree focused on Moral Science, a discipline that applies scientific methodology to the understanding of morality.

1968: While a student at Cambridge, a two-month visit to the United States leads to what will be life-changing encounters with Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, dean of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University in New York, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who urges him to seek rabbinic ordination.

Specifically, Soloveitchik enlightens him to the ability of Judaism to not only withstand the challenges of modern thought but to thrive within that environment. He is also deeply influenced by Schneerson's emphasis on eagerly sharing the lessons and values of Jewish faith not just with Jews but with all of humanity. He later sums up these encounters as: "The Rebbe challenged me to lead. Rabbi Soloveitchik challenged me to think."

1969: Awarded 1st Class Honours Degree in Moral Science (Philosophy) from Gonville & Caius College, University of Cambridge. Cambridge also awards him a Rhonda Research Fellowship at Gonville & Caius in Moral Philosophy, studying under Prof. Bernard Williams.

1970: Marries Elaine Taylor, a radiographer (no longer practicing). They have three children: Joshua (b. 1975), Dina (b. 1977), and Gila (b. 1982).

Research in Moral Philosophy at New College, University of Oxford.

1971: Appointed Lecturer in Moral Philosophy at Middlesex Polytechnic.

1972: Earns a masters in Moral Philosophy at New College.

1973: Appointed Lecturer in Jewish philosophy at Jews' College, London (now known as the London School of Jewish Studies), the world's oldest rabbinical seminary.

1976: Receives rabbinic ordination from Jews' College and Yeshiva Etz Chaim, London.

1978: Appointed Rabbi of Golders Green Synagogue, a modern Orthodox congregation in North West London.

1981: Receives Ph.D. in Collective Responsibility from the philosophy and theology department of King's College London.

1982: Appointed to the Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits' Chair in Modern Jewish Thought at Jews' College.

1983: Appointed Rabbi of the prestigious Marble Arch Synagogue, a modern Orthodox congregation in Central London.

1984: Appointed Principal of Jews' College, London, serving until 1990. In this position he develops a "practical rabbinics" program, focusing on supporting rabbis in their pastoral work in the community.

1989: Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex.

1990: Delivers the BBC Reith Lectures, a radio lecture series commissioned and presented each year by a leading public figure, on "The Persistence of Faith," vigorously challenging the view that religious faith in Europe was in a state of terminal decline. His first book, *Tradition in an Untraditional Age*, is published. It explores a wide range of studies including the Holocaust, Jewish-Christian dialogue and Jewish economic ethics and offers a distinct outlook for Jewish thought in the modern era.

1991: Named Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, the sixth Chief Rabbi since the role was formalized in 1845, and the tenth since the office was created in 1704. He follows in the footsteps of Lord (Immanuel) Jakobovits, who won the Templeton Prize earlier that year.

In response to the widely held and, to him, deeply dismaying notion that the Anglo-Jewish community was in a state of decline, he issues a call for a "Decade of Renewal" aimed at revitalizing "British Jewry's great powers of creativity." He outlines five central values: love of every Jew, love of learning, love of God, a profound contribution to British society and an unequivocal attachment to Israel.

During the next ten years, he establishes and helps nurture a bold set of initiatives to foster this renewal, including the Jewish Association for Business Ethics, which so successfully flourished that it eventually became an independent organization. Another initiative, Women's Review, tackled controversial issues such as the role of women in prayer (*tefillah*), divorce (*agunah*), and lay leadership and education.

He also founded Jewish Continuity, an educational foundation focused on maintaining and enriching Jewish identity. It employs modern marketing tactics to build awareness of the implications of assimilation and out marriage, that is, a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. Controversy over the appropriateness of the foundation's funding of non-orthodox religious activities was largely resolved when Jewish Continuity merged with the Jewish Israel Appeal to create the United Jewish Israel Appeal.

Named President of the Council of Christians and Jews and President of the London School of Jewish Studies. *Arguments for the Sake of Heaven* published.

Many of Sacks' books published during this period explore the many elements put forth as part of the Decade of Renewal. *The Persistence of Faith*, based on the 1990 BBC Reith Lectures, published.

1992: *Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought after the Holocaust* published.

1993: *One People: Tradition, Modernity and Jewish Unity* published.

1994: *Will We Have Jewish Grandchildren?* published.

1995: *Faith in the Future* published. *Community of Faith* published.

1996: Cook Lecturer at the Universities of Oxford, St. Andrews and Edinburgh.

1997: *The Politics of Hope* published.

1998: Named Visiting Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College, serving until 2013, as well as Visiting Professor at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, serving until 2004.

2000: *Celebrating Life* published. *A Letter in the Scroll* published, and receives a 2000 National Jewish Book Award (USA).

2001: The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt. Hon. Rev. George Carey, awards him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree at Lambeth Palace to mark his first ten years in office, only the second time such an honor is bestowed upon a Jewish leader.

Begins his second decade as Chief Rabbi by calling for "Jewish responsibility," a renewed commitment to the ethical dimension of Judaism. The new decade finds his public outreach gaining an ever-widening audience, including publishing at least one book every year, regularly contributing to the BBC Radio 4 "Thought for the Day," a reflection on issues of faith, and writing the Credo column in *The Times*, with thoughts and advice on a broad field of Jewish values and law, including the Torah, that offers readers guideposts in wrestling with the difficult choices of the modern world.

A Letter in the Scroll published in the UK as *Radical Then, Radical Now*.

2002: *The Dignity of Difference* published. It is awarded the Grawemeyer Prize for Religion (USA) in 2004.

2003: *The Jonathan Sacks Haggada*, a fresh and insightful take on the text for the Passover Seder, published.

2004: *From Optimism to Hope* published. Begins his commentary, *Covenant and Conversation*, on the weekly Torah reading. He calls these studies *Covenant & Conversation* because this, for him, is the essence of what Torah learning is: the *text* of Torah is the Jewish people's covenant with God, and the *interpretation* of this text is their ongoing conversation with the Divine word that continues to this day. Its current circulation of more than 20,000 subscribers is augmented through photocopies commonly distributed in synagogues around the world. The essays are compiled into books starting in 2009.

2005: Made Knight Bachelor in the Queen's Birthday Honours "for services to the Community and to Inter-faith Relations." *To Heal a Fractured World* published.

2006: *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book* published. It becomes the leading prayer book for Jewish communities in the UK.

2007: *The Home We Build Together* published.

2008: Addresses a plenary session of the Lambeth Conference on the topic "Faith and Fate," the first rabbi so honored. Named Visiting Professor at Birkbeck College, University of London.

2009: Awarded a Life Peerage in the House of Lords where he sits on the cross benches, seats occupied by members who have no political-party affiliation, as Baron Sacks of Aldgate in the City of London.

Covenant and Conversation: Genesis published. It receives a 2009 National Jewish Book Award (USA). *Future Tense* published. *The Koren Sacks Siddur* published, the first in a series using texts designed by master typographer Elyahu Koren. It becomes a leading prayer book for Jewish communities worldwide.

2010: Delivers the keynote welcome address on the occasion of the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Great Britain. *Covenant and Conversation: Exodus* published.

2011: *The Great Partnership: God, Science and the Search for Meaning* published. *The Koren Sacks Rosh Hashana Mahzor* published. For the UK, this represents the first time in a century that a new set of *Mahzorim* (festival prayer books) has been published.

2012: *The Koren Sacks Yom Kippur Mahzor* published.

June 24, 2013: At a gala dinner in advance of the completion of his time as Chief Rabbi, Sacks is honored by the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales as guest of honor, together with video messages from UK Prime Minister Rt Hon David Cameron MP and the three previous prime ministers (Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and Sir John Major), The Most Reverend and Rt Hon Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the two previous Archbishops of Canterbury (Lord Williams, Lord Carey), and The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of Westminster, among others. At the dinner, HRH The Prince of Wales says: "As a valued adviser, your guidance on any given issue has never failed to be of practical value and deeply grounded in the kind of wisdom that is increasingly hard to come by.... Your counsel reminds me of that of Solomon. 'Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love.'"

September 1, 2013: Steps down as Chief Rabbi, and is succeeded by Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

Fall 2013: Appointed Professor of Judaic Thought at New York University; Professor of Jewish Thought at Yeshiva University, New York; and Professor of Law, Ethics and the Bible at King's College, London.

The Koren Sacks Pesach Mahzor published. It receives a 2014 National Jewish Book Award (USA).

2015: *Covenant and Conversation: Leviticus* published. *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence* published. *Not in God's Name* becomes a top-ten *Sunday Times* bestseller, is widely praised in the UK, US and worldwide, and receives a 2015 National Jewish Book Award (USA). A US book tour includes engagements at The Brookings Institution, The Council on Foreign Relations, and many prominent academic institutions including Harvard and Princeton. *Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible* published. A whiteboard animation video on Jewish identity, "Why I Am a Jew," which includes subtitles in multiple languages, logs more than one million views online and is shown by Jewish schools, communities and organizations around the world.

2016: *The Koren Sacks Shavuot Mahzor* and *The Koren Sacks Sukkot Mahzor* to be published. *Lessons in Ethics: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible* to be published.

Awarded the Templeton Prize.

Selected Major Lectures

- 2015: In conversation with E. J. Dionne and Bill Galston at The Brookings Institution in Washington DC
- 2015: In conversation with Professor Akbar Ahmed at The American University in Washington DC
- 2015: In conversation with Walter Russell Mead at The Council on Foreign Relations in New York
- 2015: In conversation with Yair Lapid (member of Israeli Knesset parliament & leader of Yesh Atid) about Judaism and Zionism in the 21st century in London
- 2015: Addressed members and alumni of The Marshall Society at Yale University to mark their 60th anniversary in New Haven, Connecticut
- 2015: In conversation with former Senator Joseph Lieberman at Yeshiva University in New York
- 2015: In conversation with New York Times columnist David Brooks at New York University in New York
- 2014: Delivered keynote address at an International Colloquium on 'The Complementarity of Man and Woman' convened by The Vatican under the auspices of Pope Francis
- 2014: Addressed the Jewish Federations of North America's General Assembly in Washington DC
- 2014: Delivered keynote lecture on 'Confronting Violence in the Name of God' jointly hosted by King's College London and New York University London
- 2014: Delivered keynote address at the National Library of Israel on "The Home of the Book for the People of the Book" in Jerusalem

- 2014: Delivered inaugural lecture at King's College London on "The Relevance of the Bible to Law and Ethics in Society Today" in London
- 2014: Delivered keynote address "In Defence of Religious Liberty" upon receiving The Canterbury Medal from The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty in New York
- 2014: Delivered keynote address at The American Jewish Committee's Global Forum on "The State of the Jewish World" in Washington DC
- 2014: Delivered the Eugene McDermott Lectures entitled "The Future of Faith: The Judeo Christian Ethic in the 21st Century" and "To Heal a Fractured World: The Challenge to Faith in the 21st Century" at the University of Dallas
- 2014: Delivered Inaugural Fritz Weitzmann Owens Memorial Lecture entitled "Dignifying Difference: The Next Generation of Multifaith Leadership" at the Of Many Institute for Multifaith Leadership at New York University
- 2013: Delivered address on "A Judaism Engaged with the World" at The Great Synagogue, Jerusalem
- 2013: Delivered address entitled "Religion and the Common Good" at The Agora Institute for Civic Virtue and the Common Good, part of the Templeton Honors College at Eastern University, Pennsylvania
- 2013: Delivered keynote address at the Jewish Federation of North America's General Assembly on "Vision-Driven Leadership in the 21st Century" in Jerusalem
- 2013: Delivered the Erasmus Lecture entitled "On Creative Minorities" for First Things in New York
- 2013: Keynote address at Jewish community 'Closer to Israel' rally in Trafalgar Square, London
- 2013: Delivered keynote address entitled "The Will to Life" at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference, Washington DC
- 2013: Delivered address at The Woolf Institute entitled "Trust and Trustworthiness", University of Cambridge
- 2013: Delivered address entitled "The 21st Century Challenge for Jews and Israel" at Tel Hai College, Israel
- 2012: Delivered the Robbins Collection Lecture in Jewish Law and Thought entitled "The Future of Judaism" at Berkeley Law, University of California
- 2012: Delivered keynote address at Princeton University entitled "Religion and Science"
- 2012: Delivered the Humanitas lectures entitled "Making Space: A Jewish Theology of the Other" at University of Oxford
- 2011: Delivered keynote address entitled "Has Europe Lost Its Soul?" at the Gregorian University, Rome
- 2011: Keynote address at the International Conference of Lubavitch-Chabad Shluchim, New York
- 2011: Delivered the Ebor Lecture on biblical insights into the good society
- 2011: Delivered the inaugural Pope Benedict XVI lecture at St Mary's University College, Twickenham
- 2011: Participated in President's Conference "Facing Tomorrow 2011" in Israel
- 2010: Delivered keynote welcome address at interfaith meeting on behalf of all faiths in the presence of Pope Benedict XVI as part of the Papal visit to the UK
- 2010: Lecture series on Difference and Democracy in the Post-Secular World, Institute of Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia
- 2010: Interfaith Summit on Happiness (with the Dalai Lama), Emory University, Atlanta
- 2009: Delivered the keynote Annual Lecture at Theos (think tank)
- 2009: World Economic Forum as part of the meeting with global religious leaders
- 2009: Address to Nexus Institute Amsterdam
- 2008: Address to plenary session of Lambeth Conference
- 2008: Address to the European Parliament
- 2008: Gifford Lecture, University of Edinburgh
- 2007: Nexus Lecture, Holland
- 2007: Kenan Distinguished Lecture in Ethics, Duke University
- 2002: Inter-Parliamentary Committee against Antisemitism, Foreign Office
- 2001: Faith Lectures
- 2001: Samuel Gee Lecture, The Royal College of Physicians
- 2000: Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious Leaders, United Nations
- 2000: Mais Lecture, City University
- 2000: St George's Lecture, Windsor Castle
- 1999: Address to a national Sikh conference at the Royal Albert Hall to mark the spring festival of Vaisakhi
- 1998: The Hayek Lecture, The Institute of Economics
- 1997: St Georges Lecture, Windsor Castle

- 1996: Cook Lectures, University of St. Andrews, University of Edinburgh and University of Oxford
- 1993: Warburton Lecture, Lincoln's Inn
- 1990: BBC Reith Lecturer entitled *The Persistence of Faith*
- 1989: Sherman Lecture, University of Manchester

Prizes

- 2015: The Rambam Award for the cultivation of a meaning and ethical Judaism (Israel)
- 2014: The Guardian of Zion Award for contribution to Diaspora Jewish life (Israel)
- 2014: The Katz Prize for contribution to the practical analysis and application of Jewish law in modern life (Israel)
- 2014: The Canterbury Medal for work in support of religious liberty from The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty (USA)
- 2014: American National Jewish Book Award for *The Koren Sacks Pesach Mahzor* (USA)
- 2013: The Sandford St Martin Trustees' Personal Award for advocacy of Judaism and religion in general (UK)
- 2011: Keter Torah Award, Open University (Israel)
- 2011: The Ladislaus Laszt Ecumenical and Social Concern Award, Ben Gurion University (Israel)
- 2010: The Abraham Kuyper Prize, Princeton Theological Seminary (USA)
- 2010: The Norman Lamm Prize, Yeshiva University (USA)
- 2009: American National Jewish Book Award for *Covenant & Conversation Genesis: The Book of Beginnings* (USA)
- 2004: The Grawemeyer Prize for Religion for *The Dignity of Difference* (USA)
- 2000: American National Jewish Book Award for *A Letter in the Scroll* (USA)
- 1995: Jerusalem Prize (Israel)

Honors

- 2016: Honorary Doctorate, Tel Aviv University (to be awarded in May 2016)
- 2013: Honorary Doctorate, University of Salford
- 2013: Honorary Doctorate, Liverpool Hope University
- 2011: Honorary Doctorate, Aberdeen University
- 2011: Delivered the Invocation Prayer in the U.S. Senate
- 2011: Honorary Doctorate, Ben Gurion University
- 2010: Honorary Doctorate, Basel
- 2009: Made a Life Peer in the House of Lords as Baron Sacks of Aldgate in the City of London
- 2009: Honorary Doctorate, Roehampton University
- 2006: Doctor of Divinity, Heythrop College
- 2006: Made a Freeman of the City of London and the Borough of Barnet
- 2005: Knighted for his services to the community and to interfaith relations
- 2004: Honorary Doctorate, Leeds Metropolitan University
- 2004: Honorary Doctorate, Bar Ilan University
- 2001: Honorary Doctorate, Glasgow University
- 2001: Doctorate of Divinity conferred on the Chief Rabbi in September at Lambeth Palace by The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Hon Rev George Carey
- 2001: Honorary Bencher of Inner Temple
- 1998: Honorary Doctorate, St. Andrews University
- 1997: Honorary Doctorate, Yeshiva University, New York
- 1997: Honorary Doctorate, Liverpool University
- 1996: Honorary Doctorate, Haifa University, Israel
- 1996: Freeman of the Borough of Barnet
- 1993: Honorary Doctorate of Middlesex University
- 1993: Honorary Fellowship of King's College, London
- 1993: Honorary Fellowship of Gonville & Caius College
- 1993: Honorary Doctorate of Cambridge University