

Rabbi Zvi (Herschel) Schachter

Rosh Yeshiva, Halachic Authority: One of the Greatest and Most Influential Halachic Authorities in the United States

“The Holy One, Blessed be He, saw that tzaddikim – righteous people – are few in number, and so he planted them in every generation”. This did not mean that they were scattered, but rather that each and every generation would possess a tzaddik and a leader that reflects that generation, with the ability to improve and elevate it.

Torah luminary Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik *zt”l* arrived in the United States during the period between the two world wars. A descendant of a Torah dynasty - the grandson of Rabbi Chaim Brisker *zt”l* and descendent of Rabbi Chaim Volzhiner *zt”l*, who created the world’s first yeshiva as we know it today - Rabbi Soloveitchik was an outstanding genius who changed the Torah-Yeshiva discourse and whose theoretical teachings are still being deciphered by the greatest minds, a hundred years after his passing.

Though young in years, Rabbi Soloveitchik arrived in the United States equipped with a PhD, a broad education in the sciences and above all, a profound knowledge of all subjects of the Torah. During this time America was welcoming waves of Jews from Europe who were fleeing for their lives to the land of infinite opportunities. They left their traditions and the observance of the mitzvoth behind them; it was now money that talked, and the round-the-clock race to make more. Their children gaining a higher education in order to make a decent living, was the one important factor.




Rabbi Sacks meets often with religious leaders and politicians around the world and seeks to create dialogue between religions as well as between world leaders. The Rabbi espouses great respect for members of different religions and does not claim a monopoly on religion. He views his role as that of a philosopher involved in practical life, and seeks to bring the Jewish approach and the answers it provides to important philosophical questions and to the ethical issues on the global agenda to the attention of world leaders.


The Rabbi criticizes the religious approach that isolates itself from the world and from mainstream culture; he believes that Torah study must be combined with general education, the study of sciences, etc. The Rabbi sees Judaism as a voice of hope in the human discourse, through which the world may be made a better place to live. In his opinion, Judaism's task still lies ahead and not in the past.

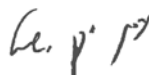
During the more than two decades in which the Rabbi served as Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, he forged strong ties with the British Royal Family as well as with the heads of the British government, who consulted him a great deal.

The Rabbi has lectured on Jewish theology and philosophy at the world's foremost universities and regularly speaks at the world's most important forums, congresses, parliaments, as well as on television and radio channels with global audiences. At each event, the Rabbi proudly brings the teachings of Judaism in all its splendor. With his distinguished appearance and through his deeds, the Rabbi sanctifies the name of God throughout the world.

In consideration of the above, the selection committee has decided to bestow on Rabbi Lord Dr. Jonathan Sacks the Katz Award for 5774 (2014).


Rabbi Israel
Meir Lau


Professor Menahem
Ben-Sasson


Rabbi Adin
(Even Israel)
Steinsaltz

