

Spiritual Exercise Instructions
High Holy Days 5786/2025-6
Jewish Ideas of Leadership

There are many aspects to the concept and role of leader. We think, of course, of leaders of our government, communities, and places of work; but that's only one type. When we drill down into our closest relationships, we find that leadership is even more important: it informs how we relate to our families and friends on a daily basis, and how we interact with the wider world. We are all leaders – and followers – in some respect, and being Jewish should inform how we view this essential role.

To focus your thinking, you might like to consult a work by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, one of the most influential Jewish thinkers of the last forty years. It's called *Lessons in Leadership*, and may be found online at

[https://www.sefaria.org/Lessons in Leadership%3B A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible%2C Foreword%3B Leadership and Public Learning?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Lessons_in_Leadership%3B_A_Weekly_Reading_of_the_Jewish_Bible%2C_Foreword%3B_Leadership_and_Public_Learning?lang=bi)

The text looks at each Torah portion throughout the year, drawing out key examples involving the personalities who feature in the Bible.

Rabbi Sacks notes:

Don't ever think that leaders are different from the rest of us. They aren't... What distinguishes a leader from a non-leader is not position or office or role but rather a basic attitude to life. Others wait for something to happen; leaders help make something happen. While others curse the darkness, a leader lights a light.

Your task is to think about the issue, and answer the two questions on the worksheet, in writing. **You will then need to send your responses to me in one of two ways:**

(1) by email, to Cantor@jccpeterborough.com

(2) hand your response – either typed or handwritten – to me in person at one of the services.

This document is available for download using this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cLOwfMxGPInHjkG_-mVpM7iqo9X9gyEt/view?usp=drive_link

If you have a problem, contact gabbai@jccpeterborough.com for a copy. Please print a copy of the worksheet (page 2 of this document) for your use or fill it in directly with your word processor. If you need extra space, just continue on the back of your sheet or add more lines as needed. A hard copy of this document including the worksheet will be available at services.

Your deadline is Yom Kippur morning – Thursday 2 October.

I will then discuss your responses, **anonymously**, with the congregation, at Mincha time: 4:30 pm on 2 October.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With love from Cantor Leon

Spiritual Exercise Worksheet

Jewish Ideas of Leadership

Please return to Cantor Leon, either by hand, or to Cantor@jccpeterborough.com

1. Which Jewish leader (ancient or modern) do you admire most? Why?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

2. How does being Jewish inform your own sense of leadership?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.