I first knew Rabbi Sacks as Jonathan, my Mishnah teacher. I was 14, it was the mid-1970’s, and my parents had arranged for him to teach me mishnayot at home once or twice a week.

We used to meet in my bedroom. On the wall over my desk, I had a large collection of headshots of Jewish heroes of mine, including Sharansky, Ben-Gurion, Einstein, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe. At our first meeting, Rabbi Sacks expressed his amazement to see a large picture of the Rebbe on my wall and asked me if I was also a follower of the Rebbe. I told him I wasn’t but that I thought he was a Jewish hero. He told me about what the Rebbe meant to him personally and of his meetings with him, how he had brought Torah to Jews around the world who had been marginalized and who had no knowledge of their heritage.

Over the next two years, I was brought blinking into Rabbi Sacks’ brilliant world of Mishnah study, where rabbinic sages, halacha, tefillah and Jewish history came alive and were thrown into glorious relief, and vibrant color. Later on, he became my community rabbi until my Aliyah. In recent years, I was able to reconnect with Jonathan’s brilliant teaching via his podcasts. I did not miss a week of “my personal tutor” since then, and this time around it gave me even greater pleasure to know that I am “sharing” him with a global Jewish, and increasingly, non-Jewish audience. Jonathan’s loss has had such a profound personal effect on so many people who never met him, because they travelled with him to work each morning, and saved a seat for him at their Shabbat table every week.

Not since his mentor and guide, the Lubavitcher Rebbe himself, has anyone done more to bring Jewish teaching to so many Jews around the world. His probing questions and breathtaking answers were filled with poetic imagery, the lyrical range of the prophets and the astonishing truths of the great Sages of Israel. His lessons will stay with me always.