



*Social Vision*  
**CONFERENCES**

*“Envisioning the Future”*

January 25, 26, 27, 28  
February 1

(All times in EST)

All sessions will take place online

a project of  
The Institute of Jewish Spirituality and Society  
for more information, please visit  
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# Introduction and Overview

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In the time since its publication, Professor Philip Wexler's *Social Vision: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's Transformative Paradigm for the World* has garnered critical acclaim amongst sociologists, religious scholars, journalists, and a wide spectrum of readers from all walks of life. The first volume to seriously explore the social ideas and activism of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), *Social Vision* mines the corpus of his teachings and writings to derive a possible blueprint for the future of society.

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In September 2020, the first *Social Vision Conference* was held. The groundbreaking event brought together an interdisciplinary group of world-renowned scholars to reflect on and discuss the far-reaching implications of topics contained within the book. This conference explored themes such as "Spirituality and Modern Life," "Spiritual Environmentalism," and "Religion as Therapeutic to the Modern World." At the conclusion of the three-day symposium, it became clear that the conversation was far from over.

Thus, the ongoing *Social Vision Conferences* were born. The "Envisioning the Future Conference" will continue to explore what Jewish spiritual/mystical teachings can offer as components of a future society. This second conference includes not only academics but expansive voices from the worlds of activism and religiosity. Each day has been organized around a theme, positioning not only individual panelists but the panels *themselves*, to function in dialogue with one another.

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## Topics:

Monday, Jan. 25: Environmentalism  
Tuesday, Jan. 26: Diversity in Practice  
Wednesday, Jan. 27: Social Justice and Spirituality  
Thursday, Jan. 28: Education  
Monday, Feb. 1: Looking Forwards

## Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>: Environmentalism

10:30 am – 11:00 am | *\*Welcome to the Social Vision Conferences\**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm | ***“The Future of Planet Earth”***

- Sandra Lubarsky, Ph.D. (*Flagstaff College*)
- Jon Erickson, Ph.D. (*University of Vermont*)
- Steve Brenner, Ph.D. (*Bar Ilan University*)

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm | *Lunch Break*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm | ***“Earth, Wind & Fire: The Dawning of a New Day”***

- Erik Peckar (*Vineyard Power*)
- Bill McKibben (*350.org, Middlebury College*)
- Rebecca Martusewicz, Ph.D. (*Eastern Michigan University*)

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm | ***“Spiritual Ecology”***

- Ariel Evan Mayse, Ph.D. (*Stanford University*)
- Ellen Bernstein (*Founder of Shomrei Adamah*)
- Janna Siller (*Adamah, Hazon*)
- Adam Berman (*Urban Adamah*)

## Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>: Evening Session

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm | **Learning Workshop:** “What Does Chassidus have to say about Environmentalism?”

## Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>: Diversity in Practice

10:00 am – 11:00 am	<p><b><i>“Diversity and the Future”</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Charles Howard, Ph.D. (<i>University of Pennsylvania</i>)</li><li>- David L. Cohen (<i>Comcast Corporation</i>)</li></ul>
11:00 am – 1:00 pm	<p><i>Lunch Break</i></p>
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	<p><b><i>“Race &amp; Racism: An Interview with Kathy and Kenyon”</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Kathy Humphrey, Ph.D. (<i>University of Pittsburgh</i>)</li><li>- Kenyon Bonner, Ph.D. (<i>University of Pittsburgh</i>)</li><li>- Liel Leibovitz, Ph.D. (<i>Tablet Magazine</i>)</li></ul>
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	<p><b><i>“Hasidic Feminism: In Theory &amp; Practice”</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Chava Green (<i>Emory College</i>)</li><li>- Tali Loewenthal, Ph.D. (<i>University College London</i>)</li><li>- Michal Etzion (<i>Bar-Ilan University</i>)</li></ul>

## Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>: Social Justice and Spirituality

1 pm – 2 pm

### ***“A Paradigm Shift in Warehousing Human Beings”***

- Sholom Lipskar (*Aleph Institute*)
- Sam Burstyn (*Criminal Defense Attorney*)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

### ***“Living Hasidism in the ‘Real’ World”***

- Rachel Werczberger, Ph.D. (*Ramat Gana Academic College*)
- Sam Berrin Shonkoff, Ph.D. (*Graduate Theological Union*)
- Estelle Frankel (*Psychotherapist, Author*)

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm

### ***“Socio-Mystical Justice and Incarceration”***

- Roxanne E. Formey (*Juvenile Court of Catham County*)
- Michael Lerner (*Tikkun Magazine*)
- Elaine Leeder, M.S.W., M.P.H., Ph.D. (*Sonoma State University*)

## Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>: Education

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

### ***“Reimagining Education”***

- Yotam Hotam, Ph.D. (*University of Haifa*)
- Peter McLaren, Ph.D. (*Chapman University*)

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

### ***“Paths to Utopia Today: Social Vision and Economic Questions”***

- Catherine Casey (*Loughborough University*)
- Heinz Sünker (*University of Wuppertal*)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

### ***“Higher Education: Elevating Transformational Learning & Personal Development”***

- Benjamin Selznick, Ph.D. (*James Madison University*)
- Tricia Seifert, Ph.D. (*Montana State University*)
- Claire Robbins, Ph.D. (*Virginia Tech*)
- Seán McCarthy, Ph.D. (*James Madison University*)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

### ***Keynote Lecture: “In The Footsteps of the Footsteps: Retrieving the Future in Anticipating the Past”***

- *Introduction by Eli Rubin*
- Elliot Wolfson, Ph.D. (*U.C. Santa Barbara*)

## Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup> : Looking Forwards

12:00 am – 2:00 pm

### ***“Deliberation on the Future of Jewish Education”***

- Led by Barry Chazan, Ph.D.
- **Featuring teachings from:**
  - o Zohar Raviv, Ph.D. (*V.P. of Taglit-Birthright*)
  - o Erica Brown, Ph.D. (*Professor of Education at George Washington University*)

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

### ***“Theory and Application of the Rebbe's Social Philosophy”***

- Richard Sugarman, Ph.D. (*University of Vermont*)
- Binyamin Murray (*Chabad of Middlebury*)

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

### ***“The Power of Moral Imagination”***

- Joseph Telushkin (*Author*)

## Presenters

**Adam Berman** is Urban Adamah's President and Founding Executive Director. Before founding Urban Adamah in 2010 he served as the Executive Director at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center from 2002 – 2009 where he founded ADAMAH: The Jewish Environmental Fellowship, a three-month leadership training program for Jewish young adults that integrates Jewish learning with sustainable ecological practices.

**Ellen Bernstein** is the founder of the first national Jewish environmental organization, Shomrei Adamah, author of numerous books on the intersection of Judaism, Bible and Ecology, and member of the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology advisory group.

**Kenyon Bonner, Ph.D.** is the Vice Provost and Dean of Students at the University of Pittsburgh, where he promotes and ensures a diverse, inclusive, and equitable learning and social environment for all students. Prior to his role as Vice Provost and Dean of Students, Bonner served for seven years as Associate Dean of Students and for 11 years as the Director of Student Life. Dr. Bonner is credited with developing the University's Reaching Inside Your Soul for Excellence (RISE) Mentoring Program.

**Steve Brenner, Ph.D.** is an expert in atmospheric sciences and physical oceanography from the Department of Geography and Environment at Bar Ilan University. He holds a B.S. in meteorology and physical oceanography from the City College of New York (1975) and doctorate in meteorology from MIT (1981). His research focuses on various theoretical and applied aspects of the past, present, and future ocean circulation of the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Eilat, and the Dead Sea.

**Erica Brown, Ph.D.** is the director of the Mayberg Center for Jewish Education and Leadership and an associate professor of curriculum and pedagogy at The George Washington University. Erica was a Jerusalem Fellow, is a faculty member of the Wexner Foundation, an Avi Chai Fellow and the recipient of the 2009 Covenant Award for her work in education. She is the author of twelve books on leadership, the Hebrew Bible and spirituality; her newest book is *The Book of Esther: Power, Fate and Fragility in Exile* (Koren).

**Catherine Casey, Ph.D.** is a sociologist and Professor of Organization and Society at Loughborough University, United Kingdom. Her research addresses questions in socio-economics, organizational analysis, and democratic governance.

**Barry Chazan, Ph.D.** is the Founding Director of the Spertus MAJPS Program, Professor Emeritus of Education at Hebrew University, and the Founding International Director of Education at Birthright Israel. He has served in important professional capacities with the Melton Center for Jewish Education and Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies.



**David L. Cohen** is a Senior Executive Vice President and the Chief Diversity Officer of Comcast Corporation, as well as a member of the Trustee Board and the Executive Committee of Penn Medicine. Before joining Comcast in July of 2002, David served as a partner in and Chairman of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP, one of the 100 largest law firms in the country and also served as Chief of Staff to the Honorable Edward G. Rendell, the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia. In addition, David serves on both the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Chamber's CEO Council for Growth.

**Jon Erickson, Ph.D.** is the Blittersdorf Professor of Sustainability Science and Policy in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and Fellow of the Gund Institute for Environment at the University of Vermont. He has published widely on climate change and renewable energy while leading international research and education programs as a Fulbright Scholar in Tanzania and teaching worldwide.

**Michal Etzion** is a doctoral student in the Gender Studies program at Bar Ilan University planning a dissertation on the subject of Chabad shlichot. Her research interests include motherhood, feminist theory, religion, and Jewish studies.

**Roxanne E. Formey (Chana Ruth)** has served since 2018 as Judge/Court Administrator and Clerk of Court for the Magistrate Court of Chatham County while serving as pro tem judge for the Juvenile Court of Chatham County. In 2020, she was selected as Juvenile Court Judge in the Juvenile Court of Chatham County. Roxanne has aided numerous humanitarian causes and domestic violence prevention organizations with legal assistance, and continues to volunteer with organizations dedicated to community development and human rights.

**Estelle Frankel** is a practicing psychotherapist, author, spiritual director and popular public speaker. In her private practice in Albany, CA. She works with individuals and couples providing brief and long-term psychotherapy and spiritual mentoring. Estelle is also a seasoned teacher and author of numerous books on Jewish mysticism and meditation who offers workshops on the intersection of psychology and spirituality, Kabbalah and healing, and *Musar*, Mindfulness and Positive Psychology.

**Chava Green** is a doctoral student at Emory University in the Graduate Division of Religion. She is a fellow at the Tam Institute for Jewish Studies. Chava uses ethnographic methods to think about the ways Hasidic texts influence the lives and identities of Chabad women and their relationship to feminism.

**Yotam Hotam, Ph.D.** is a senior Lecturer in the faculty of Education at the University of Haifa, a research fellow of the Bucerius Institute for Research of Contemporary German History and Society and the Haifa Center for German and European Studies. His research focuses on the relations between the "secular" and the "religious" in modern society and covers a variety of themes related to pedagogy and Jewish thought.

**Charles "Chaz" Lattimore Howard, Ph.D** is the University Chaplain and Vice President for Social Equity and Community at The University of Pennsylvania. The author of five books, he seeks to love and inspire love in others.

**Kathy Humphrey, Ph.D.** serves as the University of Pittsburgh's Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement and Secretary of the Board of Trustees. In these roles, she oversees the University's internal and external relations, focusing on facilitating business engagement, strategic initiatives, partnerships and government interaction at all levels. She has earned numerous awards and recognitions throughout her career, including the YWCA Tribute to Women Leadership Award, 2016 Nellie Leadership Award, a distinction as one of the New Pittsburgh Courier's "50 Women of Excellence," the 2019 Onyx Woman Leadership Award, and the Pitt African American Alumni Council's Sankofa Award. Dr. Humphrey also maintains a faculty appointment in Pitt's School of Education.

**Elaine (Sneierson) Leeder** is Social Science Dean Emerita and Professor Emerita of Sociology at Sonoma State University. She has 44 years of teaching experience, including working in prisons with convicted felons. Leeder was a visiting scholar at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the author of numerous books on incarceration and sociology, and a recipient of the Real Hero Award by the America Red Cross for her prison work. Leeder (a very distant relative of the Rebbe) is honored to be included in this panel since being a Jew and her prison work are core pieces of her identity.

**Liel Leibovitz, Ph.D.** is an editor at large at Tablet Magazine and the co-host of its popular podcast, Unorthodox. He's the author or co-author of several books, including, most recently, *Stan Lee: A Life in Comics*, published as part of the Yale Jewish Lives series. He holds a PhD in communications from Columbia University, and lives in Manhattan with his wife and two children.

**Michael Lerner** is the Editor of Tikkun magazine, the Chair of The Network of Spiritual Progressives, the Rabbi at Beyt Tikkun Synagogue-Without-Walls, and the author of many books, such as his most recent *Revolutionary Love: A Political Manifesto to Heal and Transform the World* (2020).

**Sholom D. Lipskar** is the founder of the Aleph Institute, which is a non-profit Jewish organization dedicated to assisting and caring for the wellbeing of members of isolated populations, such as U.S. military personnel, prisoners, and people institutionalized or at risk of incarceration due to mental illness or addictions. In addition, Rabbi Lipskar has been an emissary in Miami for the Lubavitcher Rebbe since 1968, where he founded the Landow Yeshiva Center, The Shul of Bal Harbour, and the Educational Academy for the Elderly. Rabbi Lipskar has created alternative punishment philosophies and developed unique educational opportunities for the general public in the field of treatment of closed populations.

**Naftali (Tali) Loewenthal, Ph.D.** is a Teaching Fellow at the Dept of Hebrew and Jewish Studies of UCL (University College London, University of London), lecturing in Jewish Spirituality. He has authored many celebrated books on contemporary Hasidism and Chabad history. He also directs the Chabad Research Unit, providing adult education, and teaches academic Religious Studies at the Lubavitch Senior Girls' School in London.

**Sandra Lubarsky, Ph.D.** has spent most of her years as a university professor and administrator bringing sustainability into the curriculum and into campus activities. She founded one of the first graduate programs in sustainability, the M.A. in Sustainable Communities, at Northern Arizona University and chaired the Department of Sustainable Development at Appalachian State University. Sandra currently serves as President of Flagstaff College.

**Rebecca A. Martusewicz, Ph.D.** is Professor Emerita in the Department of Teacher Education at Eastern Michigan University (EMU), and Docent Professor at Tampere University, in Tampere, Finland. In 1988 she received her doctorate from the University of Rochester, chaired and mentored by Dr. Philip Wexler. For the next 31 years at EMU, she taught courses within the Social Foundations of Education, focusing specifically on EcoJustice Education, Globalization, EcoFeminism, and Advanced Qualitative Methods.

**Ariel Evan Mayse, Ph.D.** joined the faculty of Stanford University in 2017 as an assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies and serves as the rabbi-in-residence at *Atiq: Jewish Maker Institute* ([atiqmakers.org](http://atiqmakers.org)). He is the author of several books on Hasidism and Neo-Hasidism, including the two-volume *A New Hasidism: Roots and Branches* (Jewish Publication Society, 2019).

**Seán McCarthy, Ph.D.** is an associate professor in the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication at James Madison University (JMU). Seán's primary research and teaching interests are situated at the intersection of community engagement and digital literacies. He is also experienced in project-focused, interdisciplinary teaching and research, largely through his role as lead instructor and course designer at JMU X-Labs, an undergraduate-focused innovation program

**Bill McKibben** is a contributing writer to *The New Yorker*, a founder of the grassroots climate campaign [350.org](http://350.org) and the Schumann Distinguished Professor in Residence at Middlebury College in Vermont. He was a 2014 recipient of the Right Livelihood Prize, sometimes called the 'alternative Nobel,' and the Gandhi Peace Award.

**Peter McLaren, Ph.D.** is Distinguished Professor in Critical Studies, Donna Ford Attallah College of Educational Studies, Chapman University. He is Co-Director and International Ambassador for Global Ethics and Social Justice of the Paulo Freire Democratic Project, College of Educational Studies, Chapman University. He is Professor Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles, where he taught for 20 years. He served as Honorary Chair Professor, Northeast Normal University in

Changchun, China (2014-2019). He is the author and editor of approximately 50 books and hundreds of journal publications.

**Erik Peckar** is the General Manager of Vineyard Power, a community-owned cooperative whose aim is to help build a sustainable energy future for Martha's Vineyard. As the manager, Erik organizes and executes day-to-day operations. Erik is primarily involved with company outreach while aiding Vineyard Wind through the permitting process to become the first offshore wind farm in Massachusetts. He has worked extensively on Community Empowerment, a piece of proposed legislation in Massachusetts designed to enable communities through a democratic process to expand local renewable energy development.

**Zohar Raviv, Ph.D** is an internationally recognized educator of Judaism who serves as the International VP of Education for Taglit-Birthright Israel. Prior to assuming his current position, Raviv served as Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at Oberlin College and as the Hebrew University Florence Melton Scholar to North America. Raviv is a graduate of Bar-Ilan University, Brandeis University, and received his PhD in Jewish Thought from the University of Michigan.

**Claire Robbins, Ph.D.** is an associate professor of higher education at Virginia Tech. Dr. Robbins has more than fifteen years of experience in research, teaching, and student and academic affairs practice at public and private colleges and universities. Her research primarily focuses on equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as on graduate student development and socialization.

**Benjamin Selznick, Ph.D** is an assistant professor of strategic leadership with a focus on postsecondary analysis and leadership at James Madison University. His research focuses on developing undergraduate innovators, campus climate for religion, and organizational change. He has been involved with Chabad on Campus since attending a Shabbat dinner at Dartmouth College in 2003.

**Tricia Seifert, Ph.D.** is associate professor in the Adult & Higher Education program at Montana State University. She also maintains a faculty appointment at the University of Toronto. Her research broadly investigates the relationship between college student experiences and postsecondary learning and success. She recently co-authored *How College Affects Students, vol. 3*, published by Wiley and finished a five-year term as Associate Editor for International Research & Scholarship for the *Journal of College Student Development*.

**Sam Berrin Shonkoff, Ph.D.** is assistant professor of Jewish studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. He is the editor of *Martin Buber: His Intellectual and Scholarly Legacy* (Brill, 2018) and co-editor, with Ariel Mayse, of *Hasidism: Writings on Devotion, Community, and Life in the Modern World* (Brandeis University Press, 2020). Shonkoff is currently completing a book on embodied theology in Buber's interpretations of Hasidic sources.

**Janna Siller** is the Farm Director at Adamah- a program of Hazon. Janna maintains the farm fields as space for growing food regeneratively, gathering vibrant and evolving Jewish community, exploring the role of soil in our sustenance, and leaning on the wisdom of literal and ancestral roots as we build toward climate justice and resilience. Janna facilitates learning among the Adamah community on topics of gardening, policy, climate, food systems, identity, ritual, and community life.

**Professor Richard Sugarman, Ph.D.** has been teaching Religion and Philosophy at the University of Vermont for over 50 years. He has been studying, teaching, and writing on the philosophy of the Jewish French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas for over 40 years. He is the author of four books and numerous articles including the newly-released book, *Levinas and the Torah: A Phenomenological Approach* from SUNY Press.

**Heinz Sünker, Ph.D.** joined the University of Wuppertal in 1991 as Professor of Social Pedagogy and Social Policy, and in 2016 was awarded the title of Rudolf Carnap Senior Professor. His research reflects an expertise in topics including Critical Theory, the Theory and History of Social Work, and the Sociology of Education. He has published multiple books on books on social theory, Nazi Germany and pedagogy, and serves as the chief editor for a leading German-language journal for sociological research.

**Joseph Telushkin** is a prolific Jewish writer who has authored fourteen books, including *Jewish Literacy* and *Rebbe: The Life and Teachings of Menachem M. Schneerson*. Telushkin is a spiritual leader, scholar, and ethicist, and was named by *Talk Magazine* (September, 1999) as one of the 50 best speakers in the United States. He resides in New York City with his wife, Dvora Menashe Telushkin, and their four children and lectures regularly throughout the United States.

**Rachel Werczberger, Ph.D.** is a lecturer in Ramat Gana academic college and The Schechter Institute for Jewish Studies. She is an anthropologist of contemporary Judaism and New Age spirituality. Her book *Jews in the Age of Authenticity: Jewish Spiritual Renewal in Israel* was published in 2016 by Peter Lang.

**Elliot R. Wolfson, Ph.D.**, a Fellow of the American Academy of Jewish Research and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, is the Marsha and Jay Glazer Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies and Distinguished Professor of Religion at University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of many publications including his recent *Heidegger and Kabbalah: Hidden Gnosis and the Path of Poiesis* (2019), and the forthcoming *Suffering Time: Philosophical, Kabbalistic, and Ḥasidic Reflections on Temporality* (2021).