

## **Judaism and Ecology Conference Participants and Abstracts**

**David Abram**, Ph.D., is the author of *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (Vintage), which won the 1996 Lannan Literary Award for Non-Fiction. Abram is an ecologist, philosopher, and anthropologist whose writings have had a deepening influence on the environmental movement in North America and internationally; he was recently named by the *Utne Reader* as one of a hundred visionaries currently transforming the world. The recipient of research fellowships from the Watson and the Rockefeller Foundations, Abram is currently a visiting professor of philosophy and environmental studies at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

### **Abstract of paper: Christian Ecological Virtue Ethics: Transforming a Tradition**

The virtue language of ecologically committed people challenges the Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue tradition in the areas of cosmology, anthropology, divine providence, and justification. It also shows ways for the transformation of Christian virtue tradition toward greater ecological attunement. Within this transformed ethic certain familiar ancient as well as modern insights--for example, from the apostle Paul, Thomas Aquinas, and H. Richard Niebuhr--can provide a critical edge and ensure a recognizably Christian character.

**Jeremy Benstein**, a native of Toledo, Ohio, is the educational director of the Abraham Joshua Heschel Center for Nature Studies in Israel, a non-profit educational foundation dedicated to promoting an environmental ethic rooted in cultural and spiritual sources. He holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard, a master's degree in rabbinic studies literature from the Seminary of Judaic Studies (J.T.S., Jerusalem) and is presently a doctoral candidate in anthropology and environmental thought at Hebrew University. Benstein has published articles on Judaism and the environmental issues in *Judaism Quarterly*, *the Jerusalem Reporter*, and *Judaism Today*. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Elisheva and their twin baby sons, Noam and Yonah.

**Adam Berman** is the director of the Teva Learning Center, an organization which runs week-long residential Jewish environmental education retreats and backpacking trips primarily for Jewish day school students. He received his B.A. in environmental policy from Brown University and has spent several years teaching and developing environmental education curriculum. Berman also served on the Board of directors of CALPIRG (1990-1991) and was instrumental in the founding of the college division of the Sierra Student Coalition, the student-run branch of the Sierra Club.

**Ellen Bernstein** is currently the director of the Jewish Continuity Initiative of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and director of Philadelphia's Israel 50. She is founder of and former director of the Shomrei Adamah, Keepers of the Earth, the first Jewish educational organization dedicated to exploring the relationship between human and nature. Bernstein is editor of *Ecology & the Jewish Spirit: Where Nature & the Sacred Meet* (Jewish Lights, 1997) and the author of several other publications produced by Shomrei Adamah. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1975 with a bachelor's degree in conservation of natural resources; has a masters degree in biology/psychology and continues her education in Jewish studies at Gratz College and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

**Tsvi Blanchard** is an ordained rabbi with doctorates in philosophy and psychology. He taught philosophy of science and Jewish studies at Washington University. He has also served as the principal of the Ida Crown Jewish Academy in Chicago. Presently, Blanchard is a senior teaching fellow at the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL), a Jewish think tank and leadership-oriented community organization group based in Manhattan and active throughout North America. His recent publications include *How Stories Heal and Joining Heaven and Earth: Maimonides on the Laws of Visiting the Sick*.

**Abstract of paper: Can Judaism Make Environmental Policy? Sacred and Secular Language in Jewish Environmental Discourse**

This paper addresses the question: Given the primarily non-Jewish and secular international language of contemporary environmental policy discussions, is there a role for the language of classical Jewish texts in formulating global ecological approaches? To answer this question, I examine three types of texts: one whose language blends the secular and the sacred, the second whose language exhibits a "secularizing shift" and a third whose language is primarily but not wholly secular. In considering these texts, I offer neither a Jewish environmental theology nor a phenomenology of a Jewish religious experience of nature. Instead, I argue for models of classical Jewish policy discourse which allow Jews to participate in more secular "universal" ecological debates while at the same time retaining a meaningful place for the religious dimension of Judaism.

**Daniel B. Botkin** is a professor of biology at George Mason University and president of the Center for the Study of the Environment, a non-profit research and educational organization. He has 30 years of experience in ecological research and in helping to solve complex environmental problems, from salmon in the Pacific northwest to nature reserves in Taiwan. He is the author of *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the 21st Century*, *Our Natural History: The Lessons of Lewis and Clark*, and *Environmental Science: The Earth as a Living Planet*. These books discuss the implications of modern environmental sciences for humanity and civilization.

**J. Baird Callicott** is professor of philosophy and religion studies at the University of North Texas. He is president of the International Society for Environmental Ethics. Callicott has authored *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, *Beyond Land Ethics: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, and more than a hundred book chapters, journal articles, encyclopedia entries, and book reviews; he is editor or co-editor of *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, *Earth Summit Ethics: Toward A Reconstructive Postmodern Philosophy of Environmental Education*, *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold*, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Comparative Environmental Philosophy*, and *A Companion to a Sand Country Almanac: Interpretive and Critical Essays*.

### **Abstract of paper: Current Issues in Environmental Philosophy**

The agenda-setting essay for a future environmental philosophy was Lynn White, Jr.'s, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." White's superficial (in every sense of the word) claim was that the human-nature relationship set out in Genesis was the ultimate cause for the twentieth century's environmental problems. His more profound claim was that modern technology, the proximate cause for the twentieth century's environmental problems, didn't just happen. It emerged in a distinct climate of thought. Hence, White argued, to really change our ways of engaging nature we have to *rethink* what he called the "man-nature" relationship--a task that falls squarely within the purview of philosophy and religion. That task has two moments. The first is critical: identify and criticize the ideas inherited from the past that led us into the valley of the shadow of ecological death. The second is creative: think up the new ideas that will lead us out of that baleful valley. That two-pronged agenda has driven research in environmental philosophy ever since.

**Rachel Cowan** is director of Jewish Life Programs at the Nathan Cummings Foundation in New York City. She received her rabbinic ordination at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and is author of *Growing Up Yanqui* and co-author, with the late Paul Cowan, of *Mixed Blessings*.

**Calvin B. DeWitt** is Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison Wisconsin and Director of Au Sable Institute in Michigan, an Institute that serves 80 Christian colleges and Universities in Canada and the U.S. with courses in ecology and environmental stewardship. He is a member of the University of Wisconsin graduate faculties of Land Resources, Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development, Water Resources Management, and Oceanography and Limnology, and a Fellow of the University of Wisconsin Teaching Academy. DeWitt also has been chair of the Christian Environmental Council and a member of the International Religion & Science Scholars Group, Center for Theological Inquiry, Princeton. He is author of papers in physiological ecology, wetland ecology, ecosystem modeling; editor of *The Environment and the Christian* (Baker Books, 1991), and, with Sir

Ghilleen T. Prance, *Missionary Earthkeeping* (Mercer University Press, 1992). His recent books are *Earth-Wise: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues* (CRC Publications, 1994) and *Caring for Creation* (Baker, 1998).

**Eliezer Diamond** who was ordained and earned an M.S. degree in Rabbinics at Yeshiva University, is Assistant Professor of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where he received his doctorate. He is currently completing a book on fasting and asceticism in the Jewish tradition, and has taught a course on environmentalism and Jewish law at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

### **Abstract of paper: How Much Is Too Much? The Problem of Conventional Versus Individual Pollution Standards in Rabbinic Law**

Defining acceptable limits for pollution can be difficult, particularly in the case of pollution sources that are more esthetic and psychological nuisances than they are health hazard or threats to the ecosystem. Legal systems dealing with this question must choose between flexible guidelines that are influenced by the personal tolerance levels of the disputants or setting down firm standards that apply to all. In my paper I show that while halakhists consider both options they come down on the side of using conventional rather than personal standards. I then show that this same question arises in contemporary Israeli and American environmental law, and I suggest ways in which the principle of conventional standards might be applied to some of the difficult environmental challenges facing us at present.

**Evan Eisenberg's** book *The Ecology of Eden* -- an inquiry into humankind's role in nature, real and imagined -- will be published by Knopf in May 1998. His first book, *The Recording Angel*, a study of recorded music as an art, published by McGraw-Hill and Penguin, has been translated into French, German, and Italian. His writings on nature, culture, and technology have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The New Republic*, *The Village Voice*, *Coevolution Quarterly*, and other periodicals. Eisenberg has been a music columnist for *The Nation*, a cantor for synagogues in New York and Massachusetts, and a gardener for the New York City parks department. Born and raised in New York City and its periphery, he studied philosophy and classics at Harvard and Princeton and biology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

### **Abstract of paper: The Ecology of Eden**

Two ways of looking at the world arose in the ancient Near East and are with us yet. For one, the heart of the world is wilderness. For the other, the world revolves around the city, the work of human hands. These two worldviews belonged to two kinds of civilization (each with its characteristic kind of farming): those of the hilly uplands and those of the great river valleys. The first kind is typified by the Canaanites and Israelites, the second by Mesopotamians. The myth of the World Mountain is shown to have a basis in ecological fact: wilderness as the source of life. Eden is here identified with the wild World Mountain or Mountain of God, from which humans

are necessarily exiled. As soon as we become fully human, we begin to destroy Eden and so expel ourselves.

## **Michael Fishbane**

**Michal Frankel** is completing her doctorate in the field of avian ecology and conservation biology at Boston University, and she also works part-time as a Jewish educator. She received her Jewish education from attending Orthodox yeshivot, including Yeshiva University where she received a B.A. in biology. In the last several years, she has become increasingly involved in Jewish environmental education by leading programs on Judaism and ecology at various synagogues and religious schools, and she is in the process of helping to form a regional chapter of COEJL in Massachusetts.

**Tikva Frymer-Kensky**, who has taught at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Jewish Theological Seminary, is professor of Hebrew bible at the University of Chicago. She is author of *In the Wake of the Goddess*.

### **Abstract of paper: Leshev and Gaia: The Limits of Biblical Ecology**

An exploration of the Biblical conception of the relationship between Humanity, God, and the Earth, this paper focuses on the reason for God's creation of the world and on the essential interweaving of the earth's destiny with humanity's and vice versa. This interlocking destiny presents a limit to ecotheology, since the elimination of humankind from the world is inconceivable, even if it should prove to be a benefit to the earth (or even humankind).

**Stephen Geller** is professor of bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. He received ordination from the Seminary and his Ph.D. from Harvard University. Geller's most recent book is *Sacred Enigmas: Literary Religion in the Hebrew Bible* (Routledge, 1996).

### **Abstract of paper: Nature's Answer: Creation and Theodicy in the Bible**

Nature, as creation by God, played a key role in the concept of order promulgated by the wisdom tradition of the ancient Near East. The biblical wisdom tradition, too, used arguments based on nature to establish principles regarding the unity of natural and moral orders. There was a strong connection between arguments rooted in observation of nature and the problem of human suffering and attempts at theodicy. But from the seventh through the fifth centuries BCE the biblical wisdom tradition found itself challenged by the growth of a new, deuteronomic, covenant faith, which based itself solely on divine revelation and relegated nature to

insignificance. This paper studies a variety of responses to the challenge of covenant religion found in biblical wisdom and psalmodic literature, and reflects efforts to accommodate ancient wisdom viewpoints to that challenge. These responses ranged from attempts to present a theodicy based on a reaction of awe at the sublimity of created order, found in the Book of Job and such compositions as Psalm 8, to more modest combinations of nature and piety such as Psalms 19 and 139.

**Jerome (Yehuda) Gellman** is a professor in the Department of Philosophy at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva. He is the author of *The Fear, the Trembling, and the Fire, Kierkegaard and Hasidic Masters on the Binding of Isaac, and Experience of God and the Rationality of Religious Belief*. Gellman has also authored articles on religious experience, the concept of God, Maimonides, Rabbi Kook, Hasidism, Judaism, feminism, and the epistemology of religion.

#### **Abstract of paper: Buber's Bluff: On the Attitude of Early Hasidism to the World and Nature**

Martin Buber taught that early Hasidim had an I-Thou relationship toward the world and nature. This included, he claimed, a metaphorical understanding of the kabbalistic doctrine of *nitzotzot* or "sparks." Buber ascribed this view especially to Israel Baal Shem Tov, and to the "Polennoyer tradition." I show that the Hasidic sources consistently refute Buber's claims, and that they had the old Lurianic concept of the sparks. I conclude with an attempt to explain the reason for "Buber's bluff," and with a thought on the possibility of basing an ecological ethic on early Hasidic thought.

**Everett Gendler** studied at the University of Chicago, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Columbia University. After serving congregations in Mexico, Brazil and Princeton, New Jersey, he was rabbi to Temple Emanuel in Lowell, Mass., from 1971 to 1995, and Jewish chaplain and instructor in philosophy and religious studies at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., from 1976 to 1995. Involved in nonviolent struggles for racial justice, peace, and environmental preservation and appreciation, he has written about these areas, while also with his wife, Mary, tending and tilling a sizable organic acreage in Andover. Since retirement, he and his wife have been engaged in some community education about practical nonviolence with the Tibetan exile community in India.

**Manfred Gerstenfeld** is an international consultant specializing in business and environmental strategy. A fellow and member of the Board of Fellows of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, he has worked with International Jewish Public Affairs for over three decades. Gerstenfeld's published books include *Environment and Confusion* (English, Italian and Hebrew editions) and *Israel's New Future-Interviews*.

**Neil Gillman** is the Aaron Rabinowitz and Simon H. Rifkind Professor and Chair of the Department of Jewish Philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. A native of Quebec City, Canada, he was ordained at the Seminary in 1960 and earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at Columbia University in 1975. Gillman's dissertation *Gabriel Marcel on Religious Knowledge* was published by the University Press of America in 1980. Dr. Gillman's second book, *Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew* won him the 1991 National Jewish Book Award in Jewish Thought. His latest book, *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought* was published in 1997.

### **Abstract of paper: Liturgical Transformations of the Creation Narratives**

The methodological thrust of this paper is the thesis that those portions of the Jewish liturgy, formulated during the talmudic period, can be studied as the pre-eminent source for the ongoing development of the central doctrines of Jewish belief after the Bible. In the course of this development, significant biblical doctrines are extended and frequently transformed. Examples will be taken from liturgical references to Creation in the wedding liturgy and in the Yotzer benediction in the *Shaharit* service.

**Lenn Evan Goodman** is a professor of philosophy at Vanderbilt University. His books include *On Justice* (Yale University Press, 1991) and *God of Abraham* (Oxford University Press, 1995), both of which lay out elements of the general theory of deserts reflected on in his conference paper. Goodman has translated and commented on Saadia Gaon's *Commentary on the Book of Job* (Yale University Press, 1988), Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, and the *Case of the Animals vs. Man Before the King of the Jinn* by the Sincere Brethren of Basra. His scholarly studies include *Rambam* (Viking, 1976) and *Avicenna* (Routledge, 1992). His *Judaism, Human Rights and Human Values* is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

### **Abstract of paper: Respect for Nature in the Jewish Tradition**

The intrinsic value of creation is a core tenet of the Judaic system of norms from its earliest expressions. The goodness of nature rests on its beauty and on the connative, telic claims made by all beings, and made with special articulacy by living beings, and above all, by persons. The consideration that is the due of living organisms, species, and larger natural kinds, ecotones, habitats, monuments of nature (and of culture) need not be derived from contractual myths, which will, of course, yield nothing of the kind, since non-human beings have no contract or covenant with humans. The appropriate level of consideration and regard cannot be derived from the notion of rights, which is properly confined to persons, and which will only be degraded if stretched rhetorically to cover non-human organisms and other entities as well. Such deserts should not be derived by appeal to notions of God's design or intent, since there are no undisputed canons of that intent, and since it is far more appropriate to move from recognition of the proximate values discovered in nature to an appreciation of divine transcendence that to

attempt to reason in the opposite direction, as though we knew God first or better and did not need to encounter Him through nature.

**Paul Gorman** is the executive director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, a formal coalition of diverse Jewish and Christian faith groups whose program he helped set in motion in 1991. A graduate of Yale and Oxford, he worked in Congress in the 1960s where, among other projects, he organized the congressional delegation to Selma and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on Vietnam. Gorman served as a speech writer and press secretary to Senator Eugene McCarthy in his 1968 presidential campaign, and has been a consultant to numerous elected officials. He has hosted a regular public radio program for 28 years and a PBS television show, and authored *How Can I Help?* (Knopf, 1984). Gorman has taught at the City University of New York, Sarah Lawrence College, and Adelphi University. Prior to his present position, he was vice-president for Programs at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, where he oversaw numerous community-based projects and organized international environmental conferences in Moscow, Oxford, and Assisi.

**Roger Gottlieb** is professor of philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He is the author or editor of seventeen books and more than 100 articles on environmentalism, religious life, contemporary spirituality, political philosophy, ethics, the Holocaust, feminism, and disability. He is internationally known for his work as a leading analyst and exponent of religious environmentalism, for his passionate and moving account of spirituality in an age of environmental crisis, and for his innovative and humane description of the role of religion in a democratic society.

**Hillel Gray**, policy director of the National Environmental Law Center, works on source reduction, right-to-know, accident prevention, and other toxic chemical issues. A Yale graduate, he previously worked at the Mass. Public Interest Research Group and the Investor Responsibility Research Center. Gray is a board member of Havurat Shalom (Somerville, MA) and on the Program Council of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life.

**Arthur Green** is the Philip W. Lown Professor of Jewish Thought at Brandeis University. He is both a historian of Jewish religion and a theologian: his works seek to form a bridge between these two distinct fields of endeavor. He also serves as director of the International Centre for Ethics, Justice and Public Life at Brandeis University. Educated at Brandeis University and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Dr. Green studied with such prominent teachers as Alexander Altmann, Nahum N. Glatzer, and Abraham Joshua Heschel, of blessed memory. He has taught Jewish mysticism, Hasidism, and theology to several generations of students at the University of Pennsylvania, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (where he served as both

Dean and President) and now at Brandeis. Founder of Havurat Shalom in Somerville, Mass., he is a leading independent figure in the Havurah or Jewish renewal movement. Dr. Green has authored several books including *Tormented Master: A Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav* and *Seek My Face, Speak My Name: A Contemporary Jewish Theology*, where he turns to the mystical tradition as a key source for a religious language that will speak to the many spiritual seekers in our generation. His most recent scholarly work, entitled *Keter: The Crown of God in Early Jewish Mysticism* is published by Princeton Press.

**Colin Greer** has been president of the New World Foundation (NWF) since 1985. Before NWF, he was a professor at Brooklyn College, CUNY. He was the founding director of both the University Without Walls at the College of Staten Island and Hunter College's Master of Arts in Teaching program. Greer co-authored, with Herbert Kohl, *The Plain Truth of Things* (May 1997) and *A Call to Character* (November 1995), Harper Collins. Greer has written several books on the history of public education and U.S. Immigration, the best known of which is *The Great School Legend. Choosing Equality: The Case for Democratic Schooling*, a book he co-authored, won the American Library Association's 1988 Eli M. Oboler Intellectual Freedom Award. Greer was also the founding editor of *Change* and *Social Policy* magazines.

**John A. Grim** is a professor in the Department of Religion at Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA. As a historian of religions, John undertakes annual field studies in American Indian lifeways among the Apsaalooke/Crow peoples of Montana and the Swy-ahl-puh/Salish peoples of the Columbia River Plateau in eastern Washington. He published *The Shaman: Patterns of Religious Healing Among the Ojibway Indians*, a study of Anishinaabe/Ojibway healing practitioners, with the University of Oklahoma Press. With his wife, Mary Evelyn Tucker, he has co-edited *Worldviews and Ecology* a book discussing perspectives on the environmental crisis from world religions and contemporary philosophy. Mary Evelyn and John are currently organizing the series of twelve conferences on Religions of the World and Ecology held at Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions. John is also president of the American Teilhard Association.

**Daniel Hillel** is professor emeritus of plant, soil and environmental sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. A renowned environmental scientist and hydrologist, he has worked throughout the Middle East, as a consultant to the governments of Israel, Pakistan, the Sudan, Iran, Egypt, Cyprus, and elsewhere; and as an advisor to the World Bank and various U.N. agencies. He has published over 200 scientific papers and reports, as well as popular articles in *Natural History Magazine* and the National Geographic Society's *Research and Exploration*. His nineteen books include definitive texts on arid zone ecology, irrigation, and soil physics, as well as the award-winning *Out of the Earth: Civilization and the Life of the Soil, Negev: Land, Water and the Life in a Desert Environment*, and *Rivers of Eden: The Struggle for Water and the Quest for Peace in the Middle East*.

**Benjamin Ish Shalom** is a professor of Jewish philosophy and rector of Beit Morasha of Jerusalem at the Center for Advanced Jewish Studies. Ish-Shalom received his Ph.D. degree from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. From 1980-1995, he was a member of the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Jewish Philosophy at Hebrew University and, in 1988, was appointed the Andrew N. and Rose Miller Professor of History of Zionism and Modern Israel at Yeshiva University. Ish-Shalom's book, *Rav Avraham Y.H. Kook, Between Rationalism and Mysticism*, was published in 1993.

### **Abstract of paper: Nature in the Thought of Rav Kook**

Rav Avraham Yitzak HaCohen Kook wrote that when speaking of nature, one must not attribute to it a set and defined essence in and of itself. Rather one must relate to a broader essence -- that of holiness. This essence has an open and dynamic character which is defined as a living multi-dimensional organism. Human beings are its clearest and loftiest expression. According to this view, nature, in all its dimensions, including the spiritual and the material, the cosmic and cultural-historical, is a process of the revelation of God in the world, and humans are perceived to be its pinnacle, the highest expression of this positive and optimistic divine-cosmic-natural process.

**Mark X. Jacobs** serves as director of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), a collaboration of 26 national Jewish organizations. He is also director of the Committee on Energy and the Environment of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. Jacobs took leave from a doctorate program at the University of Michigan to work with COEJL, where he focuses his energies on building a national network of Jewish environmental activists and educators and involving national Jewish institutions in environmental educational and programmatic resources. His columns appear regularly in Jewish newspapers around the country.

**Edward Kaplan** is a professor of French and comparative literature and a research associate of the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry at Brandeis University. He has published articles on Abraham Heschel, Martin Buber, Thomas Merton, and Howard Thurman, as well as books on Charles Baudelaire and Jules Michelet. Kaplan recently completed the first intellectual and cultural biography of Heschel, co-authored with Samuel Dresner entitled, *Abraham Joshua Heschel, Prophetic Witness*, to be published in 1998.

### **Abstract of paper: Reverence and Responsibility: Abraham Joshua Heschel on Nature and the Self**

Heschel's philosophy of Judaism includes a prophetic urgency to save the world from destruction. Following Mitchell Thomashow's paradigm of "ecological identity," I trace how

Heschel re-centers human awareness from the self to God, thus identifying with a divine perspective which leads to a perception of "togetherness of all beings in holy otherness." This state of fellowship is perceived through radical reverence. Nature as such is not sacred but it participates, with human beings, in praising God. A Sabbath consciousness may nurture a combination of love and fear of catastrophe, impelling us actively to protect the planet.

**Heather Kaplan** holds a bachelor of arts in environmental studies and religion from the University of Vermont. While in college, she wrote a thesis entitled, "An Inquiry into Environmental Ethics and Religion: Interviews with Leaders from the Episcopal and Jewish Faiths." Kaplan works as an Environmental Legislative Assistant for the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), the national coordinating office for the Jewish environmental movement that promotes environmental education, scholarship, advocacy and action.

**Eric Katz** (B.A. Philosophy, Yale; Ph.D., Boston University) is an associate professor of philosophy at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He is the author of *Nature as Subject: Human Obligation and Natural Community* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1997) and has co-edited (with Andrew Light) the collection *Environmental Pragmatism* (London: Routledge, 1996). Katz is the author of two annotated bibliographies in the field of environmental ethics (published in *Research in Philosophy and Technology* volumes 9 (1989) and 12 (1992)). He is the co-author (with several colleagues at NJIT) of a textbook: *Environmental Protection: Solving Environmental Problems from Social Science and Humanities Perspectives* (Dubuque: Kendall Hunt, 1997).

## **Les Kaufman**

**Barry Kogan** is the Clarence and Robert Efroymson Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Religious Thought at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio, and former director of the HUC-UC Ethics Center and the Starkoff Institute of Ethics. He is the author of *Averroes and the Metaphysics of Causation* and editor of *Spinoza: A Tercentenary Perspective; A Time to be Born and a Time to Die: The Ethics of Choice; The Corporation and the Community: Mutual Antagonism and Mutual Responsibility; and Common Schools, Uncommon Futures: A Working Consensus for School Renewal*. Kogan is currently working on a new translation of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*.

**David Kraemer** is a professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and a long-time associate at CLAL (The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership). He is author of several books, including *The Mind of the Talmud: An Intellectual History of the Bavli* and, most recently, *Reading the Rabbis: The Talmud as Literature*. Kraemer has just completed a manuscript on Jewish death-ways in Late Antiquity.

**Abstract of paper: Jewish Death Practices: A Commentary on the Relationship of Humans to the Natural World**

Metcalf and Huntington (*Celebrations of Death*) show how a people's death rituals might re-enact crucial elements or assumptions of its creation myth. The creation myth, of course, will define or "establish" a people's relation to the natural world. In this paper, I employ this insight to examine rabbinic attitudes concerning the relation of humans and the natural world. By examining rabbinic burial customs and their associations to Jewish creation myths, I uncover fundamental rabbinic beliefs concerning the place of humans in the created natural world.

**Jon D. Levenson** is the Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies in the Divinity School and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. Previously, he taught at the University of Chicago (1982-88) and Wellesley College (1975-82). A specialist in Jewish theology in the biblical and rabbinic periods, he has authored six books, including *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*, and *Esther: A Commentary*.

**Shaul Magid** is a student of Kabbala, Hasidism, and modern Jewish thought and teaches at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He is presently writing on Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, Hasidic thought in nineteenth-century Poland and theories of reading scriptures in Lurianic Kabbala.

**Abstract of paper: Nature and Disability: The Natural World in Nahman of Bratzlav's "Tale of the Seven Beggars"**

This essay is an attempt to see the ways in which R. Nahman of Bratzlav's attitude toward nature and the natural world in his homiletic discourses inform his thoughts about human imperfection (disability). It also addresses the question of heresy and human sadness, viewing exile as a life without the recognition of God's constant presence, resulting in a perpetual state of deficiency and sadness. Nature is thus the root of exile. Nature is also viewed as both fate and heresy, a vision of the world independent of God's influx and thus outside the realm of human influence. The beggars, all of whom appear disabled, prove that their disability results from their unwillingness to acknowledge such heresy. Imperfection (disability) is the way which perfection manifests itself in an imperfect world.

**David Novak**, who was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary and received his Ph.D. in philosophy at Georgetown University, holds the J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. His *Natural Law in Judaism* will appear later this year from Cambridge University Press.

**Abstract of paper: The Doctrine of Creation and the Idea of Nature**

This paper deals with the relation between the Hebraic doctrine of creation and the Hellenic idea of nature. It argues that they are compatible if the idea of nature is taken as the immanent order of God's creation of the world rather than as a transcendent order including even God. The acceptance and understanding of that created order is the basis for natural law as a theological-moral doctrine, i.e., God's most general commands are originally presented through the claims of human political nature which human persons and communities make on each other. This nature, normatively conceived, forms the necessary background for God's specific revelation to Israel to occur in the world, i.e., what makes it morally possible for humans. Revelation is more than a natural occurrence, but it does not obliterate the very nature it presupposes. This nature within creation is known by a philosophical constitution of universal nature and by comparative study of the concurrence of general norms from a variety of cultures.

**Michael Paley** is the executive director of Synagogue and Community Affairs at UJA-Federation. A native of Boston, he was a professor of Jewish Studies and dean at Bard College, and the vice president of the Wexner Heritage Foundation. For many years, Paley was the university chaplain and director at Earl Hall at Columbia University, the first rabbi named head of campus ministries in the Ivy League. He also served as Jewish chaplain at Dartmouth College. Paley was a member of the editorial board of *Tikkun* magazine where he was Jewish book editor. Rabbi Paley is a vice president of *CrossCurrents: The Journal for Religion and Intellectual Life*.

**Larry L. Rasmussen** has been Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City since 1986. Prior to that, he was a professor of Christian ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., and assistant professor of religion at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. His most recent books are *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*, winner of the 1997 Grawemeyer Award in Religion, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: His Significance for North Americans*, and *Reinhold Niebuhr: Theologian of Public Life*. He has also contributed chapters to four recent volumes in theology, ecology, and ethics, including *Theology for Earth Community: A Field Guide*, *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, *Worldviews and Ecology*, *After Nature's Revolt: Eco-Justice and Theology*. Rasmussen serves as co-moderator of Unit III (Justice, Peace, Creation) of the World Council of Churches and is a member of the Core Faculty of Auburn Theological Seminary in New York.

### **Abstract of paper: New Directions in Theological Ethics, Nature and the Environment**

Work in Christian theological ethics on environmental issues will be discussed around two concerns. (1) The need for a recast moral framework, one that is not anthropocentric and focused on human salvation only. (2) The reforming of the "deep traditions" of Christian practice described as (a) ascetic community, (b) sacramental communion, and (c) prophetic/liberative practices. The dialectic of a recast framework and reformed traditions will be mentioned.

**Shalom Rosenberg** has worked at Hebrew University since 1970 as a lecturer and professor. He has authored several books, including *Good and Evil in Jewish Thought*, *Torah and Science*, *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*, and, most recently, *Not in Heaven*. The author of over 50 published articles, Rosenberg is a member of the International Committee of the "Corpus Commentariorum Averrois in Aristoteles" and the Academy for Jewish Philosophy in America.

### **Abstract of paper: Torah and Nature: On the Functionality of "Nature"**

This paper examines the relationship between nature and ethics in Jewish thought. Do they stand in opposition to one another, are they identical, or can ethical obligations be derived from nature? What is the relationship between Torah and nature? Biblical, rabbinic, medieval philosophical, kabbalistic, hassidic, and modern answers to these questions are analyzed and compared.

**Cynthia Rosenzweig** is a research scientist at the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) and adjunct research scientist at Columbia University's Earth Institute. She earned degrees from Rutgers University and the University of Massachusetts. Rosenzweig's research focuses on the potential impacts of environmental change, including global warming and El Niño events, on agricultural production at regional, national, and global scales. She is the co-author, with Daniel Hillel, of the new book *Climate Change and the Global Harvest* published by Oxford University Press.

**Charles Rubin** has his Ph.D. from Boston College and his B.A. from Western Reserve University. He is currently an associate professor of political science at Duquesne University (Pittsburgh), and graduate faculty in Duquesne's Environmental Science and Management Program, and Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy. *The Green Crusade: Rethinking the Roots of Environmentalism* (Rowman and Littlefield) is a study of the environmental movement that reflects Rubin's interest in the intersection between political philosophy and public policy, an area he has also examined in writings on global warming.

**Ismar Schorsch** is chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and its Rabbi Herman Abramowitz Professor of Jewish History. He greatly strengthened the Seminary's Beit Midrash in Jerusalem, which is training the leadership necessary to bring religious pluralism to Israel. His public statements and writings have attracted wide media attention in the secular and Jewish press, including front and editorial page coverage in *The New York Times*. Schorsch's longtime support of the peace process was capped by an invitation from President Clinton to serve with the official presidential delegation witnessing the peace treaty signing between Jordan and Israel in October 1994. He has become recognized as one of the foremost spokespersons on a range of national issues including the environment, separation of church and state, health care, and welfare reform. Schorsch worked closely with Vice President Albert Gore to help create the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, a coalition of religious and scientific leaders which succeeded in using the moral influence wielded by religious leaders to effect change.

**Eilon Schwartz** is the director of the Jerusalem-based Abraham Joshua Heschel Center for Nature Studies, which he founded in 1993 to integrate environmental ethics into Jewish and Israeli education through seminars, teacher training, curricula development, and research. After receiving undergraduate degrees in Jewish history and thought at the Jewish Theological Seminary and in European history at Columbia University, he earned an M.S. in environmental studies at Bard College and is currently a doctoral candidate in Jewish and environmental education at Hebrew University. A recent Jerusalem Fellow, Schwartz is the author of a forthcoming book, *Judaism and Nature: Theological and Moral Issues to Consider While Renegotiating a Jewish Relationship to the Natural World*, as well as the chapter "Are We as a Tree of the Field?: Reflections on Environmental Ethics" in the forthcoming *Tu B'Shvat* Anthology.

**David Mevorach Seidenberg** was ordained at JTS, where he is currently pursuing a doctorate in theology, focusing on ecology. His dissertation is about constructing a Jewish theology which extends the idea of the image of God to both non-human creatures and the more-than-human world, using classical sources, Kabbala, and modern theories of language. Seidenberg is doing his research this year as a Finkelstein Fellow at the University of Judaism. He is also the founder of Hasidic Egalitarian minyanim in New York and Los Angeles, and is involved in research on Judaism and the body.

**Susan Shapiro** received her doctorate from the University of Chicago and teaches modern Jewish thought and philosophy of religion in the Department of Religion at Columbia University. She has published in the areas of post-Holocaust thought, reading for gender in Jewish philosophy, and the representation of the Jew as uncanny other in the discourses of the modern nation-state. Shapiro is currently a visiting professor and research associate at the Harvard University Divinity School. Some of the awards she has received include fellowships from the

American Council of Learned Societies, the Yad HaNavid Berecha Foundation, and the Stroum Visiting Faculty Fellowship (University of Washington).

**David Shatz** is a professor of philosophy at Yeshiva University. He has published over forty articles and reviews, dealing with both general and Jewish philosophy. He is also co-editor of *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion, Definitions and Definability, Abraham Issac Kook and Jewish Spirituality* and *Tikkun Olam: Social Responsibility in Jewish Thought and Law*. Shatz's work in general philosophy focuses on the theory of knowledge, free will, ethics, and the philosophy of religion, while his work in Jewish philosophy focuses on Maimonides, Jewish ethics, and twentieth century rabbinic figures. Recent publications include "The Metaphysics of Control," "Irresistible Goodness and Alternative Possibilities," "The Bible As a Source of Philosophical Reflection" (co-authored), and "Science and Religious Consciousness in the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik."

**Steven Shaw** has been director of the Jewish Theological Seminary's Department of Community Education for the past twelve years. Previously, he was director of the Radius Institute, a program and policy planning center at the CUNY Graduate School. Shaw is a founder of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life and has been a long-time student of field botany, forest ecology and human/nature relationships.

**Lawrence Slobodkin**, who received his Ph.D. in zoology from Yale University, is the founding chairman of the Department of Ecology and Evolution at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He was professor of zoology at the University of Michigan for fifteen years and has taught at three major Israeli universities, and at the Smithsonian Institute di Genetica ed Evoluzionistica, CNR, Pavia and Politecnico di Milano in Italy, Tsukuba National University in Japan, and Imperial College in London. He is a former president of the American Society of Naturalists and has served on many national scientific boards and advisory panels. Twice a Guggenheim and a Fulbright fellow, he is the author of over 200 publications and several books, including *Growing and Regulation of Animal Populations* and *Simplicity in Games of the Intellect*. His discoveries include disproof of the validity of the logistic equation, general proof of biological regulation of ecological systems and an existential game model of evolutionary strategy which refutes Wilsonian sociobiology on biological, not political grounds.

**Michal Smart** is the executive director of Camp Isabella Freedman, site of Yitziah Jewish Wilderness Journeys Program, the Jewish Retreat Center. She earned an M.S. in natural science with a concentration in environmental ethics and field biology from Cornell University. A former director of Education at the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, Smart is the author of

several articles, including "Awakening to the World of God's Creation" and "Sh'ma in Earth and Spirit: The Spiritual Dimensions of the Environmental Crisis" (Continuum, 1993).

**Moshe Sokol** is associate professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department at Touro College in New York City, and a member of its Graduate Faculty of Jewish Studies. He is author of numerous essays on Jewish ethics and philosophy, and editor of *Engaging Modernity, Rabbinic Authority and Personal Autonomy* and the forthcoming *Tolerance, Dissent and Democracy: Philosophical, Historical and Halakhic Perspectives*. Over the past several years, Sokol has participated in and taught or delivered papers at various conferences and sessions on Judaism and the environment.

**Abstract of paper: What Are the Ethical Implications of Jewish Theological Conceptions of Nature?**

This paper critically examines the ethical implications of Jewish theological conceptions of the natural world. Much of the literature on the subject focuses on Jewish theocentrism, and on immanentist versus transcendentist conceptions of God's relationship to the world. Using these two approaches as case studies, I argue that the difficulties in drawing ethical conclusions from Jewish theological premises are far greater than first meet the eye, for a variety of reasons which I attempt to elucidate. I conclude with three positive suggestions for engaging in ethically significant theological reflection, which I call "environmental virtue," "textual theology," and "halakhic theology."

**Lawrence Sullivan** is director of the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School. He took his Ph.D. in the history of religions from the University of Chicago, under the direction of Victor Turner and Mircea Eliade, and later taught on the faculty there. He has special research interest in the religious life of native peoples of South America, about which he wrote a book entitled *Icanchu's Drum* which was awarded a prize for the best book in philosophy and religion from the Association of American Publishers, and lived among the Nahuatlcos in the state of Hidalgo in Mexico. He edited the *Encyclopedia of Religion* published by Macmillan. He has served as President of the American Academy of Religions, the 8,000-member professional organization of those who teach about religion in North American colleges and universities.

**Daniel Swartz**, who was ordained by the Hebrew Union College, is associate director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. He is the primary author and editor of *To Till and To Tend: A Guide to Jewish Environmental Study and Action*.

**Marc Swetlitz** was educated at M.I.T., the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and the University of Chicago. His research interests include the history of evolutionary biology, the responses of American Jews to evolution, and Jewish environmental ethics. His published works include "American Jewish Responses to Darwin and Evolutionary Theory, 1860-1890," in *Darwin's Reception*, eds. Ronald Numbers and John Stenhouse (Cambridge University Press, 1999), and "Living as If God Mattered: A. J. Heschel's Views on Nature and Humanity," in *Ecology & the Jewish Spirit*, ed. Ellen Bernstein (Jewish Lights Press, 1998). Swetlitz is currently working on an article entitled, "Why Science Matters: Developing a Scientifically-Informed Jewish Environmental Ethic." He is currently an independent scholar living in St. Charles, Ill.

**David Szonyi** has been a program associate in the Jewish Theological Seminary's Department of Community Education since 1993. A freelance editor specializing in Judaica and in mental health issues, he earned an M.A. in modern European history and humanities from Stanford University.

**Mitchell Thomashow** is the director of the Antioch New England Doctoral Program in Environmental Studies. He is the author of *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist* (The MIT Press, 1995) which offers an approach to environmental education based on reflective practice that incorporates issues of citizenship, ecological identity, and civic responsibility within the framework of environmental studies. Currently, Thomashow is interested in the educational and psycho-spiritual dimensions of global environmental change. His recent essays and reviews consider biospheric perception, the local/global dialectic, the intellectual history of global change studies, and place based environmental education. He teaches courses such as Global Environmental Change, Environmental Thought, Ecological and Cultural Diasporas, and Perception and Place. Thomashow is the founder and supervising editor of *Whole Terrain*, an editorial board member of *Terra Nova*, and on the Advisory Board of The Orion Society.

**Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan** is an associate professor of religious studies at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind. She is the author of an award winning book, *Between Worlds*, as well as articles on medieval Jewish intellectual history. Tirosh-Samuelsan is currently writing a book on the conception of happiness in medieval Jewish philosophy. This year she is a visiting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Lawrence Troster** is the spiritual leader of Oheb Shalom Congregation in South Orange, New Jersey and a Steinhardt Fellow with CLAL (National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership). Troster received his M.A. and rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological

Seminary of America and his B.A. from the University of Toronto. He has also served congregations in Toronto and Richmond Hill, Ontario, and was a research associate at the Centre for the Study of Religion in Canada, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto. Among his affiliations, Troster serves on the editorial board of Conservative Judaism and the Program Council of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL). His latest article is "From Big Bang to Omega Point: Jewish Responses to Recent Theories in Modern Cosmology," *Conservative Judaism* (Forthcoming).

**Mary Evelyn Tucker** is a professor of religion at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, where she teaches courses in world religions, Asian religions, and religion and ecology. She received her Ph.D. from Columbia University in the history of religions specializing in Confucianism in Japan. She has published *Moral and Spiritual Cultivation in Japanese Neo-Confucianism* (SUNY, 1989). She co-edited *Worldviews and Ecology* (Orbis Books, 1994) with John Grim, *Buddhism and Ecology* (Harvard/CSWR, 1997) with Duncan Williams, *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans* (CSWR, 1998) with John Berthrong, and *Hinduism and Ecology* (forthcoming) with Christopher Key Chapple. She and John Grim are directing the series of twelve conferences on Religions of the World and Ecology at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions. They are also editors for a series on Ecology and Justice from Orbis Press.

**Sheila Peltz Weinberg** has been a congregational rabbi for thirteen years and is currently serving the Jewish community of Amherst, Mass. She is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and one of the interpretive contributors to the *Reconstructionist Prayer Book*. Weinberg is a founding member of Bnot Esh, a Jewish feminist collective and has published widely in the field of Jewish spirituality. Most recently she contributed to *Meditation From The Heart of Judaism*. She is co leader of the forthcoming Mindfulness Leadership Training program.

**David Wilcove** is senior ecologist at the Environmental Defense Fund in Washington, D.C. where he focuses on endangered species issues. He previously worked for the Wilderness Society and the Nature Conservancy. He has written over 70 articles and book chapters on various aspects of biodiversity conservation. He received a Ph.D. in biology from Princeton University.

**Elliot Wolfson** is the Abraham Lieberman Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and the director of the Program in Religious Studies at New York University. He is the author of several books and many essays on the history of Jewish mysticism and philosophy. His book, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton

University Press, 1994), won the American Academy of Religion Award in Historical Scholarship in 1995 and the National Jewish Book Award for Outstanding Scholarship in 1995. Wolfson is currently working on a number of projects including a book entitled *Language, Eros, and Gender: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and the Poetic Imagination*.

### **Abstract of paper: The Mirror of Nature in the Jewish Mystical Tradition**

In the crucible of medieval kabbalistic symbolism, the motif of nature as a mirror assumes a new form: The idea is not only that nature reflects the glory of God, but that in the most elemental ontological sense nature is the divine reality, for only the latter is real. The inevitable consequence of the symbolic orientation of the medieval kabbala can be expressed precisely in terms of this doubling of vision, for that which is seen in the spatio-temporal realm is always an image of an image. In the kabbalistic symbolism, moreover, both the image of the mirror and that of nature as a reference to the corporeal world are related specifically to the female. Nature is, first and foremost, the signature of body, which is related by the kabbalists, following the conventional wisdom of the middle ages, to the feminine gender. In the hierarchical polarity widespread in medieval culture, spirit or soul correspond to the male and body to the female. To appreciate the kabbalistic understanding of the mirror of nature, one must understand that the ultimate goal is for nature to be overcome by the spiritual. This ascetic overcoming of nature can be expressed as well by the transfiguration of the feminine into the masculine, the restoration of the female into the male.

**Martin D. Yaffe** received his B.A. with honors in philosophy from University of Toronto and his Ph.D. in philosophy from Claremont Graduate School, and is currently an associate professor of philosophy and religion studies at the University of North Texas. He has also taught at Tel Aviv University in Israel. Yaffe's special interests are classical political philosophy and Jewish thought. He is author of *Shylock and the Jewish Question* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) and co-translator of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Literal Exposition on the Book of Job* (Scholars Press, 1989). Yaffe is currently completing a translation of Benedict Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, the philosophical founding-document of modern Judaism, and is also compiling an anthology of essays on Judaism and environmental ethics.