

09:09:38 From Dan Cedarbaum : dan@kaplancenter.org

09:13:35 From Dan Cedarbaum : <https://kaplancenter.org/religious-naturalism-conference-speakers-biographical-information/>

09:17:59 From George Ortega : If we define nature as all there is, how does anything transcend nature?

09:18:38 From Howard Wettstein : Good question.

09:23:26 From Dan Cedarbaum : dan@kaplancenter.org
<https://kaplancenter.org/religious-naturalism-conference-speakers-biographical-information/>

09:30:35 From George Ortega : Wouldn't both upward and downward causality be subsumed within a temporal causality that, beginning with God, proceeds from past to present to future?

09:33:22 From Fred Dobb : Fractals-- identifying emergent patterns of the micro into the macro as Rabbi Tucker describes -- "pattern theology", in which all is connected by an underlying unity... similar to Kaplan prethinking the Gaia hypothesis... anyone here thinking/working on this?

09:37:56 From MEL scult : question for Rabbi Tucker. Is Kaplan's concept of salvation and Spinoza's concept of blessedness more or less the same.....thank you Rabbi Tucker for a wonderful presentation. most valuable for me.

09:41:17 From George Ortega : Wouldn't naturalism as a philosophical concept include all that is both known and unknown to science?

09:41:34 From Jeffrey Schein : jeffrey.schein here... an interesting take on rabbi tucker's focus on patternedness is Philip Phenix's Realms of Meaning

09:42:43 From George Ortega : Doesn't physics include all of the human sciences?

09:43:25 From Leslie Cook To Dan Cedarbaum(privately): Congratulations to you and others involved in a beautifully organized and presented event. And you were an excellent moderator.

09:43:46 From Eric Mendelsohn : It is not a science if it has the name science in social science computer science etc 😊

09:48:03 From Jane Susswein To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : When can science ever be considered completed??

09:48:57 From Robert Weintraub To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : Gordon: What is the connection between the "third kind of knowledge" and wisdom? Is not wisdom -- at least in part, and "instinctually," if you will -- seeing the "patterns"? How does it emerge from more than experience and knowledge, and analytical reflection on these, or from some sort of "upward causality"?

09:53:19 From George Ortega : If we define God as omnipresent, wouldn't God include all natural, known and unknown, phenomenon?

09:55:59 From Jane Susswein To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : How does judgement (moral judgement) fit in the categories of discoverable knowledge?

09:56:25 From George Ortega : Naturalism also suggests that not only empiricism, but also logic, that informs our understanding of God as nature, i.e., God is eternal.

09:56:55 From Elizabeth Caplun : what if god is in the black box (as in system theory)?

09:57:59 From George Ortega : If we define God as omnipresent, wouldn't God also be the black box?

09:58:42 From Catherine Madsen : The Metaphysical Religious Naturalist/completed science combination allows you to be a creationist or anything you want. After all, we don't really KNOW what future science will turn up...

09:59:40 From Elizabeth Caplun : George Ortega - as you wish. Definition of black box: black box is a device, system or object which can be viewed in terms of its inputs and outputs (or transfer characteristics), without any knowledge of its internal workings.

09:59:57 From Eric Mendelsohn : we are certain about what time is

09:59:57 From George Ortega : If we define God as the Creator,, omnipresent and omnipotent, God becomes an understanding rather than a belief; reality exists, is everywhere, and governed by the laws of nature.

10:01:07 From Marc Swetlitz To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : How would the varieties of religious naturalism expand if we also looked at the varieties of the "religious"?

10:03:45 From George Ortega : Wouldn't evidence of God be entirely dependent upon one's definition of God?

10:04:38 From Howard Laibson To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : Question for Sandy Goldberg: What role might the experience of God's Presence play in your theories of religious naturalism?

10:04:55 From Charles Loflin : Thank you for this. SO much to process and consider!

10:05:48 From Shulamit Widawsky : That was AWESOME. I want to study with you, Sanford! Are you teaching anything online?

10:06:28 From Nadav S. Berman To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : Question to Sanford: Why can't a religious naturalist be partially selective in deploying her/his categories, and (as Sidney Morgenbesser proposed) to endorse certain standards for what is considered 'natural science', and what 'religious belief' is, or 'how to practice Judaism'; Moshe Halbertal has termed this 'modal' believing as אמונה כ: "Believing as" - as a scientist, as a religionist, etc.

10:07:01 From Dan Cedarbaum : Judith Plaskow, Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective
<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0060666846>
 Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, Goddess and God in the World
<https://www.amazon.com/Goddess-God-World-Conversations-Embodied/dp/150640118X/>
 Judith Plaskow, The Coming of Lilith
www.amazon.com/Coming-Lilith-Feminism-Judaism-1972-2003/dp/0807036234/

10:07:57 From Sanford Goldberg : Thanks Charles and Shulamit. I may be teaching a course at my synagogue after the High Holidays. Email me if you're interested.... s-goldberg@northwestern.edu

10:08:16 From Jane Susswein To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : I think the terms 'existence' and 'belief' in God is the issue and leads us down the wrong direction. We can understand the importance to the Jewish people and others of talking about God as it relates to our personal and communal behavior and redefine the idea of God as part of our internal decision making without contravening our scientific postures.

10:08:17 From Dan Cedarbaum : Marcia Falk, The Book of Blessings
www.amazon.com/Book-Blessings-Prayers-Sabbath-Festival/dp/0881232920

Marcia Falk, The Days Between

www.amazon.com/Days-Between-Blessings-Directions-Holiday/dp/1611686059

- 10:10:35 From Deborah Schein : I am blown away by all these images of God.
- 10:13:32 From George Ortega : If Plaskow accepts that God is everywhere, wouldn't that mean God is everything, and hence the only power there is?
- 10:22:31 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : Again, I hope these papers or drafts of these papers will be available for us to read and contemplate. There is so much richness within them.
- 10:22:46 From Gail : AMEN
- 10:22:53 From Dan Cedarbaum : Melissa Raphael, The Female Face of God in Auschwitz
www.amazon.com/Female-Face-God-Auschwitz-Holocaust/dp/0415236657/
- 10:22:57 From Adrian Strizhak : yes please
- 10:23:10 From Jane Susswein : Ditto re the drafts or papers:-)
- 10:31:12 From Howard Laibson : Ditto ditto to the requests for copies of presenters' texts
- 10:32:47 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : But would the women who participated in these acts have considered them a tableaux of beauty but simply of urgent necessity amidst horror?
- 10:33:35 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : I've worked with many survivors and heard their stories. And I'm not convinced of this. Is this a romanticization of what women did during the Holocaust?
- 10:34:00 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : But, there was so much of this talk that I so admired.
- 10:34:09 From Freda Birnbaum : R. Joan Sacks, I think you are on to something!
- 10:34:13 From Shulamit Adler : kudos. beautiful.
- 10:34:21 From Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi : Fantastic session. Thank you all.
- 10:34:22 From Catherine Madsen : Aestheticizing the Holocaust gives aesthetics a bad name (again).
- 10:38:14 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : I find Unetane Tokef to be a metaphorical expression of the truth of what can be a harsh reality that it is important not to avoid. It is part of the push to acknowledge our mortality, that we can lose our lives at any moment and to live our lives as though this could happen in terms to coming to terms with how we live our lives. I would have a problem detracting from this.
- 10:38:32 From George Ortega : Musn't we have an innate wisdom to recognize and appreciate the wisdom we learn and experience?
- 10:38:42 From myrna goldenberg : Women who "helped" other women (surrogate sisters) would reject the idea of beauty/romanticization. The overwhelming emotion, in hindsight, was gratitude.
- 10:40:11 From Deborah Schein : Dr. Daniel Siegel offers the term mindsight in which the mind (thoughts) and biological brain work together to see the self and the world. It is a true inner integration that leads to empathy.
- 10:43:35 From Shulamit Widawsky : So one answers it depends on the definition of pragmatism, and the other says it depends on the definition of supernaturalism. LOL
- 10:44:16 From MEL scult : Santayana called William James an epistemological agnostic.....
- 10:45:15 From Catherine Madsen : It seems to me that many of the intellectual difficulties addressed in these sessions could be avoided by taking aesthetics seriously - i.e. not purely as "beauty" but as a rigorous emotional response to reality. For Jews, God is first of all a

character in a book (really a series of books, which complicates the matter interestingly). What kind of character is he? What are the implications and resonances of his maleness, beyond the caricature of "patriarchy" that feminist theology has been satisfied with? How can a character in a book, with his imperfections and limitations, provide something more interesting to believe in than an abstraction can?

10:47:45 From Curt Biren To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : Is this conversation subject to scientific analysis? If not, is it not real???

10:48:10 From MEL scult : on pragmatism. a philosopher is a person who must withhold judgment a rabbi must preach a very different stance.

10:51:41 From Don Thomas : Belief may be a system of doubt!

10:52:10 From Jeffrey Schein : among others Buber was very clear that emunah /faith encompassed but was not exhausted by the term belief

10:52:23 From Nadav S. Berman To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : A combined question for Gordon and Ellen: The Spinozistic God is indeed immanent, but similarly to Hegel, Spinoza's ontology and methodology are extremely nominalist. As such, they seem to stand in tension with Kaplan's pragmatism, but also with the feminist sensitivities that Ellen presented and addressed.

10:53:23 From George Ortega : Isn't belief simply a view we hold in the absence of sufficient evidence?

10:54:02 From Stuart Rose : Sam Lebens makes a sharp and useful distinction between faith and belief. he applies this to such Jewish questions as Torah min ha shamayim

10:54:32 From Adrian Strizhak : doubt as part of the process of science, not the product

10:54:34 From Raymon Grossman : An ultraorthodox woman spoke at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation one day. She said "Many of you think that we believe everything that's written. It's not whether or not we believe it. We accept it."

10:55:48 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : My concern is how women thought of their own experience at the time it was happening.

10:56:16 From Lewis Eron : Melissa Raphael's project feels like the various ways the Bible handles ISraelite history

10:56:26 From Catherine Madsen : No, a theology of art isn't fair to art either.

10:56:32 From Freda Birnbaum : (lost my connection, back now) "Faith is believing what you know isn't true" -- small boy to Sunday school teacher (Christian)

10:56:39 From Stuart Rose : there's something repellent about the phrase "tableaux of suffering". I do understand her notion of having to apply the imagination to historical events that one hasn't lived through— still that phrase bothers me

10:56:48 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : We do look back on Exodus and one could say we romanticize that experience. Maybe this is necessary. That way we have models for our own behavior.

10:58:56 From Miriam Eisenstein : The term "belief" seems inapposite to the whole rest of Sanford Goldberg's discussion. "Belief" implies something like Ripley. Why not talk about "experience?" Gordon Tucker's point - (not just his) - that we start with consciousness, the fact that we experience consciousness but can't explain it in purely mechanistic terms, means that we can point to some element of experience that we identify with God without asserting a "belief" in anything.

10:59:20 From Stuart Rose : yes, we do read Exodus that way, but the proximity, copious information , and certainty of its historicity distinguish the Exodus from the Shoah

11:02:20 From Charles Loflin : I think there is an interesting question about process theology and completed science.

11:02:20 From Shulamit Widawsky : Process theology is panentheism. Not Naturalism. My 2c.

11:02:23 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : I am delighted that Ellen Umansky is a presenter and I don't want to diminish the incredible importance of what she had to say about women's role in general in Judaism. I was very impressed and hope to hear much more from her in future.

11:05:18 From Stuart Rose : varieties of Jewish Belief is a great book— Umansky's book, that is

12:04:09 From Sanford Goldberg : @Shulamit Widawsky 12:11 pm, I agree with what you say, though would point out that there are all sorts of ways that science can get at even the more subjective states. There are a number of discussions of this in the recent literature, happy to give you some references if you don't already know them (which you may!). I would also point out that many of the more "subjective" takes on things have objective eliciting conditions, and the relationships between them can certainly be the object of empirical inquiry. So while I agree with you about the existence of this domain, I am not sure I see it as posing the same problem you see it as posing to the naturalist. Would welcome your response!

12:04:10 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : Eric, if you are out there, I have found the reference which is on page 875. The chat scroll from this morning is why I couldn't write this to you alone. But, you are welcome to get in touch with me.

12:25:59 From George Ortega : God is most fundamentally defined in Genesis as the Creator. This definition does not require the existence of humans.

12:26:31 From Marc Swetlitz To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : I love it! That word "really"!

12:26:38 From Janet Rice : What if we know God is not a "person," but sometimes relate "as if," since it's easier?

12:35:50 From Dan Cedarbaum : Video of panel Rachel just mentioned:
<https://youtu.be/P4sKmm6KPo0>

12:40:14 From Carol Stern : Rabbi Manny Goldsmith is a beloved member of Adat Shalom in Bethesda.

12:45:16 From Miriam Eisenstein : Gamoran's wife Mamie wrote "Hillel's Happy Holidays" which was one of the few books for kids in the 1940s.

12:45:50 From Dan Cedarbaum : Yes! See
<http://newjewisheducation.blogspot.com/2014/02/my-favorite-quotes-mamie-gamoran.html>

12:51:03 From Rabbi Joan Sacks To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : Thought you'd like to know we very much we wrestled and respected Borowitz's writings at RRC when I attended school there.

12:54:35 From MEL scult : Kaplan would open his classes with this prayer, called the philosophers prayer.

12:56:06 From Eric Mendelsohn : a translation of Kaplan's truth prayer into Hebrew would interesting does someone have it

12:56:49 From Lester Bronstein : This is, in fact, a fragment of a rather long and mystically poetic meditation on Ma'asey B'resheet. It "reveals" Kaplan to be a sort of closet kabbalist, at least to my ear.

13:00:52 From Lester Bronstein : Modim modim

13:00:57 From MEL scult : Borowitz misunderstands and distorts Kaplan.

13:04:42 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : Was that to be an adaptation of God, Torah, Israel?

13:04:59 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : A parallel?

13:10:11 From MEL scult : prayer in Reconstructionism is not a praying to but a praying for, meaning to keep the religious and spiritual ideals ever before us. Prayer ought to raise our consciousness morally and spiritually.

13:10:47 From Gail : Exactly, Mel!

13:11:37 From MEL scult : Kaplan said that Jews need to Reconstruct themselves which is the whole point.

13:12:21 From Miriam Eisenstein : Maybe if the naturalist God is hard to pray to, it just means we have to find vehicles other than prayer.

13:24:19 From Shulamit Widawsky : <https://tikvahfund.org/library/contemporary-problems-in-ethics-from-a-jewish-perspective/>

13:33:41 From Adrian Strizhak : thank you all for such stimulating papers and comments. Shanna Tova!

13:34:02 From Yehudah Mirsky To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : Could it be that Jonas' myth isn't just an etiology, a story of how the moral life as we know it came to be, but a way of describing what the moral life is - a struggle to actualize the fractured Godly good hidden in the world, and thus achieve and sustain the world.

13:34:58 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : Not identical, but on the importance of myth and symbols I hear echoes of Joseph Campbell, or else the other way around.

13:35:17 From William Plevan To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : For Bar: When Jonas discusses "myth" and "the sacred," is he drawing on any particular theorists of religion, explicitly or implicitly? Whose view of myth and the sacred is he closest to?

13:36:17 From Dan Cedarbaum : 1. Howard's book, The Significance of Religious Experience (Oxford University Press).

https://smile.amazon.com/Significance-Religious-Experience-Howard-Wettstein/dp/0190226757/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3CSPS3UT4ZOWC&dchild=1&keywords=howard+wettstein&qid=1599968539&srefix=wettstein%2Caps%2C193&sr=8-1

2. Howard was interviewed about God and naturalism: New York Times philosophy blog, "The Stone"

link: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ssqu51ptz0odwnq/NYT%20interview%20final.pdf?dl=0>

13:40:54 From Don Thomas : Consider a course of study with Dr. Daniel Matt translator of The Zohar Pritzker Edition on the topic of the Upper World

13:45:07 From Dan Solomon : Buber: you can only talk TO God, not about God.

13:46:16 From Don Thomas : If you can conceive of God, then what you have conceived is surely NOT God!

13:46:20 From William Plevan : Yes, Dan, and Heschel says something similar

13:48:08 From Gail : This conference underscores the cross fertilization between theologians and philosophers from so many different movements and eras as well as how collaborative we are as a people.

13:48:10 From Curt Biren To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : To Howard's point, we have trouble defining God, but does that mean that we acknowledge only that which is scientific and material and naturalistic? What about everything in our lives that we might recognize as transcendent, eternal and universal?

13:48:47 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : I agree Gail.

13:54:37 From Catherine Madsen : "God as a term of longing" - yes. Back to the Sehnsucht theme.

13:56:02 From William Plevan : I appreciate Howard

13:56:27 From Shulamit Widawsky : I'm going to keep knowing G-d and Love exist and are sacred parts of my life, whether or not I can prove their existence, and whether or not any description I offer is useful to anyone.

13:56:37 From Dan Cedarbaum : Apropos "longing," from yesterday's chat: \ From carole kessner To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : Is the musical direction in the score "sehnsucht" an expression of the search for the "supranatural?"

13:56:40 From William Plevan : Howard's intellectualist spirituality, if I may. Green I take it rejects that approach

13:56:49 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : I very much appreciate what Howard had to say. Thank you Howard.

13:58:30 From Gordon Tucker : To all: it's been a treasured two days with all of you. I will need to log off in 3 minutes, so I just want to thank everyone and convey wishes and blessings for 5781.

13:59:29 From Howard Wettstein To Dan Cedarbaum(privately) : To Gordon, Thanks so much for your presentation. Very thought-provoking.

13:59:40 From Manny Solon : I like and agree with Howard Wettstein. However, being scientifically trained, as I can't understand what he means by "God", I can't believe or affirm it. Mystery I can live with. :-)

13:59:43 From William Plevan : That helps, thanks Bar.

14:00:12 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : Regarding the Emperor's new clothes. What makes the story powerful is that the absence of clothes was real and verifiable. But, people were afraid to say this. And probably they talked themselves into either believing or just saying yes, so as not to oppose the Emperor and pay consequences for this. I feel there is a difference between truly verifiable reality, and discussing ideas.

14:00:31 From Arthur Green : Re: Jonas, remember that he was an expert on myth decades before he wrote his theology, witnessed sin his early book The Gnostic Religion. He and Scholem were important colleagues in that era.

14:01:10 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : I am very grateful for this conference, for how it was organized an the high level of the speakers and participants.

14:01:28 From Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi : Amen to what Gordon wrote. May it be a healthy and sweet new year, a year of spiritual fulfillment and of self-actualization for all! ;-}

14:01:33 From Yehudah Mirsky : Yes, on Jonas. And it would be interesting to compare him to Cassirer too.

14:02:20 From Jane Susswein : Thank you, Dan, and all the presenters for a wonderful conference!

14:02:29 From Freda Birnbaum : Joan Sacks, I've appreciated your comments even though I kept getting kicked off (computer) or having to leave and didn't see all of them!

14:05:24 From James Gregory Gallagher : Thank you Dan and all the speakers for a wonderful conference. Blessings from Scotland.

14:05:56 From Shulamit Widawsky : Howard Wettstein: I love that. Thank you for sharing that. One of those things that we never will know unless someone who was there tells the story.

14:06:39 From Lewis Eron : Is there not a circular relationship between the religious experience and the way we think about the experience. They build on each other. When that cycle is broken is when we have trouble. The break can happen in either place. What causes the break and how do we mend it? Sometimes it is a personal event. Sometimes a cultural or natural experience.

14:08:00 From Rabbi Joan Sacks : You've expressed this so well Lewis.

14:08:07 From Manny Solon : I have learned so much. Thank you all. I have enough to look up, study, ponder for the rest of my life. [I'm 85, may I live to 120! :-)]

14:08:28 From Sanford Goldberg : Thanks to everyone for a wonderful two days of discussion and thinking together. L'Shana Tova.

14:09:34 From Jonathan Weidenbaum : I am so happy to have listened to all of these wonderful presentations and discussions. Thank you to everyone!

14:10:02 From Shulamit Widawsky : I think Kaplan just meant he didn't need the Gillman test. He didn't need to insist on anything, metaphysical or otherwise.

14:10:08 From Sanford Goldberg : And thank YOU Dan!

14:10:17 From William Plevan : Thanks Dan, this was wonderful!

14:10:20 From Yehudah Mirsky : Thank you all

14:10:21 From Bar Guzi : Thank you, Dan.

14:10:22 From Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi : Shulamit W - indeed!

14:10:23 From William Plevan : Shana Tova, thanks everyone

14:10:31 From Lester Bronstein : And especially the mastermind behind this conference, Dan!