

# NEW PARADIGM SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

National Consultation, March 6-8, 2016

Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center, Falls Village, CT



Co-sponsoring Organizations:



March 2016

The concept for the New Paradigm Spiritual Communities Initiative (NPSCI) has been percolating for about a year but it was not until we secured funding from the William Davidson Foundation in late November that we could begin to invite people to the first National Consultation. New ventures are a strange admixture of excitement and anxiety. My anxiety was largely based on whether a phenomenon that I interpreted as a potential new stage in American Jewish life was seen the same way by others.

In large measure, the jury is still out on that question. It will be the primary focus of our conversations and exploration over the next few days. I expect that at the end of our time together at this Consultation we will have some greater clarity around what we hold in common and where our paths point in different directions. An OD consultant who used to do training for my staff at PANIM would call what we are about to engage in a “conversation for possibility”. Indeed it is.

But whatever anxiety I was holding about whether people would be interested in being part of this conversation for possibility was allayed by two factors. First was the response of four friends and colleagues for whom I have the highest respect. Nigel Savage, Lisa Goldstein, Elie Kaunfer and Stosh Cotler are each talented and visionary leaders of Jewish organizations that are making a significant contribution to Jewish life. Their willingness to partner with Clal on this Initiative was a true blessing. The second factor was the overwhelmingly positive response we got to our invitation to this Consultation. I certainly did not expect that we would fill and exceed our projected 50 person Consultation in less than one week, but we did. Even moreso, the talent of those who committed to the Consultation and the work that each of you is driving in your respective orbits is a reason to be very optimistic about the Jewish future. I am so excited to explore that future with you over the next three days.

I want to offer a final appreciation to Irwin Kula. Irwin and I have been friends for more than 25 years. But it is only in the last few years, after I joined the Clal senior team, that we actually got to collaborate in an ongoing way. Irwin has become my trusted thought partner and his willingness to give me carte blanche to take risks and to develop new projects has been a true gift. We are all in his debt.

Rabbi Sid Schwarz  
Project Director

**Steering Committee:**

Stosh Cotler, CEO, Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice

Rabbi Lisa Goldstein, Executive Director, Institute for Jewish Spirituality

Rabbi Elie Kaunfer, Executive Director, Mechon Hadar

Rabbi Jason Kimelman-Block, Deputy Director & Rabbi in Residence, Bend the Arc Jewish Action

Rabbi Irwin Kula, President, Clal: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

Nigel Savage, CEO, Hazon

Adam Sher, Director of Transformative Experiences, Hazon, Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center

## Consultation Goals/Desired Outcomes

1. Explore models of new paradigm spiritual communities in a range of sectors, identifying the common characteristics that might be shared across sectors.
2. Identify the conditions for success, challenges being faced and the leading edges that can expand the work.
3. Determine how best to: (a) support new paradigm spiritual communities on a national or regional basis; and (b) gauge the appetite for growing the network of people who are convened under the aegis of this Initiative in the coming years.

Sunday, March 6, 2016 <i>26th of Adar I, 5776</i>		
2:00-4:00 pm	<b>Arrivals, Check In &amp; Snack</b>	Guest Services
4:00 pm	<b>Building the Container</b> Understanding the desired results and program agenda; participant introductions; and setting norms.  <i><b>Facilitator for this session and throughout the Consultation:</b></i> <b>Claudia Horwitz</b>	Beit Knesset
6:00 pm	Dinner	Dining Room
7:15 pm	<b>Framing the Consultation</b> Context-setting talk from Consultation Project Director, Rabbi Sid Schwarz, followed by participant reactions. What is resonating? What is provocative or challenging? What questions do you have?	Beit Knesset

Monday, March 7, 2016

27th of Adar I, 5776

7:15 am	<b>Morning Gatherings</b>	
	<p><b>Rabbis Lizzi Heydemann and Lee Moore</b>  <i>Traditional/Egal Minyan</i>            Davenning with <i>niggunim</i>, <i>kavanot</i> and moments of quiet. In the Torah reading, the <i>kavod</i> (glory) of Hashem at long last fills the <i>mishkan</i> (tabernacle) and we complete Exodus narrative! <i>Leyning</i> will be experiential, renewal-style to 'get closer' to the text and its teachings.</p>	Beit Knesset
	<p><b>Shir Yaakov Feit</b>  <i>Meditative Minyan</i>            We will weave a handful of chants with ample silence, following the deep structure of the prayerbook. Meditative <i>kavvanot</i> will be offered. No experience necessary, just a willingness to plunge into stillness. Bring your prayer-aphernalia (<i>tallit</i>, <i>tefillin</i>, etc.) and please arrive promptly.</p>	Red Yurt
8:00 - 9:00	Breakfast	Dining Room
9:00 am	<p><b>Stories of Possibility</b>            An opportunity to connect with peers about an experience you've had about deep community, rooted in mutuality and purpose. What conditions make these communities possible? What impact do they have?</p>	Beit Knesset
	<b>BREAK</b>	
10:45 am	<p><b>Themes/Portals for the Work</b>            Meeting across sectors to dive deeply into one theme/portal:  <i>Chochma / Wisdom</i>  <i>Tzedek / Social Justice</i>  <i>Kehilla / Covenantal Community</i>  <i>Kedusha / Sacred Purpose</i>  <i>Tarbut / Culture and the Arts</i></p>	Beit Knesset
11:45 am	<p><b>Research from the Field</b>            Angie Thurston and Casper ter Kuile from Harvard Divinity School will share relevant findings from their research. Followed by Q&amp;A, discussion.</p>	Beit Knesset
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch	Dining Room
2:15 pm	<p><b>Leading Edges in the Sectors</b>            Participants will meet by sector (as selected by participants ahead of time). Facilitated discussion will focus on what is needed to take the work to the next level.</p>	Beit Knesset

*continued:*  
**Monday, March 7, 2016**  
*27th of Adar I, 5776*

	<b>Mincha - Soul Break</b>	
3:30 pm	<p><b>Rabbi Jessica Minnen</b>  <i>Ecstatic Mincha</i>  Join us for a taste of Ecstatic Mincha and be moved by the joy of music, the warmth of community, and the spiritual possibilities of dance as embodied prayer.</p>	Library
	<p><b>Yavilah McCoy</b>  <i>Jewish Gospel</i>  An experience with “Jewish Gospel” that will aid in the reflection upon the nature of Jewish soul music and its power to transform perceptions of self, community, and our world.</p>	Beit Knesset
4:00 pm	Free Time	
5:00 pm	<p><b>Seeds for the Future</b>  Sector groups will share highlights from the afternoon affinity groups. Then the group will gauge its own energy for moving forward and what form that might take.</p>	Beit Knesset
6:00 pm	Dinner	Dining Room
7:15 pm	<p><b>Night Hike - Jakir Manela and friends</b>  Immerse yourself in the new spiritual paradigm of the legendary Teva night hike. Lead by veteran Teva educators and alongside our peers, we will head into the night forest without a flashlight, senses piqued and hearts open. Dress Warmly!</p>	Meet in Beit Knesset
8:30 pm	<p><b>Trending with Jews: #StoryTelling&amp;Singing</b>  - <b>Helen Bennett and Blair Nosan</b>  It's time to spill: Come share a story about when that obviously brilliant idea failed miserably, when something unexpected happened to make community flourish, or anything in between! Songs are also encouraged! After all the serious business, let's gather by the fire to hear about each other's silly and/or deep community-building endeavors.</p>	Great Hall

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

28th of Adar I, 5776

7:15 am	<b>Morning Gatherings</b>	
	<b>Rabbi Shawn Zevit and Sarah Chandler</b> <i>Morning I will Seek You</i> A creative, musical and contemplative service, blended with the traditional structure of the <i>siddur</i> and morning service.	Beit Kneset
	<b>Rabbi David Jaffe</b> <i>Turn Torah into Prayer</i> Come try out this classic Breslov Hassidic practice that connects cognitive learning with the heart.	Library
8:00 - 9:00	Breakfast	Dining Room
9:00 am	<b>Orienting to Next Steps</b> Participant reflections on their own next steps, next steps for NPSCI, setting up for the two tracks of the morning.	Beit Kneset
	<b>The group will self-select one of the two following tracks:</b>	
9:45 am	1. Work groups for those interested in advancing the work of the NPSCI in a collective and structured way	Beit Kneset
	2. Peer coaching on applying lessons of the Consultation to participants' current work.	Library
11:00 am	<b>Reconvene, Highlights, Closing, Evaluation</b>	Beit Kneset
12:30 pm	Lunch	Dining Room