

THE HUMANITIES SPHERE

What will influence us as we build our common future? How will humanities and social sciences help us face the challenges that tomorrow will bring? How can we combine what we can learn about communications, environment, history and education to create a recipe for a better tomorrow?

Will Tomorrow Be Better?

Human beings want more of everything: higher income, better health, longer lives, better leadership, more stimulating social lives and, of course, more perfect happiness. To what extent will tomorrow fulfill our dreams?

M.K. Yair Lapid¹ believes that successful societies are those capable of change and of adaptation to the changes around them. Israel has this ability and can do it in a non-violent way. Lapid outlines the development of Israel from 1948, as a nation of Holocaust survivors, to the "start-up nation" it is today. This thought was followed by the vision of future domestic challenges and changes, including the issue of the ultra-Orthodox entering the workforce, and expressed faith in the fact that "our ability to change is the only fixed thing in Israeli society."

Dr. David B. Agus² expressed his optimism in the future of health. In the US, each person has the ability to look at their own DNA and find out about their risk of illness. While this puts people in charge of their own bodies, it is also a responsibility. Another example he gave was that of food and how with technology and genetically modified food, we can now actively alter the status quo to improve our health. He called Israel a "world leader" in this field.

Prof. Dan Gilbert³ assessed the psychology behind how human beings respond to threats. He explained that the reason why we respond to some threats so well and others so poorly is due to the four features of intentionality, immorality, imminence and instantaneousness. Giving the examples of the threat of global terrorism (which comprises of all four features) and the threat of climate change (which comprises of none), he suggested that we utilize our brains effectively to assess whether a threat is a danger. If we do this properly, he claims, "then our tomorrow can be quite bright."

Ayaan Hirsi-Ali⁴ addressed the future of Israel's political situation. She explained that while the leaders of hostile nations surrounding Israel have not achieved the destruction of Israel, she expressed concern that propaganda and indoctrination will shape the minds of millions of Muslims across the world and encourage them to eradicate Israel. She sees a glimmer of hope in the pursuit of democracy by some Arabs. These Arabs see Israel as a potential ally and she stated that "there can be a beautiful tomorrow." She believes that while the future will not be perfect, it will be better. She concluded by saying that "If Israel's tomorrow seems hard to predict, we must look at Israel's yesterday. If you continue to be as resilient as you are, then tomorrow will be better."

Is there Hope for a Green Tomorrow?

The panel brought together a wide variety of world experts to examine the future of our planet and how it will be affected by climate change and the looming ecological crisis. As global problems, they require international cooperation that takes into account the wellbeing of future generations.

Dr. Miriam Haran⁵ introduced the topic and maintained that people will become environmentalists out of necessity. She is optimistic about the green future and believes that Israel is coping with its water challenges through the establishment of desalinization plants, recycling waste water and drip irrigation technologies.

Prince Albert II of Monaco⁶ recognized that the environment is not at the top of the world agenda, yet it is a crucial issue that defines our future. To cope with the challenge we need to mobilize multilateral large scale institutions, link environmental issues with national issues, establish partnerships and implement cooperation mechanisms including the promotion of scientific research. "We need the invention of a new way of consumption, each of us should be aware of our role in the challenge."

The way that the international community addresses climate change has left **Prof. Ernesto Zedillo**⁷ pessimistic. The Rio and Kyoto protocols have done little to alleviate the present danger. By the end of this century the earth will be 3-5 degrees hotter with serious economic and social consequences. "We need collective action for a global public good." An international solution that addresses the problem must have a new approach; carbon must be priced and a mechanism should be introduced in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Ertharin Cousin⁸ said we need to give people the ability to feed themselves through sustainable agriculture. There is enough grain to feed the world, yet there is still food insecurity. It is not a production problem rather "where the food is, it is not where the hungry people are." Cousin asserted that "If you grow something you must have a place to sell it." The solution could be based on the increase in yield, use of drought resistant seeds and irrigation systems, support for small farmers, as it is pointless to discuss sustainable agricultural if there is no supporting infrastructure.

Efi Stenzler⁹ stated that Israel is "the only country in the world that has more trees today than it had a hundred years ago." A study in Israel found that desert forests decrease global warming and capture greenhouse gases in the same way as European forests. Successful breakthroughs have also been made using saline water for agriculture. "One acre of land can provide 30 tons of tomatoes, an unparalleled phenomenon" and he concluded that "Israel should be an ecological example and laboratory...so tomorrow will be a better place for all."

Shai Agassi¹⁰ presented his vision for an energy efficient and independent Israel in 2025, describing the need for a combination between business models and environmental innovations. Currently much energy is wasted, mainly by electricity generated from coal. The shift will occur with the use of natural gas. Solar panels will also gain traction as they are less costly and more efficient. Innovations in battery technology are also changing the world as lithium ion batteries have dropped in price and this translates into advances in electric vehicles. Agassi explains that through smart taxation the use of natural gas and solar panels will be more profitable than the use of petroleum. "The world is capitalistic in nature, which means profit from conserving energy will inevitably create a green tomorrow.... Taxation is key to making it better," yet "the question is how much will Israel be involved in these inevitable achievements."

Education: The Test of Tomorrow

How should education systems and teaching techniques in Israel and around the world adapt themselves to this new reality, in order for our children to succeed in adapting properly to tomorrow, while also being able to take part in shaping it? What should the school of tomorrow look like and how should it be run? What should be the characteristics of tomorrow's teacher? And how will all these affect the children of tomorrow?

Dr. Einat Wilf¹¹ led the panelists in a discussion of the role of the teacher in and out of the classroom and of advanced technology. The speakers presented their visions for tomorrow's education.

Prof. Dan Schechtman¹², who is running a pilot for teaching science in kindergartens, has found it hard to find kindergarten teachers with a satisfactory scientific background. He proposes to provide science clips that teachers can show and then discuss with their classes. "We need teachers, and very good teachers, and the teacher should be able to teach and be able to educate." "Teaching is providing knowledge and education makes you a better human being."

Prof. Jeannette Wing¹³ sees the future as one where "computational thinking will be a fundamental skill used by everyone in the world by the middle of the 21st Century." She presented her vision as applied to kindergarten through 12th grade pupils on the one hand, and students of various disciplines in higher education capacities, on the other, all of whom thinking like a computer scientist and use computational methods in their studies. The challenge, she says, is teacher training. It's hard to get enough teachers who know science; it's even harder to teach teachers computer science.

Prof. Daphne Koller¹⁴ sees a world where great education is a basic human right, and it is available to all who need it regardless of time and place. "A world, where great teachers are available for anyone, anywhere." Students will get content from online courses while teachers in the classroom teach critical thinking and help students with particular trouble areas.

Wendy Kopp¹⁵ has a vision "of a world of shrinking educational disparities and rising educational levels" with the human touch of a teacher. Generally speaking, the entire system must change and adapt itself to the needs of those being educated - the children. Proactively speaking, leaders are needed to make that fundamental change in order to improve the child's chances of succeeding and for the system to work better as a whole. Teach For America trains talented college graduates to become those leaders. "We can make a meaningful difference against the difference in education levels" by meeting kids with high expectations and giving them the support they need.

Prof. Frederick Lawrence¹⁶ discussed the type of education necessary for the 21st Century. "We are educating students for a future that is literally inconceivable and unimaginable," and therefore he feels they need to teach

skills that are trans-temporal. Agreeing that programs like Coursera can be used for content transfer, Lawrence sees the focus of education to be learning to think, analyze, and communicate, "and more than anything, to turn raw information into knowledge."

Has Traditional Media Been Caught In the Web?

The various mediums, from which we receive messages, are just as important and influential as the messages they deliver. Do the new media technologies restrict, disrupt or enrich the messages and content to which we are exposed? Does the traditional media feel threatened by the new media reality, and how are they dealing with the new technologies in the fields of news, education and enrichment?

Jane Eisner¹⁷ conducted an audience survey that revealed the majority of the audience had received the news via mobile device that morning. She then addressed the topic of the session and had the speakers give their take on the matter.

Although *Ha'aretz* newspaper underwent "new media changes" in recent years, its editor, **Aluf Benn**¹⁸, claimed that the basic tenets of a good story stay the same regardless of the medium. However, the story has to be presented in a way that is preferred by the specific audience paying for the news, and therefore differs from 'regular' content.

A specific audience is a concept that resonates with **Phil Griffin**¹⁹ as he sees the importance of obtaining and maintaining a meaningful and emotional connection with the audience. For MSNBC he says, it was important to differentiate itself from other networks and provide specific content materials, addressed to the audience, and going from a "general interest channel to a political channel with a progressive point of view." In his mind, the success of MSNBC is thanks to the networks evolution into a niche, which formed a large loyal community around it. "Cable television was the new medium that disrupted the traditional broadcast industry," he says, but the web was the big changer.

Richard Plepler²⁰ furthered the idea of differentiation and explained that if you create something that has an original voice and story, tell it in an original way, you can monetize the business. More than ratings, what is crucial for HBO is passionate engagement—creating shows that people are

obsessed with, in addition to the fact that with "on demand" TV, people can watch whatever they want whenever they want. He concluded with the notion that content creators need to remember that developing original and differentiated material is the key to success.

Ed Morrissey²¹ stressed the importance of the internet in enabling people to have access to a wide variety of perspectives. He started a blog ten years ago as an outlet for his thoughts. He found that there was a market out there for commentary and it engaged people, whether or not they agreed with it. He opined that the challenge is to identify your audience and then broaden your attractiveness to that audience. You have to be true to yourself and be honest with your point of view.

Dr. Renana Peres²² explained that it seems there are two distinct types of media—the traditional and the new—but in fact people utilize new media to enhance and supplement traditional media. She gave the example of how people make their TV experience more social by tweeting while watching. Her research proved how the two types of media are not mutually exclusive and that people should not feel threatened by new media.

It's not really my Field, but...

Many professions lead their practitioners to specialize in distinct and defined fields. The following professionals may be specialists in one of field, yet they took the opportunity to share their take on another field based on their respective expertise.

Prof. Daniel Kahneman²³ analyzed the psychological components of the regional politics of the Israeli-Arab conflict. The current situation of the alleged relative stable peace is extremely unfavorable to Israel: the losses for a peace treaty are very clear, costly and immediate but the gains are dubious and delayed. From a psychological perspective, delayed gains are much less compelling and more difficult. Peace involves trust and relinquishing control is extremely painful. In Israel the fear of betrayal is intense, both on individual and national levels. There is no good psychological reason to be hopeful about the situation. The only way to achieve peace is through leadership. "Leaders can convince people that risks are worth taking and that the distant future is worth fighting for."

Leadership can take many forms says **David Axelrod**²⁴. Regarding political leadership, what does success mean in winning elections if you are a slave to public opinion and

unwilling to take risks. There are two types of individuals - those who want to be something and those who want to do something. President Truman serves as an example with his historic decision to recognize the State of Israel, ignoring the advice of cautious diplomats. "Sometimes politicians want love too much and you have to sacrifice some love to make progress." Likewise, President Obama with his advancement of health reform and universal coverage will be certainly judged favorably in the long-term.

Axelrod continued his ideas about leadership in his interview with **Ilana Dayan**²⁵ in "Talk of the Day" and discussed his experiences with the then Senator and current President Barack Obama. He stressed his belief in him and his abilities to lead the American nation and adds that his overcoming of challenges has proven him as a great President. He offered as an example, the relationship between President Obama and former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton; regardless of the fact that they were opponents, they remained friends and were able to work together throughout his first term. Axelrod identifies himself as an idealist and expresses hope for idealist youngsters to join the political road: "I believe these young people have the capability to change the world."

The Hon. John Baird²⁶ stressed Axelrod's first point and said in the One on One session with **Udi Segal**²⁷ "You don't want to be popular, you want to be respected." He applied this to his full support of Israel and his belief in the peace process. "It's what's right," he said, and doing what is right will ultimately gain people's respect. He believes that unilateral steps on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are "unhelpful," and recommends that Israel follow President Obama and Secretary Kerry's initiative.

On a completely different subject, **Prof. Dan Ariely**²⁸ spoke of how he is conducting a study on the modern phenomenon of online dating. He found that six hours online translated into a single coffee, which is not very fulfilling or effective in terms of time. The probability of people going on a second date was doubled by restricting boring small talk, encouraging interesting conversations and going to virtual museums or listening to music together. He stressed that it is necessary to create an interface that is similar to the way individuals' process information, rather than the current methods that are structured for computers. He has tremendous hopes for this form of dating and called it the "new *yenta*."

Sharon Stone²⁹ summarized by stating that it comes down to a single point; we have to learn to share and work together or else the situation is helpless. The discussion

about good leadership is the ability to say what is right, versus staying in the status quo as it takes much courage to go against the tide. These are things that we learn during our childhood and that we must consider in our parenting. As parents, we instill the concept in our children, which is the primary aspect of creating peace.

Stone furthered her thoughts on peace alongside **President Shimon Peres**³⁰ during the session "Talk of the Day" with **Ilana Dayan**³¹, regarding the work of YALA. President Peres spoke of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, supporting the two-state solution. He believes that technology and fresh young minds are key components to promoting collaboration and peace. Millions of young people are online, he said, and information is exchanged rapidly. He wished them good luck, stating: "you are entitled to your future." Stone touched this issue as well, saying that when a country is open and shown to the world through the public, it becomes a tangible, accessible thing, breaks down stereotypes and delusional thinking and establishes trust.

Can Understanding Yesterday Help In Shaping Tomorrow?

There are those who claim that the changes humanity is experiencing are so rapid and acute, that relying on historical precedents is not beneficial and can even be harmful in understanding the reality before us. With this in mind, can the study of history provide us with useful insight into managing crises, resolving conflicts and better confronting present challenges, in order to shape a better tomorrow?

What kind of relevant analogies from the past will invigorate us, help us in creating a better future and not paralyze us, asked **Brig. Gen. (Res.) Ruth Yaron**³², who moderated the panel.

Dr. Josef Joffe³³ started by quoting George Santayana: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." On the other hand, for the century long Jewish-Arab conflict over this plot of land, he believes that we would be better off without a sense of history. It is the two competing narratives, the Holocaust or the *Nakba*, which drive the conflict. If our brains were blank slates, perhaps we could better solve this particular issue. To quote Tolstoy: "Happy people have no history."

Prof. Majid Al-Haj³⁴ doesn't trust history for three reasons: it is imposed by those in power; it is written by men; it

ignores minority groups and those who don't have power. While the last century was a century of international wars, the 21st Century will most likely be characterized by internal conflicts over issues of religion, nationality, ethnicity, etc. This raises the importance of multiculturalism as both a concept and a way of coping with cultural differences. "Multiculturalism is the right to be different in terms of identity, and the right to have a different narrative." But Israel, which is the most pluralistic country in the world with over 78 spoken languages, is without a multicultural ideology.

One can study mistakes in order to avoid repeating them in the future, but history does not teach us what to do or what path and measures to take, stated **Prof. Benny Morris**³⁵. Israel has learnt from mistakes in previous wars how to act in later operations, however, other mistakes may still be made. Does understanding the existential threat of the 1930s provide an answer to the current nuclear threat from Iran? Perhaps history teaches that there are many situations where there is no right answer, or perhaps the right answer isn't clear. He concluded by saying that mutual historical empathy is crucial towards a solution in the Middle East.

Dr. Diana Pinto³⁶ defined history as more important than the future. She compared the 2008 economic crisis to the Great Depression and stated that the recent crisis was milder and less extreme. According to her, this shows that the same causes do not necessarily yield the same results. She adds that the past should "instill massive modesty", and that the role of economics is vital as long as its supremacy is limited.

Lord Prof. Robert Skidelsky³⁷ quoted L.P. Hartley: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there," and added that "History is an excellent form of tourism. It frees you to travel through the past, it liberates you from the journey of the present, and any historian is bound to cherish that." History teaches you lessons you might not have otherwise learned, but the only thing worse than learning no lesson from history is learning the wrong lessons from history. "Good history doesn't give you peace; peace gives you good history." He agreed with Joffe that politicians do not learn from history, and that we (humanity) should beware not to progress through "crimes, follies, and misfortunes."

-
- 1 M.K. Yair Lapid (Israel) is the Israeli Minister of Finance and Founder and Head of *Yesh Atid* ("There's a Future"), the second largest party in the current Knesset. He was the host of Channel 2 Israel's popular Friday night news magazine, *Ulpan Shishi* and wrote a weekly column for the *Yediot Ahronot* newspaper.
 - 2 Dr. David B. Agus (USA) is a Professor of Medicine and Engineering at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine and Viterbi School of Engineering and heads USC's Westside Cancer Center and the Center for Applied Molecular Medicine. He is the co-founder of two pioneering personalized medicine companies, Navigenics and Applied Proteomics.
 - 3 Prof. Dan Gilbert (USA) is a Professor of Psychology at Harvard University who studies the nature of human happiness. He is the author of the international bestseller, *Stumbling on Happiness*, which has been translated into more than 25 languages and won the 2007 Royal Society Prizes for Science Books.
 - 4 Ms. Ayaan Hirsi-Ali (Somalia/The Netherlands) is a Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the Founder of The AHA Foundation, a women's rights organization. She served as a Member of Parliament for the VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) in the Netherlands.
 - 5 Dr. Miriam (Miki) Haran (Israel) is the Director of the M.B.A. Environmental Management Studies and a Lecturer in the School of Business Administration at Ono Academic College. In the past she served as the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General for Industries and the Chief Scientist of the Israeli Ministry of Environment.

- 6 His Serene Highness Prince Albert II (Monaco) is the reigning monarch of the Principality of Monaco and head of the Princely House of Grimaldi. The Prince is known for his work in raising the awareness of environment issues and is the founder of Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation which supports the implementation of innovative and ethical solutions in the areas of climate change, water and biodiversity.
- 7 The Hon. Prof. Ernesto Zedillo (Mexico) was the 54th President of Mexico and is currently the Director of the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization; Professor in the Field of International Economics and Politics; Professor of International and Area Studies; and Professor Adjunct of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale University.
- 8 Ms. Ertharin Cousin (USA) is the twelfth Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme. In the past, Cousin served as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture, Head of the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Agencies in Rome, and President of the International Development Law Organization's Assembly of Parties.
- 9 Mr. Efi Stenzler (Israel) is the World Chairman of KKL-JNF. In the past, he served as Mayor of Givatayim for nearly 14 years.
- 10 Mr. Shai Agassi (Israel) is an entrepreneur and innovator. He was the Founder and former CEO of Better Place, the Israeli electric car infrastructure company, and served as President of the Products and Technology Group (PTG) at SAP AG.
- 11 Dr. Einat Wilf (Israel) is a former Member of Knesset and served as Chair of the Education, Sports and Culture Committee, Chair of the Knesset Sub-Committee for Israel and the Jewish People and as a Member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

- 12 Distinguished Prof. Dan Shechtman (Israel) is the Philip Tobias Professor of Materials Science at the Technion- Israel Institute of Technology. In 2011, he received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the discovery of quasicrystals.
- 13 Prof. Jeannette Wing (USA) is the Vice President, Head of Microsoft Research International, and responsible for Microsoft Research's research laboratories in Bangalore, India; Beijing, China; and Cambridge, UK.
- 14 Prof. Daphne Koller (Israel/USA) is the Co-founder of the online education start-up, Coursera. She is also the Rajeev Motwani Professor in the Computer Science Department at Stanford University and the Oswald Villard University Fellow in Undergraduate Education.
- 15 Ms. Wendy Kopp (USA) is CEO and co-founder of Teach For All, a global movement for ensuring educational excellence and equity made up of a growing network of 26 independent organizations around the world. Kopp founded Teach For America in 1989.
- 16 Prof. Fredrick Lawrence (USA) is the President of Brandeis University. He also served as the Dean and the Robert Kramer Research Professor of Law at George Washington University Law School.
- 17 Ms. Jane Eisner (USA) is the Editor-in-Chief of *The Jewish Daily Forward*, a Jewish national weekly newspaper. Before joining the *Forward*, Eisner held executive editorial and news positions at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* for 25 years.
- 18 Mr. Aluf Benn (Israel) is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Ha'aretz* Newspaper.
- 19 Mr. Phil Griffin (USA) is the President of MSNBC. He previously served as Senior Vice President at NBC News, where he was responsible for America's number-one morning program, *Today* and was Vice President of Primetime Programming for MSNBC.
- 20 Mr. Richard Plepler (USA) is CEO of Home Box Office, Inc. (HBO) pay TV service, which provides the two television networks – HBO and Cinemax – to over 100 million subscribers worldwide.
- 21 Mr. Ed Morrissey (USA) is blogger, going by the nickname Captain Ed, who writes for *Hot Air* and *The Week* as well as for his own *Captain's Quarters* blog. He also has a daily radio show at *BlogTalkRadio*, where he serves as Political Director.
- 22 Dr. Renana Peres (Israel) is the Assistant Professor of Marketing at the School of Business Administration of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- 23 Prof. Daniel Kahneman (Israel/USA) is a Senior Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs Emeritus at the Woodrow Wilson School, the Eugene Higgins Professor of Psychology Emeritus at Princeton University, and a fellow of the Center for Rationality at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In 2002, Kahneman won the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.
- 24 Mr. David Axelrod (USA) is the Inaugural Director of the Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago. In the past he served as a Senior Advisor to President Obama and a Senior Strategist for Obama's re-election campaign in 2012. He was also a top political advisor to President Bill Clinton. Axelrod is the Founder of AKPD Message and Media and ASGK Public Strategies and a former political writer for the Chicago Tribune.
- 25 Ms. Ilana Dayan (Israel) is the host of the investigative journalism series, *Uvda* (Fact), on Channel Two Israel. She is also a lecturer on freedom of speech at Tel Aviv University.
- 26 The Honorable John Baird (Canada) is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada. In the past he has served as named Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment; Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and President of the Treasury Board.
- 27 Mr. Udi Segal (Israel) is a journalist and the Diplomatic Correspondent of Channel Two News Israel.
- 28 Prof. Dan Arieli (USA/Israel) is the James B. Duke Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics at Duke University and a founding member of the Center for Advanced Hindsight.
- 29 Ms. Sharon Stone (USA) is an actor, producer, director, activist and humanitarian.
- 30 H.E. Mr. Shimon Peres (Israel) is the President of the State of Israel.
- 31 Ms. Ilana Dayan (Israel) is the host of the investigative journalism series, *Uvda* (Fact), on Channel Two Israel. She is also a lecturer on freedom of speech at Tel Aviv University.
- 32 Brig. Gen. (Res.) Ruth Yaron (Israel) is the CEO of the Ludo Lab Group. She served as Head of the IDF Media and Communications Division in the years 2002–2005, and was the first woman to serve in the position.
- 33 Dr. Josef Joffe (Germany) is the Publisher and Editor of the German weekly *Die Zeit* and the Marc and Anita Abramowitz Fellow in International Relations at the Hoover Institution.
- 34 Prof. Majid Al-Haj (Israel) is the Head of the Center for Multiculturalism and Professor of Sociology at the University of Haifa. In the past, he also served as Vice President and Dean of Research of the University and Chairman of the Forum of Vice Presidents for R&D in Israeli Universities.
- 35 Prof. Benny Morris (Israel) is a Professor of History in the Middle East Studies Department of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.
- 36 Dr. Diana Pinto (France) is a Senior Fellow and a Board Member of the London-based Institute for Jewish Policy Research. She is a founder member of the European Council on Foreign Relations and was the Editor-in-Chief of *Belvédère*.
- 37 Lord Prof. Robert Skidelsky (UK) is the Emeritus Professor of Political Economy at the University of Warwick. He also serves as the Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell University and is Chairman of the Governors of Brighton College.