Rabbi Arthur Ocean Waskow, Ph.D.

Rabbi Waskow received a bachelor's degree from The Johns Hopkins University in 1954 and a Ph.D. in American history from University of Wisconsin–Madison. He worked from 1959 to 1961 as legislative assistant to Congressman Robert Kastenmeier of Wisconsin. He was a Senior Fellow at the Peace Research Institute from 1961 through 1963. He joined Richard Barnet and Marcus Raskin and helped to found the Institute for Policy Studies in 1963, and he served as Resident Fellow until 1977.

In 1968 Rabbi Waskow was elected an alternate delegate from the District of Columbia to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. His delegation was pledged to support Robert Kennedy, and after Kennedy's assassination Waskow proposed and the delegation agreed to nominate Reverend Channing Phillips, chair of the delegation, for President — the first Black person so nominated at a major party convention.

Rabbi Waskow was a contributing editor to the leftist Ramparts magazine, which published his "Freedom Seder" in 1969. The "Freedom Seder" was the first widely published Passover Haggadah that intertwined the archetypal liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Ancient Egypt with more modern liberation struggles such as the Civil Rights Movement and the women's movement.

Through the 1960s, Rabbi Waskow was active in writing, speaking, electoral politics, and nonviolent action against the Vietnam War. Since 1963, he participated in sit-ins and teach-ins, and was arrested many times for protests against racial segregation, the Vietnam War, the Soviet Union's oppression of Jews, South African apartheid, and the Iraq war.

Since 1969, Rabbi Waskow has taken a leadership role in the Jewish Renewal movement. He founded The Shalom Center in 1983 and serves as its director. In its inception the Shalom Center primarily confronted the threat of nuclear war from a Jewish perspective, emphasizing the story of Noah and the imperative to save the world from "a flood of fire". As the Cold War abated, the Shalom Center turned its focus toward ecology and human rights issues.

The chief concerns of The Shalom Center are:
The Iraq War and related issues, including the growing use of torture by the United States and unchecked presidential power; American addiction to over-use of oil and the danger it poses to the planet through global warming; The creation of deeper connections among Jews, Christians, and Muslims; An interfaith effort to identify and encourage the use and marketing of "Sacred Foods"; Peace in the Middle East; Lesbian and gay rights, especially in marriage and other sacred contexts; The rights of immigrants.

From 1982 to 1989, Rabbi Waskow was a member of the faculty of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, where he taught courses on contemporary theology and practical rabbinics. He has also taught in the religion departments of Swarthmore College, Temple University, Drew University, and Vassar College.

In 1993, Rabbi Waskow co-founded ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal. Between 1993 and 2005, he performed research, wrote, and spoke on behalf of ALEPH.