**New Horizons: Cohort 2 (5781)**

**Noam Ackerman –** Noam Ackerman is 25 and comes from Adi in the Jezreel Valley. A graduate of the WIZO Canada School in Nahalal, he also completed the pre-military preparatory program "Arava" at Mosha Hatzeva, before serving as an officer in the Armored Corps. He sees in-depth study of Jewish sources as a continued dialogue between a student and his/her past, while exploring the dilemmas and questions that arise from this study for our lives in Israel in the year 2020. He will commence his studies with the Horizons program in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud and the Department of Jewish History.

**Jodi Weinberg –** Jodi is a psychologist by training, with a B.A. in Psychology & Musicology, and an M.A. in Educational Psychology. She thinks that looking deeply at one's Jewish identity allows one to interpret the societal, national and global dynamics that are bound up with Jewish existence in the State of Israel. Similarly, she wants to acquire valuable psychological tools through studying and confronting questions of identity and belonging. She will commence her studies in the Faculty of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud as a Master's student.

**Eylon Weizmann –** Aged 20 and from Tel Aviv, Eylon is a graduate of the Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts, majoring in music and Jewish Thought. There, he was taught by some of the best Horizons graduates, who teach at the school. He was recognized in the IDF as an excellent musician, and subsequently began to study for his Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance at Tel Aviv University's Buchmann-Mehta School of Music. This year he decided to switch gear and study Jewish Philosophy, out of his love of knowledge and his appreciation for the Horizons graduates who taught him at High School. He will commence his studies in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud, and the Department of Philosophy.

**Ido Vaknin –** Aged 28 and from Jerusalem, Ido is a graduate of the city's Hartman School. After graduating the pre-army preparatory program "Ami-Hai" in Carmit, he was a commander in the Nahal Brigade. A graduate of the three-year program at the Nissan Nativ Acting Studio, he sees his life as a constant conflict surrounding questions arising from the Jewish world, and thinks the best way to bear the burden of this conflict is to share his passion with others. He will commence his studies in the Horizons program in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and the Department of Literature, with a focus on creative writing.

**Aviad Tortski –** Aged 24 and from Jerusalem, Aviad is a graduate of the state-religious education system and the pre-army yeshiva at Maaleh Gilboa. He served as a combat soldier in the Nahal Brigade. Aviad approached us after completing one year of study in the Department of Jewish Thought and Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. There he became interested in researching Hasidut, with an emphasis on cognitive internalization as it finds expression in the writings of Professor Ron Margolin (the head of the Horizons program), and decided to transfer to Tel Aviv University and join the program himself. He will commence his studies in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud and the multidisciplinary humanities program.

**Dana Yitzhak** – Aged 23 and from Tel Aviv, Dana is a graduate of the Environmental Leadership High School at Kfar Yarok, where she focused on cinema and television. She did her army service at Army Radio. She reached us after one semester studying at Tel Aviv University's Department for Cinema and Television. She hopes that the Horizons program will play a meaningful role in shaping her own Jewish identity, but will also provide her with practical tools to become part of a new generation of educators who are proud to bequeath to their students a vibrant and relevant Jewish culture that is deep and uncompromising. She will commence her studies in the Horizons program in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud and the multidisciplinary humanities program.

**Eran Sassa Evron –** Aged 23 and from Jerusalem, Eran is a graduate of the Alon High School in Ramat HaSharon. He served in the Planning Division of the IDF's External Relations Unit. A graduate of the BINA pre-army program, and a counselor for various programs dealing with Secular Jewish Thought, he has a deep connection to Jewish thought, literature, and the arts. He takes inspiration from the "and you shall explain to your son" (Exodus 13:8) tradition of passing on knowledge from teacher to student, even viewing the teacher as a student themselves. He will commence his studies with Horizons in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud and the multidisciplinary humanities program.

**Bar Oz –** Aged 23 and from Tel Aviv, Bar is a graduate of the Manor Kabri School at Kibbutz Cabri. A graduate of the BINA pre-army program, she served in the IDF as a company commander in the Nahal brigade, including time in Beer Sheva and Yad Eliyahu. As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor and a non-Jewish mother according to Orthodox halacha, Bar is on a journey of discovery regarding questions of identity and belonging. Her participation at BINA was the first time she felt that the process she was going through was recognized; this stemmed from in-depth learning and research accompanied by a supportive infrastructure, which gave the students an opportunity to see a different Judaism, one that allows searching, doubting, and asks questions sensitively. She will commence her studies in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud.

**Shai Amir** – Aged 28 from Tel Aviv, Shai is a graduate of the Kiryat Hinuch Shachar Ma'ayan High School at Kibbutz Ein HaHoresh. She did national service as an assistant for children with special needs. She has a Bachelor's degree from the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tel Aviv.Shai believes that studying Jewish sources and thought is an anchor in her life and provides her with tools for creating a feeling of security and belonging. Because of this, she wants to continue her studies and pass on her knowledge to others, through teaching in formal and informal frameworks. Due to her concerns about studying over Zoom, she will begin her studies with Horizons in the second semester of 5781, in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud's Master's program.

**New Horizons Cohort One (5781)**

**Itamar Ohana-Lev –** Aged 24 and from Givatayim, Itamar is married to Shoval. He is a permanent officer in the Intelligence Corps. Raised in Ramat Gan, he is a graduate of Bar Ilan University's Art & Science Yeshiva High School (part of the state-religious education system); the Bnei Akiva youth movement; and the Hesder yeshiva Machanim in Gush Etzion. He served in the IDF as a producer, editor and presenter for Army Radio (he also graduated its journalism course). During his army service he produced and edited a special prizewinning series dealing with the history of the Jewish people and Israeli culture.

He began his studies this year in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and the Department of Jewish History. He sees the connection between these two areas and the importance of studying both the ideas and the context in which they were formulated. He believes that the cultural richness of the Jewish people is a torch illuminating the way forward, and it's important to mark it as the most important tool in shaping the Jewish and Israeli identity of the students.

**Tamara Bal** – Tamar is 31 and lives in Tel Aviv. She grew up in Tzfat, where she graduated the Makif High School. She did her army service as a human resources coordinator for the Israeli Air Force. She has a Bachelor's degree in East Asian Studies and Multidisciplinary Studies from Tel Hai College. She has been a counselor and informal educator with a variety of civil society projects. Today she is thinking about Judaism as a concept, a communal framework, and a religion. She seeks to deepen her study in an academic environment, and feels a sense of mission to teach. She spent a year in China studying Chinese, and also speaks Hebrew, English, Spanish and French. This year she began studying for a Master's in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud.

**Ayelet Ben Street –** Ayelet is 26 and currently lives in Tel Aviv. She grew up in Jerusalem in a traditional Mizrahi family. She studied at the Keshet High School for religious and secular pupils. She is a graduate of the Noam youth movement (affiliated with the Conservative movement), which led her to Women of the Wall and a year of service with the Jewish Agency in Chicago, where she was emissary in the Conservative community, a Jewish day school and summer camp. She then worked at the Ramah camp in Wisconsin for two subsequent years. She served in the army at a center for the blind and hard of hearing, and was a counselor in schools and centers for Jewish and Arab children with hearing difficulties. Following the army she was a counselor for a year at the Hanaton pre-army program in the Lower Galilee. Last year she worked at the Conservative movement's Knesset Guard organization, which monitors developments related to religion and state in the Knesset, and also helps train activists. This year she commenced her studies in the Departments of Jewish Philosophy and Literature.

**David Ben Shimul –** Aged 30 and from Carmiel, David is married with two children. He has a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from UNINTER in the Brazilian city of Curtiba. He hopes the Horizons program will provide him with the knowledge and tools to be able to deliver content laden with values, identity and belonging to students in the public education system, to be part of a different education system to the one he grew up in, to understand it and to have an influence within it. He is studying for a Master's in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud.

**Avya Gur –** Avya is 26 and comes from Givat Ada. She is a musician, writer, and singer. A graduate of the Aloni Yitzhak Youth Village, she served in the Israeli Navy. This year she began studying at Tel Aviv University's Department of Linguistics. She also learned Jewish studies at the Atim Beit Midrash. She believes in our ability as human beings to show creativity, craftsmanship and empathy, and hopes to keep this faith and pass it on to her friends and students, while encouraging critical thinking, doubting, and developing independent thought and freedom of internal discourse. She commenced her studies this year in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and the Department of Biblical Studies.

**Talia Greenfield –** Talia is 23 and from Ra'anana. She is a graduate of the Tzvia Ulpana in Herziliya (part of the state-religious system); a graduate of Bnei Akiva; and Midreshet Ein Hanatziv. She believes that Judaism needs to be taught in way that is alive and relevant for the diverse Israeli society, both religious and secular, and she is interested in exploring this further on the Horizons program. She commenced her studies this year in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and the Department of Biblical Studies.

**Libby Levin –** Aged 26 and from Tel Aviv, Libby grew up in Kibbutz Ma'ayan Baruch in the Upper Galilee. She is a graduate of the Emek HaHula High Shool in Kibbutz Kfar Blum, and is a graduate of Kav HaZinuk's Program for Advancing Young Leadership in the Peripherty. This NGO identifies, trains and supports future value-based, diverse and groundbreaking social leadership. She did a pre-army year of service at the Neve Hadar Dormitory in Havatzelet HaSharon, a therapeutic and post-hospitalization dorm for at-risk children and youth.

Libby did her army service in the Education Corps, as an NCO in the Center for the Advancement of Special Populations, where she supported soldiers with acclimation, economic and educational difficulties. She has also been a leader with the Masa Israeli program. Because most of her life has been taken up with social projects, she has been looking for a way into the world of education. She is excited to study on the program and to advance in the educational arena. She commenced her studies this year in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and the Department of General History.

**Meital Hillel** – Meital is 22 and comes from Moshav Bnei Dror in the Sharon. She is a graduate of the 'Dror' Kiryat Hinuch High School in the Sharon, where she focused on Land of Israel studies and Archaeology, while also studying general history at the Open University. Prior to the army she did a year of service with the 'In the Community – Changing Social Reality' project. In this framework she taught young women at-risk who were going to study at the Evelina Tehila High School. For her army service she taught Hebrew at an Ulpan in a traditional high school supporting youngsters without housing (the Atnachta program). Afterwards she was the commander of soldiers in the education unit in the south and a commander for training commanders.

As the daughter of a mother who made Aliyah from Ethiopia and as someone who has worked with at-risk girls, Meital sees deep value to Jewish identity and is happy to be able to help shape this with young people, as a source of inspiration and strength. She commenced her studies this year in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and the Department of Jewish History.

**Shiran Katz –** Aged 24 and from Tel Aviv, Shiran is a graduate of the Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts in Givatayim, where she focused on Jewish Thought and Dance. At the end of her studies she won a prize for excellence in the fields of learning, art, society, and spirit. She did a pre-army year of service at 'Zemer' in Migdal HaEmek, where she dealt with education and strengthening young people on the periphery. In the army she was a commander on the border with Egypt, and was recognized as an outstanding officer on Independence Day.

She started studying at Tel Aviv University's Philosophy, Economics and Political Science program in 5779, having been inspired from studying Jewish Philosophy in high school. She has a mission to educate and inspire the future generation. This is why she joined the Horizons program, which combines education with a teaching qualification. Her dream is to open a school for the arts in the periphery, in order to allow as many people as possible the exceptional experience that she had in high school, the period which shaped her values. The steps she is taking today towards this goal are learning at university, teaching and coaching children and youth, and setting up a project for free private tuition via social media. She commenced her studies this year at the Department of Jewish Philosophy and the multidisciplinary humanities program.

**Yoni Sharon –** Yoni is 34 and from Tel Aviv. He is a musician and guitar teacher. A graduate of the Hadassim High School, where he focused on theater, he then graduated Rimon Music School, where he focused on performance, and he also has a qualification as a sound engineer and technician. In the army he served in the Classified Intelligence Corps in a role that supported combat units. In the last few years he has been an independent musician, played in bands, taught guitar, produced, and recorded. Through his work as a guitar teacher he understood that, alongside his love and passion for music, he also had a deep desire to teach. As a result he decided to improve his professional and pedagogical abilities and to teach formally. And, as someone from an extremely secular background, he wanted to broaden his knowledge of Jewish culture, its development and sources – this is how he found the Horizons program. He also wants to broaden his knowledge of general philosophy and religious studies. He commenced his studies this year in the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Jewish Philosophy.