

**Rabbinical Training Department**

**Tzohar**



Friday, June 1, 2018
**18 Sivan, 5778**

Dear Mr. Lior Arussy,

**The Half Year Summary – Tzohar Rabbinic Training Department**

### **General Background**

**The Aims of the Tzohar's Rabbinic Enrichment Department**

Tzohar is Israel's largest rabbinic organization and its rabbis serve the public in various ways. In order to strengthen Tzohar's standing as a rabbinic organization and maintain its connection with its rabbis, Tzohar established a rabbinic training department. The department's activities are aimed at community rabbis who serve as an address for the needs and challenges confronted by their communities in the complex times in which we live. Today the work of community rabbis is more challenging than ever.

Our aims are as follows:

1. **To promote a wider vision of the role of the community rabbi.** The traditional concept of the role of a community rabbi tasks the rabbi with teaching Torah, providing individuals with halachic rulings, and managing prayers. Over the years, the community rabbi's role has expanded to include welfare issues, and to provide inspiration and public leadership to his community and beyond.
2. **To give the community rabbi practical tools.** The rabbinic ordination process requires knowledge of Halacha – Jewish law. However, a rabbi's job involves skills that go far beyond this. Many of these skills can be developed and improved upon so that he becomes more effective at his role.
3. **To guide community rabbis through the unique challenges they face.** Every community has its own story. The composition of the community members and the unique challenges the community faces, as well as the rabbi's personality and talents, demand personalized attention.
4. **To provide solutions for the special situations that the community's rabbanit (rabbi's wife) faces.** The community rabbi's position impacts his entire family. The rabbanit's status and position in the community and that of the family constitute part of the rabbi's challenges. Addressing the specific needs of the rabbanit, not only provides her with the necessary tools to deal with being in the public eye, but also empowers the community rabbi himself.

**The Activities of the Tzohar's Rabbinic Training Department**

The department is active in four areas:

1. **The Professional Development Program for Community Rabbis**

The ordination process that a rabbi goes through to become a community rabbi in Israel includes passing tests on specific subjects in Jewish law. However, serving as a community rabbi demands a much more complex skill set: highly developed interpersonal communication abilities, a broad community perspective, taking initiative, general knowledge, relevant halachic knowledge and more. For this, one needs additional relevant training not provided by the Rabbinate.

It is for this reason that Tzohar established the Professional Development Program for Community Rabbis. The purpose of this program is to empower the rabbis and help them develop the abilities necessary for them to excel in their rabbinic work.

The program includes three components:

1. **Receiving professional tools** – for example: interpersonal communication skills, building the community, personal guidance for community members, guiding families during their mourning period or times of distress, etc.
2. **Community rulings** – dealing with the principles of community rulings, in accordance with the specific Jewish laws needed in rabbinic work, as well as the 'spirit of the Halacha.'
3. **Collegial support in facing the challenges of rabbinic work** – the rabbis share challenges and dilemmas from their daily rabbinic work.

This program is intended for rabbis who are in their initial years of serving as community rabbis. The meetings are each approximately five hours in length and they take place over the course of two years. The course is aimed at rabbis between 30-45 years of age. The number of participants in each group is limited to sixteen in order to maximize the group dynamic.

The participants in this program are eligible for a yearly grant of 10,000 NIS, subject to their full attendance in the entire program..

There are currently thirteen community rabbis participating in this program in 5778 from all over Israel.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Place | Year of Training |
| Hanan Shukrun | Jerusalem | 2 |
| Ovadia Simni | Neve Michael | 2 |
| Aviram Hariv | Peduel | 2 |
| Ron Alon | Shoham | 1 |
| Avi Sha'ish | Rehovot | 1 |
| Yair Binstok | Efrat | 1 |
| Yehonaton Amrani | Holon | 1 |
| Ariel Ziskind | Gonenim, Jerusalem | 1 |
| Amihai Shukrun | Ramat Gan | 1 |
| Refael D'loya | Har Bracha | 1 |
| Dobi Stern | Mitzpe Ilan | 1 |
| Ze'ev Rozenfeld | Talmon | 2 |
| Sharon Simhi | Holon | 1 |
| Tali Bar-Lev | Coordinator |  |
| Boaz Ganot | Rabbinic Training Program Head |  |
| Rabbi Tzahi Lehman | Director of Rabbinic Training Department |

1. **Personal Guidance Program**

Like many others in leadership roles, the community rabbi faces loneliness. This loneliness is felt both on a professional level and on a personal-social level. The camaraderie that develops in the Professional Development Program responds to the personal/social needs of many participants.

At the same time as running the Professional Development Program, Rabbi Tzahi Lehman, , a member of the Tzohar Executive Board and Head of the Rabbinic Training Department, also holds personal guidance meetings. During these meetings Rabbi Lehman and the community rabbi discuss the specific challenges facing the rabbi and his community, focusing on the need to advance the community according to its character and needs.

This guidance is provided over the two years of the Professional Development program, with the option to continue afterwards if the rabbi wishes and feels it is necessary.

1. **The Rabbinical Apprentice Program – *Pirchai Rabbanim***

It is common to study for rabbinical ordination in both yeshivas and kollels. After completing their studies, the students are ordained as rabbis. However, only a small percentage of those ordained actually go on to become community rabbis. Some choose to work in education, while others choose different career paths altogether, and only a few search for a community position.

There are a number of reasons why so few go on to serve as community rabbis. One reason is that these newly ordained rabbis are not familiar with the world of community rabbis. Sometimes, a rabbi chooses not to be a community rabbi because he is familiar with a certain type of community or a certain style of rabbi, and he does not identify with this model. Our goal is to expose the rabbi to different models of communities and styles of rabbis, in the hope that he will find the type that suits him best.

This is the reason for our Rabbinical Apprentice Program – *Pirchai Rabbanim*. The purpose of the program is for the rabbi to gain a deep familiarity with the different opportunities of serving as a community rabbi.

Throughout this program the participants meet with a wide variety of community rabbis who serve different communities in a multitude of ways. A different rabbi comes to each meeting and discusses a relevant component of his work with the group based on his personal experiences.

Among the issues discussed: why be a community rabbi; how to prepare to be a successful rabbi; the rabbi as he views himself; the boundaries of the rabbanit's work; community – clients, employers or partners?; characteristics of the rabbanit's work in different communities; rabbinate on the side – merging a rabbinical career with another; the rabbi's family.

There are ten meetings in this program and each meeting lasts for three hours. The program's intended population are yeshiva and kollel students (avrechim) approaching the end of their rabbinical ordination studies, or immediately afterwards. The age range is between 25-32 years old. The number of participants in each group is limited to sixteen to maximize the group dynamic.

The participants in this program are eligible for a one-time scholarship of 3,000 NIS subject to full participation in the program.

There are two groups taking part in the apprentice rabbis program in 5778:

1. One group at the Or Etzion Yeshiva, Merkaz Shapira, with twelve participants.
2. One group at the Sha'alavim Yeshiva with fourteen participants.
3. **The Empowerment for Women Program**

The community rabbi does not simply provide a service to the community as an individual; his wife and family share the mission. The rabbi’s wife serves a role in many communities as well. Even rabbi's wives who do not see themselves as serving a rabbinic role in the community agree that their personal life and familial life have been influenced by the their husband's role as community rabbi.

It is common for the rabbi to share his concerns and dilemmas with his wife. Additionally, the community constantly seeks support from the rabbi, his wife and his family. The women in the community turn to the rabbi's wife when they are in need, etc.

 In answer to this challenge, Tzohar established the Empowerment for Women Program. The purpose of this program is to empower the rabbi's wife and provide her with appropriate tools for the position she holds, as well as a support network of colleagues.

Among the issues discussed: how to talk to teenagers about sexuality, about difficulties, and especially, about their self-image; secrets and discoveries in the rabbanit's work; talking with, and about, people with mental health issues; issues relating to chronic or terminal illness; the influence of our employment on our life and identity; violence in the family.

The 5778 winter session has already taken place for. It included five meetings in which 25 rabbis' wives took part. The summer session will begin shortly.

**In summary, the Rabbinc Training Department is active in the four areas noted above. We are successfully spreading the spirit of Tzohar by training rabbis in the Professional Development Program and by supporting them in the field.**

**We would like to thank the Edmond E. Safra Foundations for supporting this work. We believe that this partnership will see continued development and growth in the work of community rabbis across Israel**

**We would be delighted to host you and introduce you personally to the department heads and to the rabbis taking part this year.**

**We have included a budget report for this program (see appendix).**

**With our blessings and gratitude,**

**Rabbi Tzahi Lehman Rabbi Boaz Ganot Dafi Forer Kremer**

 Director of Rabbinic Training Department

 Rabbinic Training Program Head

Director of Resource Development

**Appendix**

**Budget – Accounting Report for Rabbinical Training Program 'Empowerment'**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 83000327 | Rabbinical training – Empowerment | 71,846 |  |
| 83000328 | Rabbinical training – apprentice rabbis men and women | 89 |  |
| 84000208 | Computers, internet, and maintenance 945 | 356.8 |  |
| 84000308 | Mailing rabbinical training | 4,435.7 |  |
| 84000408 | Telephone and cellphone – rabbinical training | 1,622.6 |  |
| 84000508 | Office supplies –rabbinical training | 192.4 |  |
| 84000608 | Office maintenance – rabbinical training | 3,084.6 |  |
| 84000708 | Legal fees and letters – rabbinical training | 679 |  |
| 84000808 | Banking fees and credit – rabbinical training | 0 |  |
|  | Total expenses | 82,306.1 |  |
| 74106200 | Lior Arussy initial donation payment (first 50%) |  | 171,634 |
| 74106300 | Foreign investment funds rabbinical training |  | 650,701.87 |
|  | General donations |  | 0 |
|  | Total income |  | 822,335.87 |

\*The program that Ya'acov handed in only details half of the costs. The program is also supported by foreign investment funds and by general donations.

 This accounting report is a complete report.