Dear Friends & Partners,

Thanks to your support, in 2018, Tzohar has continued to advance the vision of tolerance and caring that has always guided our organization.

Your generosity has enabled us to connect tens of thousands of Israelis with their Jewish heritage while strengthening the Jewish future of our country. As a result, Tzohar continues to play a pivotal role in defining the Jewish character of the State of Israel.

Indeed, 2018 was a year of tremendous growth and activity for Tzohar. In our effort to advance a better and more just society for the people of our beloved nation, we were privileged to engage many more Israelis in their Jewish heritage in a warm and welcoming atmosphere of acceptance.

We have continued to work tirelessly to enrich and expand our existing activities while adding new programs based on need and demand. Today we are recognized as one of the most prominent organizations in Israel working to enhance Jewish identity and improve the bonds between religion, state and society.

In 2018 we opened a marriage registration satellite office in Tel Aviv and increased the scope of our Bnei Mitzva programs and our ‘Shorashim’ project. These achievements allowed us to reach new populations as well as increase awareness and engagement. Our Holidays project- named in Memory of Dr. Aryeh Leon and Tzipora Dvora Kronitz z”l- has allowed us to become the natural choice for many Israeli Jews who are seeking a traditional Jewish holiday experience. Similarly, the Tzohar Ethics Center- named for Bertha Kresel z"l- and directed by Rabbi Yuval Cherlow, continues to grow in influence.

One of our major 2018 achievements was the launch of Tzohar Food Supervision. Appreciating the important role that kashrut observance holds in our country, after much consideration and planning, we launched this kashrut initiative. While it is estimated that the percentage of Israelis who would like to keep kosher is on the rise, only a third of restaurants in Israel have kashrut certification. We take great pride in recognizing that this initiative has been met with considerable public support and despite continued challenges this encourages us to continue on this path.

Aside from our programs, this year we made significant progress towards formalizing our relationship with our friends and supporters around the world. In April 2018 the Israel Friends of Tzohar was launched. the Israel Friends offers our partners in Israel the opportunity to join a network of Tzohar supporters. We are delighted to report that by the end of 2018, we have 65 dedicated men and women in our circle of friends. Based on this model, we are expanding our circle of friends to the United States, England, Australia and other countries. We invite you to become a member - your seat awaits.

This report will provide the details of all our 2018 activities and hopefully leave you with a deeper appreciation of the remarkable path we have been blessed to take over the past year.

We were deeply saddened this year by the untimely passing of Tzohar stalwart, Rabbi Elyashiv Knohl z”l. Rabbi Knohl founded the Marriage Project and for many years served as its halachic director. His endless caring and tolerance for the needs of our couples and his love of his fellow man was evident in all that he did; he is sorely missed. Recently, Rabbi Gabi Goldman assumed this position and we wish him and Tzohar's Marriage Department continued success.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our valued partners, for the confidence you have placed in us. It is due to your support that we have been able to attain all the significant achievements laid out in this report. Your confidence in our ability to achieve our goals has enabled us to strengthen the Jewish future of our nation and positively impact our people both here and around the world. We take great pride in this partnership and are positive that together we will continue to achieve our vision and further unite the Jewish people.

With thanks and appreciation,

Rabbi Dr. Moshe Beeri, CEO

Rabbi David Stav, Chairman

Dafi Forer Kramer, Director of Resource Development

Lifecycle and Jewish Holiday Activities

Tzohar's Jewish lifecycle and Holiday activities aim to ensure that every Jew is able to commemorate Jewish life-cycle events and Jewish holidays in a meaningful way.

Our activities take place in many diverse communities with the goal of making Jewish traditions and ritual accessible and relevant for all.

**The Marriage Project**

***The Goals***

With close to 10,000 Israeli couples annually opting for a civil marriage overseas, Tzohar's goal is to infuse meaning, warmth and relevance to the Jewish wedding experience and to ensure that that Jewish marriages are accessible to all Israeli Jewish couples.

***2018 – Responding to changing trends***

In recent years, due to changing perceptions in general Israeli society, a trend has emerged where traditional Jewish marriage is called into question and more and more people are choosing not to marry in a Jewish ceremony. Tzohar has witnessed this trend in the decrease in the number of couples signing up for our marriage services - particularly in the center of Israel. The population in Tel-Aviv and the center of the country is extremely alienated from Jewish heritage and has a high percentage of people who opt for a civil marriage overseas.

To respond to this trend Tzohar opened the Tel Aviv satellite office.

This initiative makes Jewish Marriage highly accessible. The task is far from simple; we began by establishing a noticeable, physical presence in the areas where most of these couples live. We set up three offices (in addition to the central Tzohar office in Lod.) The first office is in Haifa- home to a very sizable non-traditional population, an office operating out of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and the third and newest office in the Tel Aviv Port- the “cultural hub” of Tel Aviv.

We are delighted to report that our efforts have succeeded in increasing the number of couples who are seeking us out and we are committed to doing everything possible to ensure that this trend continues.

***Annual Number of Couples Marrying via Tzohar***

This chart shows that while the years 2012-2016 saw a sustained rate of activity in the number of couples turning to Tzohar, in 2017 we saw a slight decrease. Due to our efforts described above, in 2018 that number increased by approximately 300 couples.

***A Personal Glimpse***

*It was love at first sight…*

*“I never saw his wheelchair or the machines that support his breathing- and that isn’t because I’m blind… I just said to myself - this is the man I want to live with.”*

*This is how the love story began between Slava Yorchenko, who suffers from a severe muscular disease and Chani Ravnasri, a visually impaired woman. The couple married in 2018 with Tzohar’s volunteer Rabbi Yair Arieli officiating at the ceremony.*

*A year and a half before they decided to marry, Slava and Chani fell in love. Shortly thereafter, Slava proposed with a gold ring, Chani returned the gesture and bought Slava a ring and adorned his wheelchair with hearts that she painted herself.*

*10 months later they came together under the chuppah. Together with Rabbi Arieli, the couple reflected the happiness and hope of any young couple. Tzohar ensured that their disabilities would not prevent them from embracing the traditions of marriage that have defined our people for generations.*

**Shorashim**

***The Goal***

To enable Jews, primarily immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU), to prove their Jewish ancestry in the Israeli Rabbinical Courts.

***2018 - Shorashim Breaks the Glass Ceiling!***

For many years, Tzohar has been involved in proving the Jewish roots, primarily of immigrants looking to marry legally in Israel but who cannot do so unless they can prove their Jewish lineage.

In recent years, we have looked to expand our efforts and reach out to relevant populations even if they aren’t yet preparing for marriage. In 2018, we succeeded in breaking through this “glass ceiling” and we are proud to report **an increase of 96%** in the number of cases that were referred to Shorashim not directly connected to imminent marriages.

By expanding beyond “marriage-related” cases, we succeeded in significantly expanding our reach. The number of cases related to marriage is on the decline but there are still tens of thousands of individuals who require that their Jewish ancestry be certified.

The increase was made possible by a strategic plan implemented in 2018. We worked with a team of 'field agents’ and reached out to organizations that work with immigrants from the Former Soviet Union.

***A Personal Perspective***

*Miriam and Mariana are cousins both named for the same woman - a great grandmother called Miriam. Their special story has its origins in the early 20th century and continues to the present today; it is the tale of special women who stood by each other in the face of adversity.*

*Miriam was a young woman living in Ukraine in the early 1900’s - she died in childbirth when her daughter Rachel came into the world. Her husband was left with a tiny infant and he soon married another woman who raised the child. Some years later they had a child of their own, named Esther.*

*Rachel and Esther grew up as sisters in every way and both eventually made their ways to Israel and raised families. When each had granddaughters they both chose the name Miriam – or the variation Marianna - in memory of that matriarch who had died in childbirth.*

*Several months ago, Miriam arrived at Shorashim in advance of her wedding needing to prove her Jewish roots. Her grandmother Rachel had already passed away so Miriam, together with the Shorashim investigators, went to the nursing home where Esther was living to see how she could help. Based on that meeting, Miriam's Jewish roots were verified and Miriam proceeded with her Jewish wedding.*

*A little while later, Marianna arrived at Shorashim. She had already married a Jewish man in a civil ceremony. Concerned for her two children and wanting to ensure they were recognized as Jews, she wanted to certify her own Jewish roots. Marianna arrived without any documentation- embarrassed and worried about the process. By this time, the grandmother Esther had also passed away and so that avenue of investigation was no longer available. Due the research that Miriam had done months earlier and the actions of the original Miriam more than 100 years ago, the Shorashim researchers had everything they needed to prove Marianna's Jewish roots and another Jewish marriage would be made possible.*

*In the coming weeks we hope to close this case and accompany Marianna to the Rabbinical Court – with the blessing that a chain of righteous women that in both life and death stood in solidarity with one another.*

**The “Bnei Mitzva” Project**

***The Goal***

*To transform the Bnei Mitzvah event into a meaningful experience and create a lasting connection between the family and their Jewish heritage.*

***Bar Mitzvah***

***2018 – More families, more mentors and greater satisfaction***

Tzohar has designed a unique Bar Mitzva project transforming the Bar Mitzvah event into a meaningful experience while strengthening the family’s connection with their Jewish heritage. One of the unique aspects of the program is our hand-picked and specially trained mentors. in 2018 Tzohar held 2 courses in which we trained 46 new mentors. By training mentors from new geographic locations such as Haifa, Pardes Hanna and central Tel Aviv, Tzohar is able to provide this unique program to populations previously unserved. To date Tzohar has 157 active Bar Mitzvah mentors.

As a result of the quality and geographic spread of our mentors, as well as a targeted Facebook marketing campaign, Tzohar exceeded its goal and accompanied 449 Bar Mitzvah boys as oppose to the originally planned 350.

The quality of this program is reflected in the feedback questionnaires received from the participating boys and their families. The scores have been exceptionally high since the beginning, however in 2018, Tzohar succeeded in further improving the quality of the program as well as the number of participants.

The chart clearly illustrates the rapid growth of this project and the incredibly positive feedback we receive from participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | 2015-(Beginning in June) | 2016 | 2017- | 2018- |
|
| Number of Participants | 15 | 206 | 248 | 449 |
| Average Test Scores (Out of 10) | 9.77 | 9.62 | 9.77 | 9.81 |

*A Personal Perspective*

*When it came time for Yuval to celebrate his Bar Mitzva, his family turned to Tzohar to ensure it would be a meaningful experience. Based on his meetings with the family, the Tzohar program instructor mentor Chezi, came to appreciate that they wouldn’t feel completely comfortable having the ceremony in a Beit Knesset but would prefer a more private event- and not on Shabbat.*

*As it turned out, Yuval’s birthday fell on a day already of great significance- Yom Ha’atzmaut. – Israel Independence day. That year, the holiday fell on a Thursday- a day when we read the Torah. Chezi arranged for a private service in a Synagogue in Herzliya where the family lived. As soon as the main service had ended, Chezi led the family into the sanctuary where he read his Torah portion and was called up to recite the blessings.*

When the ceremony was over Yuval’s father Ilan turned to Chezi and said, “I honestly never believed that a synagogue could provide a welcoming Jewish experience for us. We have never felt at home in our local synagogue. This remarkable experience around Yuval’s Bar Mitzva showed the entire family that a Jewish celebration in a synagogue can be a positive experience.”

***Bat Mitzva***

***2018 – challenging societal perceptions***

In Israel, the concept of a Bat mitzvah, where girls mark this significant milestone in a meaningful way, remains relatively foreign.As such, many families who would commit to a Bar Mitzvah program for their sons, are not necessarily looking for such a program for their daughters.

In 2018, Tzohar continued to offer an original and creative Bat Mitzvah program that meets the needs of secular Bat Mtizvah girls. Tzohar remains committed to combatting societal perceptions while inculcating the need for this content rich program for girls of Bat Mitzvah age.

**The Bereavement Project**

***The Goal***

To provide practical and spiritual support to families during time of bereavement

***2018 - Offering Support When It’s Needed Most***

Unlike most Diaspora communities, In Israel, when someone loses a loved one, unless they know a Rabbi, which for most secular Israelis is rare, the family will not receive the practical, spiritual and emotional support we all need during the most difficult time in our lives.

Unfortunately, when a loved one passes away, the family has no choice but to engage with the local Chevra Kaddisha/burial society, whose focus is dealing with the deceased and not with the practical, emotional or religious needs of the family.

Tzohar provides families with a Rabbi who is there to support, guide and comfort the bereaved. In Israel, Rabbis are often limited in the role they can play during the burial service as this remains the domain of the chevra Kaddisha. However, Tzohar Rabbis do all they can to assist families in navigating the rules of the Chevra Kaddisha and are available to conduct minyanim and guide families and provide support throughout the entire process.

The road ahead for this program remains a challenge because we don’t feel it prudent to launch a public campaign against the burial societies Our plan is to organically promote interest in the program and based on those experiences we will assess how to move forward.

***The Personal Perspective***

*Thank you to Rabbi Gabi for your help and support during the funeral of my dear mother.*

*My mother passed away late at night on the 13th of Shvat.  We got the call from the nursing home that my dear mother, Tova Sandrov had passed away.  She was 92 years old and the call certainly wasn’t unexpected.  But the death of a mother, regardless of age, can come as a shock.*

*The ambulance arrived to take her away. We were hit with a wave of sadness and pain; our mother wasn’t here anymore.  And in that very moment we were forced to go from a position of pain and mourning and into one of action.*

*It was Thursday night and we had to plan a funeral.  What do we do?  Who do we call?  Who needs to be informed?  Who can help?  Who knows about the customs of death and burial?  It was honestly a moment of confusion and uncertainty and all of a sudden I remember: Tzohar…  Just days earlier I had read how Tzohar had begun to work in the realm of bereavement.  “Nothing happens by chance” I said to myself as I called the Tzohar hotline.  The call was answered by an informed and calm voice.  “My mother has a plot alongside my fatherin the section of the Givat Shaul Cemetery reserved for parents who had lost children in the army or to terrorism,” I recall saying.  “Indeed they had lost their son Chanoch, in the Yom Kippur War,” I explained.*

*The voice on the other end of the line remained calm.  “Rabbi Gabi will call you shortly and explain everything.”  And indeed, just minutes later the phone rang and I heard the voice of Rabbi Gabi (whose family name I still don’t know…), calm and comforting.*

*He respectfully asked some questions about my mother and our family and quickly became a partner in our bereavement process.  All the concerns that I had of estrangement that I feared based on other funerals I had attended melted away.  Rabbi Gabi asked whether we’d like the ceremony accompanied by clarinet music- a suggestion that filled me with excitement that we had someone who so understood where we were coming from.  We chose a favorite song and arranged to meet at the cemetary the next morning an hour before the funeral so we could become better acquainted and make it as meaningful an experience as possible.*

*The name Tzohar serves as an ultimate reflection of the bonds between fellow Jews- observant or secular.  Until this very day, the sounds of Rabbi Gabi’s clarinet remain with me and serve as a sort of anthem of Jewish unity and how a fellow Jew was with us during this difficult time.*

*Over a half a year has passed since that moment.  I have repeatedly delayed sitting down to write these words of thanks to Tzohar because the thoughts spark so much emotion.*

*But today I have found the strength: And I say thank you and I pray that many others will seek out your services, both in times of joy as well as times of personal need.*

*With sincere gratitude,*

*Batya Melamed*

**The Tzohar Jewish Holiday Project**

**In Memory of Dr. Aryeh Leon and Tzipora Kronitz**

***The Goal***

Our holiday project is designed to embrace a central vision of Tzohar to make Jewish tradition accessible to all Israeli Jews in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Tzohar holiday events are attended by tens of thousands of Israelis throughout the country and are led by hundreds of Tzohar volunteers.

***2018 – Additional locations, greater attendance, accelerated engagement***

**Purim**

On Purim TZOHAR holds Megilah readings and children's activities. The readings take place in local cultural centers and have a reputation for being “child-friendly” and welcoming.

In 2018 approximately 85,000 participants enjoyed Megilla reading and Purim activities in over 450 locations around Israel. This year for the first time, Tzohar added public libraries to its list of locations where the activities took place and children could enjoy an illustrated presentation of the Megillah.

**Shavuot**

Tzohar transforms the tradition of staying awake throughout the night of Shavuot and studying Torah into a meaningful, educational and relevant experience appealing to Israelis from diverse backgrounds.

In 2018 Tzohar held its long-standing **Tikun Leil Learning Together** program where social leaders, politicians, celebrities and Tzohar rabbis sat together on panels and explored contemporary Jewish Israeli issues. This program took place in 19 locations across Israel and attracted approximately 8,360 People

In addition, for the second year running, Tzohar invested significant resources in its **Tikun Leil Open Home** program where families across the country opened their homes and learnt together with friends and neighbors. This program ran in 138 private homes across Israel and drew a crowd of approximately 2,760 people.

**The Span of Tikun Leil Open House**



**Rosh Hashanah**

**Tzohar's Rosh Hashana program** brings shofar blowing to secular Israelis all around the country. The project includes shofar blowing, singing, children's activities and more.

In 2018, Rosh Hashanah activities were held in over 290 locations with approximately 36,000 participants.

**Yom Kippur**

While most secular Israelis fast on Yom Kippur most do not attend prayer services.

Tzohar provides explanatory Yom Kippur services which are meaningful, warm and welcoming. The services take place in cities, Kibbutzim and Moshavim across Israel.

In 2018 Tzohar organized 320 services attracting approximately 63,000 participants in communities nationwide. Each service was run by Tzohar volunteers. Participants are provided with machzorim and explanatory pamphlets on the meaning of the prayers and the day. In many of the locations, learning circles are held in the evening and Tzohar provides a booklet of source material to facilitate discussion. t

**The success of Tzohar's holiday programs clearly demonstrates the thirst in Israeli society for quality Jewish content that is delivered in an accepting, warm and welcoming environment.**

***A Personal Perspective***

*On Yom Kippur of 2017 sixty people participated in the Tzohar minyan at the secular Kibbutz Ga-ash. This past year that number grew to 150 Kibbutz members. When we came to the closing Neilah service, Eli, a member of the Kibbutz approached us and said the following:*

*“Look at all of them. They have all come out of their homes which is not an easy thing …… The home is their base and the fact that they have chosen to come out is a source of great pride for us”.*

*Eli then turned to his fellow members of the kibbutz and said:*

*“Friends, look around… We know that it’s not easy for many of us to come into a Beit Knesset. I remember that we deliberated long and hard whether to allow this type of program into our kibbutz. And look here we are! We are standing alongside one another and each one of us is supporting the other in solidarity and love.”*

*And finally Eli turned and said:*

*“And to you our father in heaven… It’s now the time of Neilah when the gates of heaven close. It’s the time for decisions. Please, love your nation. You are our father and you must love us… Please dear father, love us and choose good for us all”*

*Eli turned back to the audience and we all clearly saw the tears streaming from his eyes and soon everyone's eyes' were similarly filled with tears.*

*There is no nation like ours! Am Yisrael Chai!*

**The Tzohar Volunteer Management Division**

***The Goal***

To strengthen the bond with our volunteers by continuously providing them with professional tools to advance their work and to regularly express our utmost appreciation for their service through social and educational programming.

***2018 – Content and Conferences***

We take great pride that our operational structure is largely built upon the dedication of hundreds of volunteers. In 2018 we continued to actively work to enhance and expand our relationship with this growing community.

Our efforts included:

**Virtual Library** – the establishment of a virtual library that includes valuable and varied information ranging from basic informative tools to information on how to improve the 'client' experience.

**New Training Materials** are now availablefor Volunteer Rabbisand Bnei Mitzvah mentors including a dedicated app for our Bnei Mtizvah course participants.

**Whatsapp Broadcast Groups** – Every month, professional material is broadcast volunteer rabbis and bridal counselors.

**Online Dedicated Newsletters for Bridal Counselors** – Produced by our content development team, tackling complex subjects such as the influence of smartphones on marital relationships.

**Conferences** - a variety of conferences were held for our volunteers

**Volunteer Appreciation Day** – Tzohar's 2018 volunteer appreciation day was a huge success. Over 1000 people - our volunteers and their families - gathered at Etgarim Park in Ashdod where Tzohar saluted their contribution to Tzohar's success. The feeling of identification with Tzohar was palpable.

Rabbinic Leadership

***The Goal***

To establish a rabbinic leadership in Israel that is ethical and inspiring and has a lasting influence on the relationship between religion & state and too nurture the next generation of Tzohar rabbis.

**Pastoral Training**

**2018 – Extending the Concept of 'Community'**

**Professional Development for Community Rabbis**

Recognizing that community rabbis have the potential to play a critical role in our society today, this course aims to empower community rabbis to serve as effective spiritual leaders with the ability to apply Jewish law appropriately and sensitively.

In 2018, thirteen rabbis participated in our professional development course for community rabbis. The participants reported acquiring greatly improved professional tools such as interpersonal communication skills and public leadership skills.

**Program for “Rabbinical students”**

The program introduces the students to different models of community and different opportunities of serving as a community rabbi. In 2018, Tzohar ran two such programs - One group at the Or Etzion Yeshiva, Merkaz Shapira, with twelve participants and the other group at the Sha'alavim Yeshiva with fourteen participants.

**Wives of Community Rabbis**-– Recognizing the significant role of the wife of the Rabbi in the community, Tzohar created a program to provides these women with much needed tools and resources as well as a support network of colleagues. In 2018 XXX women took part in course of XXX meetings of XXX hours each.

**Virtual Community Rabbis – Launched in 2018 with the generous support of the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles**

Appreciating the increasing reliance of the public on the Internet, we have placed a heavy emphasis on bringing rabbis into the online world and providing them with the tools to develop a significant online presence. The rabbinic voices that are heard today on social media are largely those of extremists who arouse antagonism and alienation from Judaism. The voice of moderation and tolerance must be heard from rabbis as they are considered leaders and influencers of public opinion in Israeli society.

In 2018, thanks to a generous grant from the **Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles,** Tzohar launched its first course to train 'virtual community rabbis' providing them with the tools and abilities to have a significant and meaningful online presence and influence the public arena.

**The Tzohar Rabbinical Council**

***The Goal***

To leverage its combined authority to wield significant influence on the Jewish nature of the State of Israel.

For many years, the key issues pertaining to the vision and operation of Tzohar have been the responsibility of a core forum of rabbis. But as our scope and influence has grown, we have expanded this focus to include a larger group under the heading of the Tzohar Rabbinical Council. Composed of some forty leading rabbis, this Council is responsible for the major decisions of the organization.

***2018 – Shabbat, Kashrut, Yom Ha'atzmaut***

Over the past year the council met on three occasions. Issues discussed included, the role of Shabbat in Israeli society, the Tzohar Food Supervision Project, the halachic status of Yom Haatzmaut and other core issues. The Council set up two sub committees which were assigned to develop recommendations that would be discussed by the broader Council for further review.

Public Policy

***The Goal***

Given the complex integration between religion and State in Israel, the goal of Tzohar’s Public Policy activities is to help define the Jewish and social character of the State of Israel.

**Knesset Project**

Tzohar is regularly involved in championing various legislative measures connected to our mission. Much of our work is dedicated to establishing positive relationships with lawmakers and parliamentary aids in the Knesset. Our work is apolitical and every effort is made to establish working relationships with representatives from all the Jewish political parties and factions in the Knesset.

***2018, Advancing an ethical and moral Jewish society in Israel***

* Published and presented position papers on key issues before relevant Knesset committees.
* Consultations with Knesset members and aids designed to promote the connection between Jewish identity and policy making.
* Promotion of bills that promote the Jewish perspective on society, family and ethics.
* A bill that would support pre-marital counseling.
* A bill restricting offensive and damaging speech in online forums.
* A bill to financially protect independent (non-salaried) employees in the case of the loss of a loved one. The previous law favors only salaried workers whereby independents can incur financial losses because they choose to sit shiva.
* A bill that would add women to the committee that elects the Chief Rabbi of Israel. This would be a revolutionary change in the current practice and has already gained the support of 27 members.
* A bill that would add the Chief rabbi of the Israeli police to the national rabbinical council.
* A Knesset bill increasing the ability of judges to reference Jewish law in reaching decisions.
* Efforts to advance regulation to make synagogues in Israel more accessible for the disabled.

Other activities included:

* A parliamentary roundtable with the Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel on the topic of reducing animal cruelty in industrial meat production.
* Annual Tu B’Shvat seder in the Knesset hosted by the Knesset speaker and attended by many members of the parliament.
* Tzohar released the second volume of the “Tzohar in Legislation” book dedicated to articles by politicians on issues related to our organizations mission as well as papers by Tzohar rabbis on these topics.

**Media and Communications**

***The Goal***

Tzohar aims to leverage the media coverage that the organization receives in order to, advance our agenda and name recognition.

Tzohar has always worked to use the media as a conduit to reach audiences with our core messages and mission. We take pride in a high level of recognition among the Israeli public and are constantly working to further expand that awareness both in Israel and among relevant audiences abroad.

***2018 – Kashrut takes Center Stage***

In addition to our ongoing efforts on broader issues of Jewish identity, a key media focus in 2018 was the launch and promotion of the Tzohar Food Supervision project. According to objective surveys, our efforts resulted in the equivalent of 4,500,000-shekel worth of publicity in Israel alone over the first six months of the project.

Considerable coverage was also secured in the English-language media around the world with placements in outlets like The New York Times, The Jerusalem Post, The Times of Israel, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, i24 News, the Associated Press among many others all across the globe.

ATTACHED GRAPHIC

**Tzohar Food Supervision**

***The Goal***

To bring integrity, competition and transparency to the field of Kashrut and to provide supervision for 10 percent of the food establishments in Israel.

**2018 - Tzohar Food Supervision is launched**

in 2018 Tzohar launched Tzohar Food Supervision as a subsidiary of Tzohar. In recent years, the kosher certification system in Israel has been the subject of harsh criticism, especially from business owners. The staggering extent of criticism has led to disillusionment with the government’s kashrut system. Many business owners have abandoned kashrut certification – despite their religious and economic interest in maintaining the laws of kashrut – solely because they do not want to interact with the State Rabbinate.

On March 1st 2018, Tzohar launched **'Tzohar Food Supervision**,' a subsidiary of Tzohar, in order to bring **integrity, competition, and transparency** to this field. **By the end of 2018, 110 restaurants carried Tzohar supervision.**

Tzohar Food Supervision operates in full accordance with the halachic regulations of the Chief Rabbinate however our operations are carried out independently. Our specific goal is to encourage businesses that were previously not certified as kosher to obtain such certification and provide consumers with more kosher options.

With the establishment of this new venture, the following founding principles were developed to guide this initiative.

1. Kashrut supervisors (male and female), will undergo special training courses.
2. Close monitoring of the taking of tithes (תרומות ומעשרות)
3. Practical work by kashrut supervisors in the kitchens of the food establishment’s we supervise
4. Certification is only provided following a trial period.
5. Close oversight of our supervisors to ensure they comply with our regulations.
6. This is not a for profit initiative; any profits earned will be returned to the businesses we supervise.,
7. No financial employer-employee relations will exist between the supervisors and the businesses they supervise. The Food establishments pay Tzohar Food Supervision for our supervision services and supervisors receive a wage from Tzohar Food Supervision. This is to circumvent any chance of illicit payments for favors.

Rabbi Oren Duvdevani, a highly experienced and respected expert in kashrut supervision of large scale kashrut operations in Israel and abroad, was recruited to direct the initiative.

Over the course of 2018, the Project has enjoyed healthy growth and we look forward to continued expansion in the years ahead.

**Tzohar's Center for Jewish Ethics in Memory of Bertha Kressel z"l**

***The Goal***

The Center aims to be a leading authority on issues of ethical concern in Israel and the Jewish world. The Tzohar Ethics Center is dedicated to the relentless pursuit of an Israeli society that is moral and just.

***2018 – From Jerusalem to Helsinki***

**Organ Donation**: Together with a number of partners, Tzohar's Center for Jewish Ethics launched a major public awareness campaign to promote organ donation.

**Conferences in Israel and abroad:** Rabbi Yuval Cherlow, Director of Tzohar’s Jewish Ethics Center, delivered 19 lectures on issues of Jewish ethics at influential conferences and symposiums. These included:

* The Technion Faculty of Medicine
* Tel Aviv's University's International Ethics Conference
* Institute for National Security Studies
* The Annual Herzliya Conference
* Hebrew Universities Jerusalem PPE Convention – Rethinking Artificial Intelligence
* Rabbi Cherlow headed a session at UNESCO's International Conference in Israel
* The Sderot Conference on organ donation
* George Washington University School of Medicine
* Religious Zionist Conference in Australia

**Round Tables**

* Promoting an ethical code to prevent cruelty to animals in the food industry.
* Struggle against exporting arms to countries that violate human rights.
* Establishment of the Helsinki Committee for the export of arms.

**Appointments:** Rabbi Cherlow was appointed to a number of positions in 2018 including:

* The Helsinki Commission that reviews all medical and genetic testing on human beings in Israel.
* The Commission for Genetic Therapy that approves genetic medical treatments
* The Israeli Artificial Intelligence Committee of the European Union for Ethical concerns.

**Prenuptial Agreements**

***The goal***

To sign up couples to Tzohar's halachic prenuptial agreement in order to combat the phenomena of agunot –chained women.

***2018 – More Agreements, Less Agunot***

In Israel a legal divorce can only be secured via the rabbinic courts. The process can be unbearably slow and bureaucratic and is considered discriminatory against women. All too often, recalcitrant husbands (and at times wives), refuse to grant (receive) a get. The result is that the woman becomes an Agunah, “chained,” and locked into a tragic fate that prevents her from moving forward with her life, and remarriage in particular.

In 2018, Tzohar continued to market this agreement to couples marrying via Tzohar (over 4,000 couples a year). In addition, Tzohar invested considerable resources in training our marriage registration staff by providing practical tools for marketing the agreement, as well as arranging meetings with women who experienced 'get refusal' in order to foster empathy among Tzohar personnel.

As part of our marketing activities, Tzohar introduced Certificates of Appreciation for couples signing the agreement. This is a 'photo opportunity' that has proven to be a very effective social media marketing tool.

Since its launch in May 2015, over 3,300 couples have signed the agreement.