



The Schechter Institutes, Inc.  
שוחרי עמותות שכטר

# Across the Divide

Building Dialogue  
in Israel  
Rebuilding Jewish Life  
in Ukraine



**The Schechter Institutes**  
Annual Report 2022-2023

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**The Schechter Institutes, Inc.** is a not for profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the advancement of pluralistic Jewish education. The Schechter Institutes, Inc. provides support to four non-profit organizations based in Jerusalem, Israel, and forms an educational umbrella that includes:

**The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies**, the leading M.A. program in Jewish Studies in Israel with 300 students and close to 2,000 graduates and an extensive adult education program in Israel and overseas.

**The Schechter Rabbinical Seminary** is the international rabbinical school of Masorti Judaism, serving Israel, Europe and the Americas.

**The TALI Education Fund** offers a pluralistic Jewish studies program to 65,000 children in over 300 Israeli secular public schools and kindergartens.

**Midreshet Schechter Ukraine** provides Jewish education to Jewish communities in Ukraine and emergency relief to the Jews of Ukraine.

**Midreshet Schechter Israel** offers adult Jewish education in Bet Midrash frameworks in Israel.

**Neve Schechter-Legacy Heritage Center for Jewish Culture** in Neve Zedek draws 50,000 Tel Avivians every year to concerts, classes, cultural events and art exhibits.

Written and edited by Linda Price | Photos: Din Aharoni Rolland, 2023 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Shai Birnbaum, Netanel Cohen, Etai Nadav, Evgenii Petrushanskii and Josh Shuman | Graphic design: Yula Verman





## Across the Divide

### Building Dialogue in Israel; Rebuilding Jewish Life in Ukraine

At this critical juncture in our Jewish State's history, where voices of dissension, disunity and divisiveness are clamoring to be heard, it is important to keep in mind that much more unites Israel than divides it.

At the vanguard of building national unity is the Schechter Institutes in Jerusalem, who, forty years ago, introduced the notion of dialogue and religious pluralism into every Schechter curriculum, classroom and program, the effects of which reverberate throughout Israel today:

- with our close to 2,000 MA graduates working to plant the values of diversity and mutual respect in the minds of each and every one of their students, co-workers and family members;
- with Schechter-led synagogues acting as models of religious pluralism for entire neighborhoods and towns;
- with the TAL school system, for close to fifty years, instilling the lives of three generations of Israelis – hundreds of thousands – with core values of Judaism, pluralism, Zionism and democracy;
- with Neve Schechter dispelling the debilitating equation of religion = coercion, replacing the disconnect with a Judaism that provides spiritual beauty and space for all.

And in this year of displacement and loss in Ukraine, we honor the dedicated emissaries of Midreshet Schechter who continue to bring hope and optimism, along with the basics of survival to Jewish communities across Ukraine. These quiet heroes are not only defending their country, they have also chosen to practice their Judaism during these challenging times, in their synagogues, schools, seminar retreats and Camp Ramah Ukraine.

## Letter from the Chairman



Dear Friends,

The situation in Israel is very troubling to all of us no matter where we stand on the political spectrum. As the Talmud says in the Tractate of Yoma, the Second Temple was destroyed due to senseless hatred. As a result, we were exiled for 2,000 years. What we are witnessing today is similar conflicts within the Jewish people in Israel. In this environment, support for Jewish democracy and pluralism is key to helping everyone understand the viewpoints of "the other" and finding ways to reconcile conflicting views in a manner respectful to all. By educating children and adults in the beauty of their Jewish heritage, Schechter helps to bridge these kinds of divides.

Jewish pluralism and democracy are the essence of our mission. In all of our activities, we attempt to both raise the level of knowledge of and appreciation for Judaism and to stress tolerance for different ways of practicing Judaism. We support these concepts in many ways.

For children, there is TALi which brings Judaism into the secular Israeli school system and educates over 65,000 children and 3,000 teachers each year, as well as preparing pedagogic materials for hundreds of non-TALi schools and pre-schools in the Israeli school system.

For families, we train rabbis who serve in pulpits, community centers, hospitals and other areas throughout Israel (and Europe) and spread Judaism through their actions and teaching.

For adults, we offer degree and non-degree courses at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies and the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary in Jerusalem and Neve Schechter in Tel Aviv, as well as online in Hebrew and English. Neve Schechter also brings pluralistic Judaism to more than 50,000 people per year through its cultural programs including Jewish art, classes, music, book clubs and holiday programming.

Our work spreading pluralistic Jewish values isn't limited to Israel. TALi has prepared teaching materials for Jewish day and supplemental schools throughout South America and in eight European languages. In the Ukraine, we run Hebrew and day schools, Camp Ramah Ukraine and, together with Masorti Olami, four synagogues throughout the country. In the midst of the war, we help bring stability by providing aid and shelter to those displaced, helping those who want to emigrate, and maintaining Shabbat and holiday celebrations as well as all life cycle events.

We are happy to send you our Annual Report so that you can see in detail just how we are fulfilling our mission.

We hope that you will continue to support us in spreading Jewish knowledge and Jewish pluralism throughout the State of Israel and the Jewish world.

With best wishes for a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling New Year,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saul I. Sanders". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Saul I. Sanders  
Chairman of the Board, The Schechter Institutes, Inc.

## Letter from the President



I agree with every word in the letter from our Chairman, Saul Sanders. Since January 2023, the State of Israel has been embroiled in a huge conflict, which has pitted communities, friends and families against each other.

Yet, as I have pointed out elsewhere (*Responsa in a Moment*, Vol. 4, chapter 17), the Jewish ideal has always been to strive for unity without uniformity.

As for unity, we have learned in *Midrash Tanhuma* (ed. Buber, *Nitzavim*, pp. 48-49): "According to the universal custom, if one takes a bundle of reeds, will he be able to break them at one stroke? But if he takes them one by one, even an infant can break them. *So too you find that Israel will not be redeemed until they become one bundle...*".

But unity does not mean uniformity! As we have learned in the tractate of *Berakhot* 58a: "Our Rabbis taught: *If one sees a multitude of Jews, he says: 'Blessed is He who discerns secrets' – for the mind of each is different from that of the other, and the face of each is different from that of the other*". In other words, we actually recite a blessing to God for having created people who are different from each other in their ideas and appearance!

As Saul Sanders pointed out, pluralism is one of the main Jewish values stressed in the dozens of programs run by the Schechter Institutes, which now teach and reach 125,000 children and adults every year.

But how do we teach pluralism in practice?

- Our MA graduate Nahal Cohen fosters Jewish-Arab dialogue as Director of Akko's Mediation Center for Dialogue in the Community (see page 4 in this report).
- TAL is now developing a curriculum to teach pluralism throughout the Israeli public school system (see pages 5 and 17), while continuing to run the incredibly successful *Dialogue and Identity* project for 1,200 Jewish and Arab Israeli children (see page 17).
- The Schechter Rabbinical Seminary continues to run the pioneering *Ashira* program, which teaches adults how to chant the services in four tracks; both the teachers and the students come from every denomination in Judaism (see page 15).
- And Neve Schechter now attracts every type of Tel Avivan – secular and traditional, young and old, veterans and new immigrants from Ukraine and Russia – to its dozens of classes, concerts and art programs.
- In order to expand our message of pluralistic Judaism throughout the State of Israel and the Jewish world, we have recently hired talented new staff members, including Rabbi Matt Berkowitz as Vice President of the Schechter Institutes, Inc.; Rabbis Chaya Rowen Baker and Arie Hasit as the "Dean Team" of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary (see pages 6 and 7); Dr. Marva Shalev Marom as the new incumbent of the Golinkin Chair in TAL Jewish Education (pages 11 and 17); and Bar Yerushalmi as Curator of the Neve Schechter Art Gallery (page 9).

If you are upset about the current situation in Israel, you can *do* something about it, by partnering with us and supporting The Schechter Institutes, the largest provider of pluralistic Jewish education in the State of Israel.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Golinkin".

Rabbi Prof. David Golinkin  
President, The Schechter Institutes, Inc.



## Crossing the Great Religious Divide

**Nahal Cohen, 37, Director of *The Mediation Center for Dialogue* in the Arab-Jewish city of Akko, Schechter MA graduate in the Maccabi Program for Community Leadership**

*"To be able to see the world as it is, not as you fear it might be, let faith extinguish the fear."* Nahal Cohen's WhatsApp contact information provides a poignant first clue as to who this woman is. So does her picture. She is definitely Orthodox, donning a prominent head covering. She is a devout believer, but one who is courageously committed to co-existence with Israel's Arabs.

"I call myself 'Settler Lite,'" she explains with a wry smile. Nahal grew up in Bet Horon, a small communal settlement north of Jerusalem. She attended a religious girl's high school in Ofra, a northern West Bank town in Samaria. She met her husband in the religious Zionist youth movement, Bnei Akiva. In 2011, they moved as a family to Akko, a coastal city north of Haifa with a historical mix of Arab and Jewish residents.

"We joined the 'Garin Torani' (a group of young, religious Zionists) to help strengthen the Jewish presence in Akko," she explains. At one time, Akko's "new" city (as opposed to its ancient walled city) was almost entirely Jewish, but today, 60% of the residents are Arab.

Ideology aside, the experience has radically changed Cohen's perception of Arabs. "Growing up, I only saw Arabs 'on the other side of the fence.' For me, an Arab was a 'potential terrorist.'" All that has changed over the past twelve years. "Once 'the other' becomes your neighbor, it is impossible to see them as your enemy. He or she simply becomes a person. A good or bad person."

Indeed, Nahal feels Israel's biggest enemy today "is our ignorance of 'the other,' be it Arab-Jew, Secular-Religious, Right or Left. Ignorance quickly leads to fear and hatred." Focused on the community, this activist has worked extensively with youth-at-risk, as well as teaching mainly Russian immigrants in the national conversion program for Israeli soldiers.

Two years ago, she was chosen to direct Akko's Mediation Center for Dialogue in the Community. Together with three professionals and an additional thirty volunteers, Nahal's team works with thousands in the city. The job is demanding, and can often be lonely. "It's very nice to talk about 'co-existence,' as my Tel Aviv friends are wont to do. But it's not always about peace and love. It's about trying to give space to every voice, in a community pot that more often than not, spills over."

Nahal knows how difficult and paradoxical real dialogue is. "When you allow yourself to listen to a narrative different than your own, the fear of losing your own personal compass, your center, is very real." But she is willing to take those risks and fervently hopes that many more Israelis like herself will leave their comfort zones to engage in genuine dialogue.

**“Once ‘the other’ becomes your neighbor, it is impossible to see them as your enemy. He or she simply becomes a person. A good or bad person.”**

**– Nahal Cohen**



## Can Pluralism Be Learned, like Math and English?

**Orit Bar-Or, Director of Formal Education for TALi elementary schools, former Principal of the TALi Hod Hasharon School**

Orit Bar-Or is an experienced educator. For thirty-five years she has been integrally involved in shaping the lives of thousands of young Israelis, the vast majority of them in the TALi school system. Principal of the veteran TALi Hod Hasharon School for fifteen years, she is passionate about the principles and values that TALi education embraces.

"TALi stands for Enriched Jewish Studies, but I needed to connect my Judaism to my core values of Zionism and Democracy," explains Orit. These 'three legs' formed the educational pillars for the nine years that Orit had her students (1st-9th grade) under her wing.

Orit learned these values at home. Both her parents are from Iraq. They met in Israel and settled in Hod Hasharon, a fertile region a bit inland from Herzliya. Instilling in her a love of Israel and family, she remembers navigating between the "New Jew" returning to the Land of Israel and the "Traditional Jew" of her Iraqi ancestors. Introduced to TALi education early on in her professional career, Orit realized it was the perfect framework to "connect" these two disparate identities.

"Connections" are paramount to Orit's holistic philosophy of education. "Scholastic achievement will come, but first we must ensure that our students feel a sense of belonging – to their families, the school community and the community at large. With a positive sense of self comes an inner strength and well-being," explains Orit.

In 2018, after fifteen years at the helm of TALi Hod Hasharon, Orit retired. But only from the school. Today, she is Director of Formal Education at TALi headquarters in Jerusalem, overseeing the pedagogical work taking place in all TALi schools around the country.

Topping her agenda is *Meorot* – an educational incubator of six model TALi schools chosen for their excellence and commitment to TALi values. *Meorot* principals and lead staff are involved in creating a revolutionary three-year model for teaching pluralism in schools throughout Israel.

"TALi is building a pluralism curriculum that will take the discipline of pluralism out of the theoretical realm of words into the practical world of measurable acts of behavior. Just as in math and language, students are required to demonstrate specific skills, we want to prove that pluralistic behavior can be taught and measured empirically," explains Orit.

To this end, Dr. Nurit Novis-Deutsch, a Schechter graduate now on faculty at Haifa University's Department of Education, has been hired to study the effects of the *Meorot* pluralism curriculum on a group of 5th graders. "This is ground-breaking research, the first of its kind undertaken anywhere in the world," says Orit.

In Israel's divisive climate of 2023, TALi's new pluralism program aims to teach its youngest citizens skills in mutual respect and listening – just what the Jewish State needs most these days.

**"TALi is building a pluralism curriculum that will take the discipline of pluralism out of the theoretical realm of words into the practical world of measurable acts of behavior."**

**– Orit Bar-Or**

# THE "DEAN" TEAM

The Schechter Rabbinical Seminary proudly introduces two extremely talented SRS graduates set to lead the school in the coming years: Dean, Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker and Associate Dean, Rabbi Arie Hasit.



## Building on Strong Foundations

**Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker, 46, new Dean of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, SRS-ordained in 2007, served for sixteen years as rabbi of Jerusalem's Ramot Zion Synagogue and the last seven years also as SRS Coordinator of Practical Rabbinics**

Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker makes everything seem so easy. At the ripe age of 30, she became the first rabbi to be hired by Ramot Zion, Jerusalem's flagship Conservative synagogue. A congregation founded in the early 1970s by a group of North American Conservative rabbis, these idealistic leaders laid the foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel, establishing the Bet Midrash (today's Schechter Rabbinical Seminary), the TAL Education Fund and Ramot Zion.

Through her strong leadership skills, boundless commitment to community and keen empathy for people, Rabbi Chaya succeeded in making Ramot Zion a significant neighborhood force and a resource to people in search of a Jewish connection. "When looking for Jewish input, residents know to come to us, be it for celebrations or in sorrow. Local institutions know that they need to consult with Ramot Zion on any major planning processes or events," she explains.

As Dean of SRS, Rabbi Chaya wants to develop "creative and smart leaders who will strengthen innovative and committed Judaism." She envisions opening programs aimed at reaching a wider spectrum of Israel's population and building strategic partnerships with other institutions. "I want to create specialty study niches in adult and child education and community building, using the successful *Ashira* Jewish music program as a model.

"Another potential market are NOAM (Masorti youth group) graduates. We are anxious to reach them with SRS study programs, either in NOAM pre-army programs or in Israeli universities," explains Rabbi Chaya. A shortage of rabbis in Israel has prompted SRS to work on a unique training program for non-rabbinic community leaders. "We aim to provide them with the skills needed to lead their congregations. Naturally, some participants from these SRS programs will funnel into the rabbinical program."

Working closely for the past seven years with outgoing Dean, Rabbi Avi Novis-Deutsch, as coordinator of practical rabbinics at SRS, Rabbi Chaya gained invaluable experience mentoring students during their internships. "Those years re-kindled my passion for learning and being immersed in a Bet Midrash community. I realized how much I love teaching rabbis, helping them become the best leaders they can."

Within the Bet Midrash, Rabbi Chaya will focus on developing rabbinical skills for the community, building on the positive work that Rabbi Arie Hasit began in the Bet Midrash last year. "We want to give Bet Midrash graduates the ability to build and strengthen vibrant Jewish life in Israel, one that is honest and committed to advancing pluralism in Israel. The way we start is by building a microcosm of our ideal community right within the walls of our own Bet Midrash."

**"We want to give Bet Midrash graduates the ability to build vibrant Jewish life in Israel, honest and committed to advancing pluralism."**

**– Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker**



## The Heart of the Matter: the Bet Midrash

**Rabbi Arie Hasit, 40, new Associate Dean of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, SRS-ordained in 2016, founding rabbi of the Egalitarian Minyan in Mazkeret Batya for six years, Associate Director of SRS in 2022-23**

Rabbi Hasit feels blessed that Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker “brought me onboard for leading SRS together.” Over the years, their lives crossed at crucial periods in Arie’s professional development. “I consider Rabbi Chaya my rabbi and a leading figure in my rabbinic life,” says Arie. As a rabbinical student, he interned at Ramot Zion during Chaya’s tenure. Before that, Chaya officiated at Arie’s marriage to Sara Tova Brody.

The heart of Rabbi Arie’s work will be in the Bet Midrash, where, as Associate Director, he focussed his energies last year on building community. “I see the Bet Midrash as a *kehillah* – a community – not just a place to study. Our aim is to create a caring community *within* the Bet Midrash, an organic model to prepare our students to lead congregations of their own.

Rabbi Arie comes to his new position knowing how to build community. Immediately following ordination from SRS in 2016, Arie, together with his wife and infant daughter, moved to Mazkeret Batya to become the congregation’s first rabbi. This historic village near Rehovot has successfully attracted thousands of young Israeli professionals to its newer neighborhoods. “Initially, we formed a WhatsApp group of six families, rotating services in different living rooms. Six years later, our Egalitarian Minyan boasts 70 dues-paying families with a permanent location in a school,” beams Arie.

In the coming year, Rabbis Chaya and Arie will take practical rabbinics one step further into the community. One day a week will be dedicated to peer learning, practicing a broad range of teaching skills including story-telling and on-site training in schools. Business and organizational skills will also be taught. Students will be required to organize seminars for the Bet Midrash as well as run small projects and lectures for the public at large, each according to his or her particular passion and strengths, all aimed at exposing wider audiences to the SRS message.

“SRS must nurture an environment of diversity, committed to making Israel a better society. Our vision is to transform the Bet Midrash into a community of diverse voices where everybody brings their Torah to the world, and by doing so, makes the world a better and more tolerant place,” explains Arie.

Look out Israel! This “Dean Team” means business and they are surely out to win. “I look forward to working closely with Rabbi Hasit. Both of us are eager to do a good job, and if so, then it will be easy!” sums up Rabbi Chaya.

**“I see the Bet Midrash  
as a *kehillah* –  
a community – not  
just a place to study.”**

**– Rabbi Arie Hasit**



## Living Through Two Wars and Landing on Your Feet

**Maxim Melnikov, 39, Director of Kyiv's Conservative congregation, *Kehillat Masoret*, and of the MILI Charitable Foundation which funds Midreshet Schechter Jewish centers in Kyiv and throughout Ukraine**

When Maxim Melnikov made his first trip to Israel from Ukraine in 2014, he was doubly lucky. First, he missed Russia's bloody incursion into eastern Ukraine and Donetsk, his home town. Second, he fell in love with the Jewish land and its people.

Maxim, a lawyer by profession and public activist by passion, today directs *Kehillat Masoret*, the largest Conservative community in Ukraine, co-sponsored by Masorti Olami. "Donetsk was no longer safe and so I moved to Kyiv after returning home from Israel. At a Jewish event, I met Rabbi Reuven Stamov, then rabbi of *Kehillat Masoret* and the rest is history," he smiles.

"Fleeing the fighting in Donetsk, I put down roots with *Kehillat Masoret*. It became my new home and family in Kyiv. The wonderful people took me in and really cared for me." In return, Maxim contributed his expertise in legal matters relating to the Kehillah. Not long after, he was hired as its Director. Maxim quickly became a pillar of the community, while in parallel, immersing himself in the study of Judaism and Jewish observance.

Fast forward seven years. Russia declares all-out war on Ukraine in February 2022. Kyiv is under siege and aerial bombardment. Many of *Kehillat Masoret's* members flee the Ukrainian capital, for points west, including Europe and Israel. Maxim does not.

"I could not allow myself to leave because of the responsibility I felt towards the community," he explains. Indeed, from the onset of hostilities until today, Maxim never abandoned Kyiv. "I remained in touch with congregation members, kept an eye on our new Jewish Center/Synagogue complex and made sure nobody lacked anything."

The war rages on, but the locals of Kyiv who never left or have returned, are creating their "new normal" within the confines of war's uncertainty and danger. Maxim is just one of those quiet heroes.

"My stay in this community is connected with helping to ensure that it develops, grows and prospers." And indeed, it has in the past half year. The new synagogue complex is open, and once again, offering Shabbat and holiday programming to growing numbers of members. New staff has been hired to meet the center's demand.

For Maxim, directing *Kehillat Masoret* and the Mili Fund at times seems a higher calling. "This is my job and my life at the same time. I live for this work and can't imagine my life without it. *Kehillat Masoret* connects me to my religion, to people I care about and to the goal of building a strong pluralistic Jewish community in the heart of Kyiv."

“This is my job and my life at the same time... *Kehillat Masoret* connects me to my religion, to people I care about and to the goal of building a pluralistic Jewish community in the heart of Kyiv.”

– **Maxim Melnikov**



## The Notion of What Judaism Can Be

**Bar Yerushalmi, 35, Curator, the Schechter Gallery, Neve Schechter Center for Jewish Culture, Tel Aviv**

The ancient “Red Highway” connecting Hebron to the Dead Sea; Bees and Breast-feeding; Jewish Amulets: Resurrecting Mystical Text through Music; The Voices of Eve, Ruth, Miriam and Hamutal Breaking the Gender Barrier; Mushrooms and the Talmud on Human and Non-human Connections; 24/7 Radio Prayers.

Is there a common denominator that runs through this eclectic list of art installations? Yes. The vision of one very talented young man, Bar Yerushalmi, curator of the Neve Schechter Gallery in Tel Aviv’s Neve Zedek neighborhood. Since assuming the job, Bar has upended how we see Judaism, knowledge and life itself.

His credentials are impressive. Four-year BA program at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. MA in Curating earned in London as well as an Internship at the Tate Modern. A year at a commercial gallery in Melbourne, with break-out projects upon his return to Israel in 2017.

Bar arrived at Neve Schechter in January 2022 with little or no Jewish background. “From the time of my Bar Mitzvah, I distanced myself from ‘Professional Judaism.’ I was still connected, but with a safety-gap in place.

“Joining Neve Schechter was an important moment for me. I was not expecting it to be so meaningful, where a job can also be part of your personal journey.”

He remembers his “defining moment” when Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaya, Executive Director of Neve Schechter, sat him down at a table, with a huge volume of the Talmud separating them. “I thought to myself: We do not speak the same language. We don’t come from the same world. It was the first time I had ever seen a *Daf Gemara* (page of Talmud) before... but... I understood that we would use this book to get to know one another.”

With time, Bar came to realize how closely the structure of the Talmud replicated his own thought processes and curatorial work. “You think you know your problems and how to deal with them. Before Neve Schechter, I could not imagine that there was such a huge part of me – my Jewish identity – that had been left untreated. I was reminded in a beautiful way, that I belong to this body of knowledge that is part of my heritage, part of my DNA.

“What we are doing through the gallery is expanding the notion of what Judaism can be,” Bar explains. This expansiveness is almost palpable in the installations Bar and his invited artists have brought to Neve Schechter. Using performance art and the medium of sound, “which is corporeal, an all-encompassing physical experience,” Bar is certain that the art is touching upon what people care about, “for is not the highest goal of art to connect with life and reflect upon it?”

“In Israel today, we face so much divisiveness and hate. Every subject is ‘loaded’, especially that of religion. Neve Schechter is finding ways of opening the ‘Jewish space’ for more people to enter that magnificent ‘treasure box,’ without fear and without fear of being left out or silenced.”

**“In Israel every subject is ‘loaded’, especially that of religion. Neve Schechter is finding ways of opening the ‘Jewish space’ for more people to enter that ‘treasure box,’ without fear of being left out or silenced.”**

**– Bar Yerushalmi**

# The Graduate School



Chair, Board of Trustees:  
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## Numbers 2022-23

- 300 students
- 62 faculty members, 14 full-time, 48 part-time
- 10 interdisciplinary MA tracks of Jewish Studies
- 76 graduates in 2023; 1994 graduates since 1994
- 13 books published by Schechter and Schechter faculty
- Over 50 conferences/study events live and by Zoom

## Class of 2023 – One of the Largest

On June 2, 2023, 76 MA students received their degrees in a Commencement ceremony at the Jerusalem campus. Judaism and the Arts and Land of Israel Studies awarded the most degrees, with Midrash, Jews of Spain and Islamic Countries and Gender and Feminism programs following close behind.

Opposite page: MA students discuss ideas presented in a Schechter seminar

Top, from left: Dean Noa Yuval Hacham (left) with Kekst Fellow Dr. Ronit Steinberg, congratulate Schechter graduate at the ceremony; Dr. Marva Shalev Marom, incumbent of the Golinkin Chair in TALJ Education

Bottom, from left: "Art Tours" class visits Israel's new National Library; Art studio at Schechter combines creating art alongside Jewish text study



## New Kekst Faculty Fellow Chosen

The Kekst Faculty Fellow for 2023–25, in memory of longtime Board Member **Gershon Kekst z"l**, is **Dr. Ronit Steinberg**. A lecturer in Art History and Modern Jewish Art, she received her PhD from the Hebrew University. Dr. Steinberg is department head and academic advisor for both the Judaism and the Arts and Gender and Feminism tracks. Her book, *The Visual Arts in Jewish Society*, a publication of The Open University, will soon be published.

## Kekst Fellow Leads Successful Gallery Course

Dr. Ronit Steinberg led "Art Tours," an intensive six-day course that immersed students in Israel's art scene. Visiting art galleries and museums in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in Spring 2023, the students met with artists and curators in an eclectic encounter of contemporary Israeli art and some older pieces. Very well received, the course will be offered again in 2024.

## Creating Art Inspired by Jewish Texts

Schechter has introduced an art studio experience alongside Jewish text study. Seventeen students were enrolled in a year-long academic course that offered analog photography first semester and sculpture and installation art second semester. A resident artist worked alongside Schechter faculty.



## YAMAH – Developing Creative Leadership

Over the years, Schechter has been at the forefront of establishing interdisciplinary graduate programs designed to foster educational leadership in Israel, including the Marpeh CPE program, Mishlei Academic Bet Midrash, Maccabi Community Leadership and more. Welcome YAMAH, Hebrew acronym for *Creativity, Educational Leadership and Jewish Renewal*. The program run by the Graduate School and TALJ, is headed by **Dr. Marva Shalev Marom**, who has joined the Schechter faculty and is the new incumbent of the Golinkin Chair in TALJ Jewish Education. (More on Dr. Marom, page 17.)

## Inter-Religious Classes Promote Dialogue

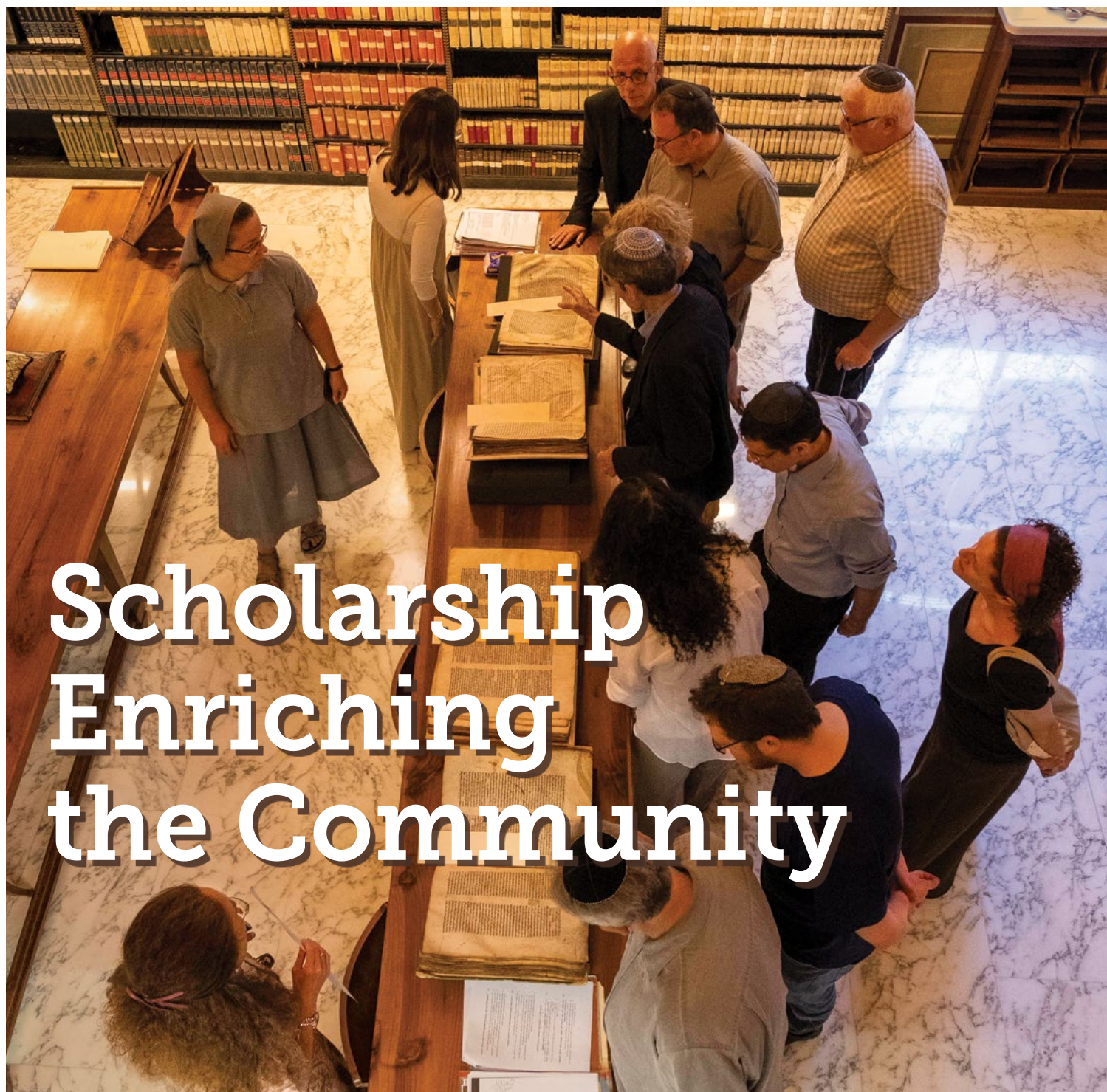
- The Center for Dutch-Israeli Studies (CIS) partnered with Schechter to offer *The Written Law and the Oral Law: Where Judaism and Christianity Differed* to Dutch pastors. The online course was taught by adjunct faculty member **Rabbi Dr. Vernon Kurtz**. The Center hopes to bring groups of Dutch clergy to Schechter for classroom *chavruta* in 2024.
- A field trip course on Sufism taught by Prof. Paul Fenton, a leading expert on Islam, was offered by Schechter's Adult Education Department in Spring 2023. An additional course taught by **Dr. Ron Kronish** explored Christian and Muslim relations.

## Trauma, Hope and Jewish Sources

A new multi-disciplinary research group made up of leading Schechter faculty members from various disciplines has been formed to study *Trauma and Hope in Jewish Sources*. A book and international conference is planned upon completion of the study.

## Zoom Lectures Enrich Hundreds

Schechter's Continuing Adult Education marked another successful year as online and in-person learning attracted new and varied audiences. The program, in English and Hebrew, continued to grow in 2022-23, with 38 courses reaching 400 students in Israel, Europe, Australia and North America.



# Scholarship Enriching the Community

Schechter continued to reach both the academic community and the general public through its conferences, lectures and publications, both online and in-person.

- *Informed Creations* MA program final art project, July 2023
- 24th National Women's Study Days in four languages, February and June 2023
- Conference on programs for people with mental illness, co-sponsored by SRS, June 2023
- Book Launch, *Bemidbar Rabah*, Vol. 1, ed. by Profs. Hananel Mack and David Golinkin, May 2023
- Conference/field trip marking Israel Independence Day, SRS, May 2023
- 17th Annual Conference on Gender in Israeli Society in memory of Moshe Shalvi z"l and honoring Prof. Alice Shalvi, March 2023
- Marpeh CPE Conferences, October 2022 and February 2023
- Book Launch, *Festschrift* in honor of Prof. Ed Greenstein, co-sponsored by Bar Ilan University, February 2023
- Book Launch, *The Book of Esther*, Rabbi Benjamin Segal, February 2023

Opposite page: Prof. David Golinkin lectures on Hebrew manuscripts in the Vatican Apostolic Library in Rome

- **Academic Conference, *Radical Jewish Women***, co-sponsored by JTS, The Schocken Institute and the Open University, December 2022
- **9th Annual Pirkei Avot Lecture in Memory of Dr. Aubrey Rotenberg z"l, *Pirkei Avot in the Synagogue***, Prof. Dalia Marx, December 2022
- **Annual Rabbi David Aronson Memorial Lecture, *Pikuah Nefesh: A Conference on Mental Illness***, December 2022
- **Integrative Education Conference**, co-sponsored by the Golinkin Chair in TALI Education, Melton Center and Herzog College, November 2022
- **Book Launch, *Mordecai Richler's Imperfect Search for Moral Values***, Dr. Shana Mauer, October 2022

## New Books 2022-2023

### Published by Schechter

- ***Aseh Lekha Rav: Responsa***, Vol. 2, David Golinkin, 2023 (Hebrew)
- ***A Commentary to Yerushalmi Berakhot* by Prof. Louis Ginzberg**, co-published by Schocken and Bar Ilan, 2023 (Hebrew)
- ***NASHIM, a Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues***, eds., Renée Levine Melammed and Deborah Greniman, co-published by Hadassah Brandeis Institute and Indiana University Press, No. 40, Fall 2022; No. 41, Spring 2023; No. 42, Fall 2023
- ***Bemidbar Rabbah, Vol. 1***, eds., Hananel Mack and David Golinkin, 2023 (Hebrew)
- ***Responsa and Halakhic Essays***, Joel Roth, ed. David Golinkin, 2023
- ***The Book of Esther***, Benjamin Segal, co-published by Gefen, 2022



### Published by Schechter Faculty

- ***Hasdai Crescas on Codification, Cosmology and Creation***, Ari Ackerman, Leiden: Brill, 2022
- ***Zion and Diaspora: Past, Present and Future***, eds. Ari Ackerman and Yossi Turner, Jerusalem: Carmel, 2023 (Hebrew and English)
- ***Jewish Art in Late Antiquity***, Shula Laderman, Leiden: Brill, 2021
- ***Mordecai Richler's Imperfect Search for Moral Values***, Dr. Shana Mauer, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023
- ***The Divine Light at the Root of the Soul: Spiritual Teachings of A.D. Gordon***, Einat Ramon, Ashdod: Nofech Books, 2022 (Hebrew)

## Prof. Golinkin Lectures at the Vatican

Rabbi Prof. David Golinkin was invited by Rabbi Ariel Stofenmacher, Rector of the Seminario Rabinico in Buenos Aires, to teach at an international seminar on Hebrew manuscripts in the Vatican Apostolic Library in July 2023, in honor of thirty years of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel.

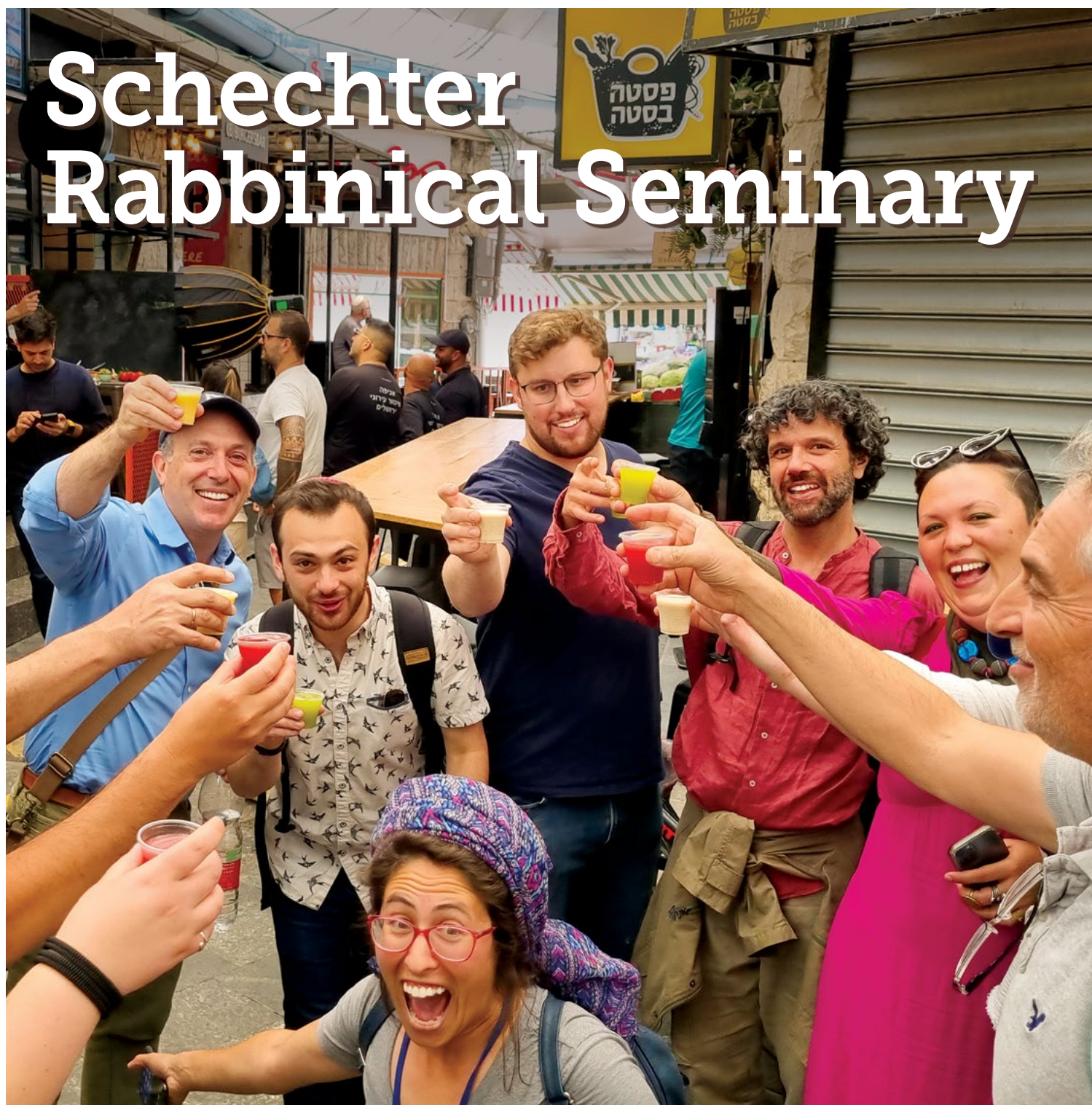
## Research at Schechter

Research at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies is conducted at its **Center for Judaism and the Arts**, **The Center for Women in Jewish Law** and the **Institute of Applied Halakhah**. The **Midrash Project** is publishing a series of critical editions of Midrashim as well as synopses of all manuscripts of many midrashim.

Top, right: *Bemidbar Rabah* book launch at Schechter

Below, from left: Prof. Ed Greenstein with Dr. Sarah Schwartz at the book launch of his Festschrift; Rabbi Benjamin Segal responds at his book launch for *The Book of Esther*; Russian-speaking contingent at the Annual National Women's Study Day at Schechter





# Schechter Rabbinical Seminary

Chair, Board of Trustees:  
Ilana Laderman Mushkin

Chair, Executive  
Committee:  
Mariano Ptascinsky

Dean:  
Rabbi Avi Novis-Deutsch

Spiritual Mentor:  
Rabbi Dr. Reb Mimi  
Feigelson

## New Deans Appointed

Rabbis Chaya Rowen Baker and Arie Hasit assumed top SRS leadership posts as Dean and Associate Dean in July 2023. (See profiles, pages 6 and 7.) We wish the duo much success in their new roles and recognize the impressive contribution that outgoing Dean, Rabbi Avi Novis-Deutsch made to the Bet Midrash by establishing creative programs that are reaching new and diverse Israeli populations.

## 403 participants in SRS programs:

- 12 rabbinical students, including 2 new students from Ukraine
- 12 overseas rabbinical students from JTS and the Seminario Rabinico
- 22 *Mishlei* students engaged in Jewish renewal and community action
- 35 students in Torah Lishmah programs in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv
- 94 students in the *Ashira* Jewish music program

Opposite page: Israeli and overseas rabbinical students toast the Jerusalem shuk with Rabbi Matt Berkowitz (left)

Top, from left: Torah Lishmah study in Tel Aviv's Neve Schechter; Rabbi Diana Villa (center) with rabbinical students in the Bet Midrash

- 40 special needs students in four Batei Midrash around the country and online
- 10 rabbis in advanced weekly Halakhah studies
- 180 students in WhatsApp daily Mishnah study group, up 20% from last year

## JTS Students Spend Year at Schechter

Ten JTS rabbinical students are studying Talmud, Halakhah and Hebrew literature with their Israeli counterparts in Jerusalem for the 2023-24 year, as well as taking additional academic electives through the Graduate School. The year in Israel also includes field trips around the country. In 2022-23, twenty students from JTS, Ziegler, the Seminario and Schechter toured Israel together.

## Two New Rabbinical Students from Ukraine

Lev Kleyman leads Midreshet Schechter's Chernivtsi Aviv congregation in Ukraine. De facto rabbi for years, he, together with members of his community, took in refugees fleeing the fighting in 2022, providing a safe haven for thousands. Joining Lev is Oleg Karsany, originally from Kharkiv, who spent six years in Israel before returning to Ukraine in 2006. Oleg was forced to move to Chernivtsi when Russia attacked Ukraine. He has become an active member of Kehillat Aviv. The men, unable to leave Ukraine, began their rabbinical studies online and in-person when Rabbis Avi Novis-Deutsch and Irina Gritsevskaya were in Chernivtsi in February 2023.



## Ashira Music Partnerships Spread the Magic

The *Ashira* Jewish Music program to train lay prayer leaders, now in its sixth year, is having a substantial impact on spiritual life in Israel by making prayer more accessible to countless Israeli worshippers. This year, in addition to the annual winter and summer prayer leaders course, a new two-year course, *T'filat Kol Peh*, is deepening theoretical and practical knowledge in Ashkenazi liturgy. Fourteen students are enrolled in the program, sponsored jointly by the Hadar Institute. *Zamru*, a joint SRS-Fuchsberg Center scholarship program, offers advanced liturgy and prayer study to a select group of *Ashira* graduates. This year, the group gave three public concerts with close to 200 Jewish music aficionados attending.

## Community Activists Ordained at 32nd Ordination

Rabbis David Perlman Paran and Adam Berman were ordained at a moving ceremony in Jerusalem in December 2022. Perlman Paran, founding rabbi of the Darchei Noam Synagogue in Pardes Hannah, is known as the "Green Rabbi" for emphasizing sustainability in his work. Berman directs the Jewish Agency Partnership 2Gether Arava-Australia project. The two join 108 Schechter colleagues leading communities in Israel, Europe and the Americas.

## Teaching Sustainability and Shmita

"Making Torah relevant" has always guided the SRS curriculum and this year, thanks to a generous grant from Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael, courses in "Sustainability, the Environment and Shmita" are being offered to all SRS students.

From left: New *T'filat Kol Peh* group, part of the *Ashira* music program; Rabbis Adam Berman and David Perlman Paran at their ordination ceremony; Rabbinical student Lev Kleyman (center), heads up Kehillat Aviv, Chernivtsi, Ukraine



# TALI

## Education Fund



Chair,  
Board of Trustees:  
**Col (ret.) Roni Yannay**  
  
Susan and Scott Shay  
Director General:  
**Dr. Peri Sinclair**

TALI, Israel's largest pluralistic in-school Jewish studies program, is dedicated to strengthening Israeli society through promoting Jewish-Israeli identity, pluralism and democracy.

### Numbers 2022-23

- TALI frameworks serve over 65,000 pupils and 3,000 educators in over 300 public schools and preschools throughout Israel
- **Professional Development:** Over 3,000 teachers participated in TALI Professional Development courses funded in part by the Ministry of Education
- **Halleli:** Study missions to New York, December 2022 and April 2023
- **10th grade Jewish/Israeli Identity Program** seminars for over 2,000 high schoolers
- **Bar/Bat Mitzvah program** reaches close to 1,100 children
- **Dialogue and Identity Co-existence Program** in 38 schools: 1,200 students, 76 teachers and 38 principals

Opposite page: Enjoying the moment at the *Dialogue and Identity* Songfest for peace and co-existence

Top, right: Students at the TALi Navon School, Bet Shemesh, share the light of Hanukkah

## Meorot Program Aims to Put Pluralism into Practice

*Meorot*, an educational incubator of six model TALi schools, is working to transform pluralism into a discipline that can be taught to elementary school students. In the program's first year, teams from each school met regularly to create a three-year curriculum for teaching pluralism in schools throughout Israel.

**Dr. Nurit Novis-Deutsch**, a Schechter graduate on faculty at Haifa University's Department of Education, is studying the effects of the *Meorot* curriculum on 5th graders. (See TALi profile, page 5.)

## New Incumbent of Golinkin Chair in TALi Jewish Education

**Dr. Marva Shalev Marom**, the new incumbent of the Golinkin Chair in TALi Jewish Education, earned her PhD from the Stanford Graduate School of Education. Working extensively with disadvantaged communities, she created a music program for Ethiopian Israeli and Arab youth in Jaffa. Her dissertation researched four Israeli Ethiopian female students on their perceptions of religion, race and the definition of Jewishness in Israel. Marom recently joined the Schechter faculty to head the new TALi-Schechter *YAMAHA* MA program – Hebrew acronym for Creativity, Educational Leadership and Jewish Renewal (See page 11.)

## Dialogue and Identity Teaching More Teachers

The veteran co-existence program, *Dialogue and Identity*, now in its 17th year, teaches shared religious values to 1,200 Arab and Jewish children in 38 schools. This year, an additional 30 teachers learned in the program. A second national Songfest took place in May with a thousand Arab and Jewish students coming together in songs of peace and co-existence.



## Demand for TALi Curriculum

- More than 72 public schools purchased TALi content on an Education Ministry online platform.
- TALi has signed a major contract with the Ministry of Education to write curricular materials for the Integrative School Network.
- TALi Jewish content reached the entire Israeli network of secular pre-schools in 2022-23.

## TALi Digital Reaches New Markets

- Close to 250,000 people used materials on TALi's six educational websites
- TALi content on Facebook reached 110,000 users



The Visual Midrash website had a complete design and technology upgrade. Online in English and Hebrew, it is an invaluable resource for educators worldwide.

- All TALi Weekly Torah Portion materials have been digitalized and uploaded to a state-of-the-art interactive site with links to music, movie clips, games and more
- Levana "New Month" website added new content, attracting 60,000 users, up 22% from last year

From left: Participants in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program; President Yitzhak Herzog shares a special moment with children of TALi Pisgat Zeev, Jerusalem; Hallel Leadership Development participants meet with Judge Rachel Freier, NYC





# Neve Schechter Legacy Heritage Center for Jewish Culture

Chair, Midreshet Schechter:  
**Rabbi Prof. David Golinkin**

Executive Director,  
Midreshet Schechter:  
**Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaya**

Director, Neve Schechter:  
**Romina Reisin**

Curator:  
**Bar Yerushalmi**

## Breathtaking Judaism That is So Needed

Neve Schechter has burst onto Tel Aviv's cultural scene with state-of-the-art exhibits, cutting edge performances and a learning community for all ages. One participant recently wrote, "This is the kind of breathtaking Judaism that Israel so desperately needs today."

## Numbers 2022-23

- More than 1,000 weekly participants, totaling more than 50,000 annually
- 300 participants in the Learning Community: 15 Judaism, Music and Arts courses
- 400 participants at 10 holiday events
- 110 lectures, concerts, holidays events and exhibits
- 100 Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, 10 weddings and 6 Brit ceremonies held in the Atid Sanctuary

Opposite page: Tisha B'av study in the Neve Schechter courtyard

Top, right: Artists' Incubator final project, *Coming of Age*, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ritual, in the Atid Sanctuary, performed by Renana Raz and her daughter, Omer

## Masorti Kehillah of Neve Zedek

Neve Schechter houses the Masorti Congregation of Neve Zedek, led by **Rabbi Roberto Arbib**. More than 115 families celebrated lifecycle events with the congregation in 2022-23.

## Neve Schechter Prize for Contemporary Israeli Art

Neve Schechter awarded the Fourth Annual Prize for Contemporary Israeli Art, sponsored by the **Yehoshua Rabinovich Foundation**, to singer and songwriter **Shay Tzabari**, in September 2023. Tzabari's works fuse familial and tribal roots with Jewish texts and melodies into a dialogue between traditional and contemporary Israel.

## Hineni Study for Young Adults

*Hineni*, a year-long Bet Midrash program for young adults aged 20-32, completed its first year with eight mini-courses, three workshops and a retreat dedicated to Jerusalem's culture scene. The new program elicited high marks from the entire student cohort.

## Adult Coming-of-Age Ceremony

This year, the twelve actors, dancers, musicians and theater directors of the **Artists' Incubator** turned their creative energies to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Studying the history, theology and sociology of this life event ritual, the group created their own "adult coming-of-age ceremony." The performance, which took place in the Atid Sanctuary in May, received very positive feedback.

## Music and Holiday Events

Neve Schechter hosted many music events sponsored by **Dr. David Braun**, in honor of his late father, **Dr. Richard Braun z"l**, including: Six-weeks of Friday noon Kabbalat Shabbat music with a flea market, 600 people, June/July 2023; Bene Israel Indian traditional music and food, Tu Bishvat, 120 participants, February 2023; Acoustic Groove live music evenings, 200 participants, January 2023; Live music at 20 holiday, literary and gallery events.



**Holiday Programming:** Rosh Hashanah through art and music, 200 participants, September 2023; Tisha B'av movie/lecture/gallery talk, 150 participants, August 2023; Tikkun Leil Shavuot, 100 participants, May 2023; Holocaust Memorial Day, multi-generational discussion, April 2023; Megillat Esther all-women reading, 90 participants, March 2023; Purim Ball, 200 participants, March 2023; Tu Bishvat photo exhibit/Seder, 200 participants, February 2023; Hannukah community gathering, 80 participants, December 2022

## Women at the Gallery

Under the able direction of curator **Bar Yerushalmi** (see profile, page 9), the Schechter Gallery exhibited the works of four multidisciplinary Israeli women artists: *Open Code* by **Chana Anushik Manhaimer**, dealt with technology as *Avodah Zarah* (idolatry); *I, Worlds* by the late **Dorit Feldman**, conceptual artist; *How to Dance with Ghosts at Parties* by **Natalie Feldesman**, creator of site-specific environments; and *Mother, I Shall Weave a Chain of Pearls for Thy Neck with My Tears*, about the Book of Ruth, by **Ruth Helbitz Cohen**, installation artist.

## ...And Men at the Salon

Neve Schechter's International Art Salon, a permanent venue for video art located in the upper floor foyer, hosted the works of three internationally-known music video artists: **Hanan Ben Simon**, Brooklyn, NY; **David Israel Katz**, San Francisco, CA and **Nadav Spiegel** with **Natalie Feldesman**, Israel-Portugal. Their art touched on topics such as love, Torah and Jewish philosophy.

From left: *Hineni* study group for young adults; Schechter Gallery Tisha B'av performance; Selichot prayers in the Atid Sanctuary





# Midreshet Schechter Ukraine and Israel

Chair:

**Rabbi Prof. David  
Golinkin**

Executive Director:

**Rabbi Irina  
Gritsevskaya**

Head of Kehillat Aviv,  
Chernivtsi:

**Lev Kleyman**

Director, Kyiv:

**Maxim Melnikov**

**Midreshet Schechter-Ukraine**, including the four synagogues co-sponsored by Masorti Olami, is the only Conservative Jewish educational network in the FSU. It reaches over 1,000 Jews by on-line learning, teacher training, school and synagogue programs and Camp Ramah.

**Midreshet Schechter-Israel** has branches in Masorti congregations and community centers throughout the country, offering weekly adult education classes in Hebrew, Russian and English to more than 700 veteran Israelis and immigrants.

## As War Drags On, Midreshet Schechter Supports Essentials

The Russian invasion of Ukraine grinds on well into its second year. Kharkiv continues to be under heavy attack, while in other areas, the “new normal” entails constant air raid sirens, power cuts, a devastated economy and shortages of many basics. Midreshet Schechter has been working non-stop, in partnership with Masorti Olami, to provide communities with the economic and spiritual support so sorely needed.

Opposite page: Campers and staff at the 31st Camp Ramah Ukraine, with picture of longtime donors, Ben and Harriet Teitel z"l

Top, right: Schechter Leadership Mission visits Kehillat Aviv in Chernivtsi, from left: Rabbi Leonid Feldman, David Kekst, Michal Makov Peled, Lev Kleyman, Rabbi Alan Iser, Eric Diamond, Jonathan Anschell and Rabbi David Golinkin

Bottom, from left: Making Hamantaschen at Odessa's *Kehillat Tiferet*; Teachers Seminar participants; *Kehillat Masoret* members in their new Kyiv synagogue complex

## Camp Ramah Ukraine Welcomes Schechter Leaders

Camp Ramah Ukraine celebrated its 31st season this summer under the dark cloud of war, but for the 125 children and 36 staff, they were in "Sunny Valley" in western Ukraine, the venue for this year's 12-day respite from the trauma that many of the children have experienced these past eighteen months. No wonder Camp has a waiting list! Additional donations next year will allow more children to experience camp.

A high point of the camp was the emotional Shabbat encounter between campers and members of a high-level Schechter delegation, led by Vice Chair of Schechter's Board of Directors, **David Kekst**, who was visibly moved by the entire experience. "I saw a video of Camp Ramah Ukraine, and was transfixed. Kids who looked like they were from Camp Ramah in Ojai having the time of their lives, but living through a horrific war where civilians are being targeted and homes destroyed. I wanted to go there to show the campers that they are part of something larger, a worldwide Jewish community that doesn't leave anyone behind."

## Lighting Up the Holidays

A stream of Schechter Israeli educators, led by Executive Director **Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaia**, made frequent visits to Midreshet Schechter communities in Ukraine this year, lifting spirits, sharing Jewish knowledge and providing much needed supplies to community members.



**Chanukah:** Warm blankets, clothing and even generators were distributed in Kyiv, Chernivtsi, Odessa and Kharkiv. **Purim:** **Rabbi Avi Novis-Deutsch** led the Megilah reading and taught classes at *Kehillat Aviv* in Chernivtsi and **Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaia** brought laughter and learning to Kyiv's *Kehillat Masoret*. In Odessa's *Kehillat Tiferet*, a "Hamantaschen Bake" stole the show. **Passover:** Seders were held in Kyiv, Chernivtsi and Odessa, drawing more than 300 people. In Kyiv, the seder, led by **Rabbi Gritsevskaia**, welcomed thirty Jews from Kharkiv, who traveled long distances in dangerous conditions to be able to participate.

## Teitel Camp Seminars Set a High Bar

The Ben and Harriet Teitel Camp Ramah Yachad Ukraine Staff Seminars are a crucial educational element of Camp Ramah Ukraine. War could not dampen the great success of the seminars, held at this year's camp site, Sunny Valley, in western Ukraine in December 2022 and in advance of the camp in late July.

## Teachers Seminar and Online Learning

Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine and the danger in traveling from cities under attack, the five-day Teachers Seminar, celebrating 31 years of training Jewish leaders, attracted 40 educators to its annual retreat. Teachers, community activists and camp counselors from five Ukrainian cities benefitted from intensive study, pedagogical training and professional exchanges, which they passionately took home to their communities. The educators also participated in two online courses in Jewish Philosophy and Hasidism that ran from October 2022-February 2023. The learning is funded by **The Claims Conference** and **The Pincus Fund for Jewish Education**.





# Development and Communications

Chair,  
The Schechter Institutes, Inc.:  
**Saul Sanders**

Vice Chair,  
The Schechter Institutes, Inc.:  
**David Kekst**

President,  
The Schechter Institutes, Inc.:  
**Rabbi Prof. David Golinkin**

Executive Vice President:  
**Eitan Cooper**

Deputy Director of Development and Public Relations:  
**Michal Makov Peled**

North American  
Representative:  
**Avrum Lapin,**  
The Lapin Group, LLC

## **Jerusalem Campus Renovation and Endowment Campaigns Propel Schechter Growth**

Over the past year (September 2022-August 2023), the capital campaign to fund our Jerusalem Campus Renovation Project has thus far raised \$3.5 million out of \$4 million needed.

An unprecedented \$2,025,000 in new endowments were received over the past year to ensure the long-term stability and strength of our Institutes.

Schechter raised \$5,289,500 to fund the programs and operating expenses of our Graduate and Rabbinical schools, TAL Education Fund, Neve Schechter

and Midreshet Schechter in Ukraine. This fundraising has ensured the stability of the four Schechter non-profits as they conduct outstanding programs and expand their impact throughout Israel and in Jewish communities around the globe.

The current Israeli government took office in late December 2022. To date, Schechter has not been adversely affected. In fact, in 2022-23, we secured and/or increased government and municipal funding in a number of areas. We are working closely with officials in the Ministries of Education, Culture and Diaspora Affairs to maintain that funding.

Tragically, the more than 18-month war in Ukraine has left the battered country in an on-going state of emergency. The need to care for refugees fleeing war zones and aid



those still living under direct attack goes unabated. Many people responded once again to our Camp Ramah Ukraine Emergency Appeal in June 2023. With this crucial support, Midreshet Schechter was able to expand the Camp from 90 campers in 2022 to 125 campers this year.

A first-ever mission to Camp Ramah Ukraine took place August 3-6, 2023 (see page 21). The mission inspired both participants and the camp community alike, with messages of support and solidarity.

We can only express our deepest appreciation for the strong commitment demonstrated by our donor community to our mission and programs. Our diverse funding community includes private individuals in North America and Israel, family foundations, JAFI and KKL, Jewish Federations, and the Israeli government. We are grateful to our many friends and partners and thank them for their sustained generosity.

## Jerusalem Campus Renovation Project

A major renovation, now underway, of the Jerusalem Campus Library and Administration Building and Classroom Building has been made possible by a significant multi-year commitment by the **Harvey L. Miller Family Foundation** and to generous capital gifts by **Gary and Carol Berman** in honor of their grandchildren, **Rabbi Gary Charlestein, Julius and Ray Charlestein Foundation, David and Rebecca Kekst, Saul and Mary Sanders and Peter and Debbie Wexler.**

## New Gifts and Commitments (\$20,000 and above)

- **Michael and Sari Arnall**, General, Schechter Graduate School
- **Himan Brown Trust**, Richard Kay, Trustee, *Ashira* Jewish Music Program
- **Ethan and Gretchen Davidson**, The Midrash Project
- **The Guilford and Diane Glazer Foundation**, TALI Hallel Program, in cooperation with Derekh Eretz
- **Dr. Rivka Sherman-Gold and Irving Gold**, TALI Levana (Hebrew Month) Website
- **Israel Ministry of Diaspora Affairs**, with AMI, TALI 10th grade Israeli/Jewish Identity program
- **Israel Ministry of Science**, for a specific project
- **Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael**, for Shmita and Jewish Environmental Programs, Schechter Rabbinical Seminary and Midreshet Schechter
- **A group of Los Angeles Donors**, Camp Ramah Ukraine
- **Lou and Judy Miller z"l**, Endowment Bequest, TALI Education Fund
- **The Al Roadburg Foundation**, Midreshet Schechter Ukraine
- **Rabbi Jonathan and Beverly Schnitzer Endowment**, Schechter Graduate School

Opposite page: Schechter Leadership Mission to Camp Ramah Ukraine, from left: Chair, David Kekst, Rabbi Leonid Feldman, Staff and Campers; Center: Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaia and Lev Kleyman; Right: Rabbis David Golinkin and Alan Iser, Jonathan Anschell and Michal Makov Peled

Below: Isabelle Adler and her daughter Randi, receive an update on the *Ashira* Jewish music program from Rabbis Avi Novis-Deutsch and David Golinkin





From left: New Schechter Institutes, Inc. Board Member, Michael Arnall, Florida, meets with Eitan Cooper, David Golinkin, Arie Hasit and Michal Makov Peled

## In Memoriam:

**Lou and Judy Miller z"l**, from Los Angeles; Lou, a long-term board member and both devoted patrons of the TALI schools, made a major endowment bequest to TALI. *May their memories always be for a blessing!*

**Prof. Oded Schremer**, a Professor Emeritus of Education at Bar Ilan University, and a longtime member of the TALI Board of Directors, passed away in June 2022. *May his memory be a blessing!*

## Campus Renovation on Schedule

The Jerusalem Campus renovation, including the Harvey L. Miller Family Library and Administration Building, is replacing the building's sixty-year-old aging infrastructure to provide a contemporary workspace, full handicapped accessibility and updated library facilities and conference rooms. Demolition of internal walls, ceilings and floors, construction of the elevator shaft and installation of steel support beams in the entrance lobby have proceeded on schedule through mid-September, with completion set for May 2024. Renovation of the Classroom Building lower level, scheduled for completion by July 2024, will house an art studio and a significant part of Schechter's Judaica library collection. The renovation includes the installation of 8,000 sq. ft. of photovoltaic panels on the roofs of both campus buildings to provide all the institution's electrical needs, as well as an upgrade of Schechter's communications capacity for distance and hybrid learning.

## Schechter Leadership, News and Appointments

David Kekst of Los Angeles was appointed Vice Chair of The Schechter Institutes Inc. Board of Directors. David led the recent mission to Camp Ramah Ukraine and will Co-Chair the SIJS 40th Anniversary Mission to Israel in November 2024. We welcome **Michael Arnall**, Florida, to the Board.

The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies Graduate School welcomes **Galit Cohen** to the Board and thanks **Dr. Zvi Gabbay**, who stepped down from the Board, for his service.

The TALI Education Fund appointed **Rabbi Benjamin Segal** as its new Board Chair. **Roni Yannay**, who served as Chair for the past decade and whose leadership was an inspiration to all who worked with him, has stepped down from the Chair. TALI welcomes **Mike Berman** to the Board, and thanks **Dr. Daniel Marom**, who has stepped down after many years on the TALI Board.

The Schechter Rabbinical Seminary welcomes newly appointed Board members, **Rabbi Mauricio Balter**, **Ahmi Ben Yehudah**, **Dr. Yizhar Hess**, **Eran Levita**, **Sophie Fellman Rafalovitz**, **Rabbi Peretz Rodman** and **Rabbi Phil Scheim**, and thanks Board members stepping down for their service: **Miriam Herschlag**, **Dror Yehoshua** and **Rabbi Shlomo Zacharov**.

Right: Jerusalem Campus renovations are well underway on the Harvey L. Miller Family Library and Administration Building. Architects **Rabbi Gustavo Gryncajg**, a Schechter graduate, and **Alejandro Cucacovich** (left) oversee the work

Opposite page, top left: **Rabbi Matt Berkowitz**, new Vice President of The Schechter Institutes, Inc.

Opposite page, top right: **Jonathan Anshell**, member of Ramah Ukraine Mission and Executive VP of Mattel, Los Angeles, swamped by campers clamoring for "selfies" with the "Barbie" celebrity





## Rabbi Matt Berkowitz is New VP of The Schechter Institutes, Inc.

Rabbi Matt Berkowitz was appointed Vice President of the Schechter Institutes, Inc. on July 1, 2023, a senior leadership position that will enhance Schechter and its educational mission. An accomplished educator and artist, Rabbi Berkowitz brings decades of experience in development to his new position. From 1999 to 2008, he served as JTS's Senior Rabbinic Fellow based in NY and Florida where he expanded the donor base and taught adult learning study groups throughout the U.S. From 2009, Rabbi Berkowitz directed JTS' Israel Programs while continuing to work closely with donors. He is the author and illuminator of *The Lovell Haggadah*, published by Schechter and used widely throughout the world.

## Schechter Leadership Mission Boosts Morale at Camp Ramah Ukraine

A high-level delegation, led by **David Kekst**, Los Angeles, Vice Chair of the Schechter Institutes Board of Directors, together with **Rabbi Alan Iser**, Philadelphia, **Jonathan Anshell** and **Eric Diamond**, Los Angeles and **Rabbi Leonid Feldman**, Israel, and joined by Schechter's **Prof. David Golinkin** and incoming Director General **Michal Makov Peled**, spent an unforgettable Shabbat with the 160 campers and staff at this year's Camp Ramah Ukraine. Everyone at camp was visibly moved by the delegation's visit and demonstration of support, which prompted countless hugs, selfies and emotional moments.

**Rabbi Alan Iser** sums up the experience: "Despite the presence of war felt by all the children, Camp Ramah Ukraine is permeated with joy, love of Judaism and love from the staff for the campers. Never in one weekend have I hugged so many children who needed and deserved affection and affirmation. They are all



a testimony to the resilience of the Jewish people and the power of Judaism to provide light in a time of darkness."

The group returned home inspired to share their experiences with their communities. **David Kekst** looks back on the visit: "Reading the latest news of the fighting in Ukraine, I prayed that these wonderful children, campers, counselors, staff members and the soldier who visited with us, are staying safe. Braving all the horrors and challenges, these young campers come from all over Ukraine and from outside Ukraine simply because they love it."

## November 2024: Schechter Mission to Israel

Registration has already begun for this incredible opportunity to see your kind of Israel in a way never before experienced: **Schechter Leadership Mission to Israel, November 11-18, 2024. Building on 40 Years of Progress.** Reserve your place today. Contact [schechter@thelapingroup.com](mailto:schechter@thelapingroup.com)

Schechter Leadership Mission arrives at Camp Ramah Ukraine. From left: Jonathan Anshell, Rabbis David Golinkin, Alan Iser, Leonid Feldman and Irina Gritsevskaia, Michal Makov Peled, Igor Babkin, Eric Diamond and David Kekst





Top left: *Sylvan Adams Bonei Zion Prize* awarded to Prof. David Golinkin by Margaret Adams and Nefesh B'Nefesh co-founders Tony Gelbart and Rabbi Yehoshua Fass

Opposite page, left: Eitan Gerson (left), who recently celebrated his Bar Mitzvah, presents a "mitzvah money" envelope to Prof. David Golinkin for the Jews of Ukraine

Center: from left: Debbie Rennert, Alice Goldfarb and David Golinkin  
Right: Masorti Europe Mission to Israel at Schechter, June 2023

## Prof. David Golinkin Awarded Bonei Zion Prize

Prof. David Golinkin received the prestigious Nefesh B'Nefesh Sylvan Adams Bonei Zion Prize for his distinguished contribution to Israeli society in the field of education at a moving ceremony in Jerusalem in November 2022. The prize, established in 2013, formally recognizes the achievements of outstanding Anglo immigrants and their contributions to the State of Israel.

## Executive Director to Knesset

Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaia, Executive Director of Midreshet Schechter, spoke at a Knesset conference in March. Organized by Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, speakers shared their views on *One Year After: The Situation of Ukraine's Jewish Communities*.

Below, left: Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaia presents Ukrainian war update at the Knesset

Below, right: Women's League for Conservative Judaism Delegation visits Schechter, from left: Rabbi Ellen Wolintz Fields, Executive Director, Debbi Goldich, past International President, SRS rabbinical students Inbal Sitbon and Marine de Moliner, Rabbis Arie Hasit and David Golinkin

## Bar Mitzvah Boy Sets Example

Eitan Gerson, 13, from Kansas City, decided to donate his Bar Mitzvah gifts to support Camp Ramah Ukraine (see page 21). Eitan, son of Karen and Jeffry Gerson, has donated more than \$1,000 to the camp and he continues to collect tzedakah which allows him to send around \$30-\$50 to camp every few months. "I was interested in the young kids in Ukraine because they are just like me," he said, "however, they are living in a place that is unsafe due to war." Eitan decided to use his Bar Mitzvah money, and additional monies earned from refereeing soccer games, to help children in Ukraine have a safe Jewish camp experience. He visited Schechter in February 2023 with his parents and brother Gilli, meeting with Prof. David Golinkin and Michal Makov Peled.

## Zoom Bridges Continents

Schechter created a successful hybrid model in 2022-23 that utilized both "in-person" learning in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv together with its successful long-distance Zoom lectures. Meaningful Jewish study in Hebrew, English, Russian and Spanish reached communities in Israel and throughout the world, enriching the lives of hundreds with top-level Schechter Jewish study.

- "Zooming Into" Pre-Holiday Learning for the High Holidays, Hanukkah, Tu B'Shvat, Purim, Pesach and Shavuot, with three lectures and 60-80 participants each time
- 4th International Reading of Megillat Hashoah in five languages, co-sponsored by Beth David Congregation, Toronto; Masorti Olami, Rabbinical Assembly and Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano, April 2023





- **ScholarStream lectures to Conservative communities worldwide, *Elul: A Journey Toward Repentance*: Dr. Reb Mimi Feigelson, Dr. Gila Vachman and Prof. David Frankel; *The Exodus in Jewish Tradition, Philosophy, Bible, Midrash and Art*: Profs. Ari Ackerman, David Golinkin, David Frankel and Dr. Tamar Kadari; *Counting the Days and Making Every Day Count*: Schechter graduates Rabbis Nava B. Meiersdorf and Dikla Druckman Sherzer, sponsored by the Rabbinical Assembly and four Conservative seminaries**

## Learning with the President

Prof. David Golinkin taught numerous classes on Zoom and as a scholar-in-residence in 2022-23. **North America:** Agudath Yisrael, Rabbi Ari Lucas, West Caldwell, NJ, April 2023; Zoom “Chat” with 12th graders on *Halakhah*, Toronto; Beth Israel, Rabbi Jonathan Infeld, Vancouver, BC, April 2023; Shelter Rock Jewish Center, Rabbi Martin Cohen, Roslyn, NY, February 2023; Har Zion Temple, Rabbi Seth Haaz, Philadelphia, PA, February 2023; Beth Tikvah, Rabbi Ammos Chorny, Naples, FL, February 2023; Parlor meeting on Midreshet Schechter Ukraine, Home of Board Member David and Rebecca Kekst, LA, February 2023; Shearith Israel, Dallas, Rabbi Ari Sunshine, November 2022 and Zoom, December 2022; **Rabbinical Assembly Convention**, St. Louis, MO, November 2022; Bnai Israel, Rabbi Michael Safra, Rockville, Md, November 2022 **Israel:** European Masorti Leadership Group, “Six Characteristics of Conservative/Masorti Responsa,” June 2023; National Women’s Study Day, June 2023; Tikkun Leil Shavuot, Congregations Moresheet Avraham and Yedidya, May 2023; Book Launch, *Bemidbar Rabah*, May 2023; Zoom Into Pesach, April 2023; Zoom for Masorti Movement, “The Judicial Revolution’ in Light of Jewish Law and Tradition,” March 2023; SRS/JTS/Ziegler students, “Is it Permissible to Go Up to the Temple

Mount?” March 2023; Ashira Jewish Music Program, January 2023; Israel Museum event honoring Prof. Doron Bar, “The Deller Sukkah,” October 2022; Begin Center, “Student Struggle Against the Holocaust,” October 2022; Bet Avi Chai, “U’Netaneh Tokef,” October 2022; Zoom Into Rosh Hashana, September 2022

## Excellent PR for Schechter

Thanks to the efforts of New Media Director, Joshua Shuman, all four Schechter non-profits – SRS, SIJS, TALI and Midreshet Schechter Ukraine – received impressive media coverage. From December 2022–August 2023, more than 21 articles appeared in numerous outlets from Australia to Canada, Israel and the U.S. Check out Schechter in the news: <https://schechter.edu/in-the-media/>

## Schechter Faculty Shine at International Conferences

- **Jacob Mann Conference**, Cambridge, England, Dr. Gila Vachman, July 2023
- **The Institute for Advanced Study**, Princeton, NJ, Prof. Renée Levine Melammed, research on *Women’s Letters in the Cairo Genizah*, January-June 2023
- **Conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism**, Malmo, Sweden, Dr. Biti Roi, June 2023
- **The International Conference on Late Antiquity**, Jerusalem, Prof. Moshe Benovitz, and Dr. Milka Levy-Rubin, March 2023
- **Association of Jewish Studies Conference**, Boston, Dr. Biti Roi, December 2022
- **The world’s largest conference on Biblical Studies**, Society of Biblical Literature, Denver, CO, Dr. Sarah Schwartz, Prof. David Frankel and Dr. Etka Liebowitz, November 2022



# Across the Divide

Your Donation to Schechter:  
Making the Difference in Israel 2023

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The 2023 Budget  
Our Leadership · Our Donors

# Schechter Institute Operating Budget

(in \$US) January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

| Income   |             | Expenses                                       |             |
|--|-------------|--|-------------|
| 1. Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies Graduate School |             |  |             |
| Federations and Foundations                              | 795,152     | Faculty Salaries                               | 1,011,388   |
| Contributions  | 1,232,696   | Academic Administration – Salaries             | 122,283     |
| Tuition and Fees   | 931,061     | M.A. Student Tuition Scholarships              | 309,792     |
| Endowment Income   | 322,727     | Adult Education and other Programs             | 212,124     |
| Book Sales, Rental Income, Misc.                         | 187,272     | Library, Academic Research, Publishing         | 242,278     |
|  |             | Student Recruitment/Marketing                  | 193,415     |
|  |             | General Administration and Campus Maintenance  | 721,705     |
|  |             | Development and PR                             | 655,922     |
| Sub-Total  | \$3,468,907 |  | \$3,468,907 |
| 2. TALI Education Fund                                   |             |  |             |
| Jewish Agency  | 331,000     | Curriculum Development, Publishing, Digital    | 271,885     |
| Foundations, Federations, EU                             | 592,576     | Pedagogical and Curricular Guidance            | 261,863     |
| Contributions  | 625,973     | Experiential Activities                        | 167,271     |
| Israeli Government, Municipalities                       | 123,328     | Me'orot and Professional Leadership Training   | 330,153     |
| Fees for Sales, Services                                 | 228,262     | Early Childhood Resources                      | 75,828      |
| Interest and other                                       | 79,242      | Dialogue and Identity                          | 250,592     |
|  |             | Joint Projects with SIJS – Marketing and YAMAH | 71,622      |
|  |             | Network Supervision and Program Evaluation     | 177,979     |
|  |             | Administration                                 | 373,188     |
| Sub-Total  | \$1,980,381 |  | \$1,980,381 |
| 3. Schechter Rabbinical Seminary                         |             |  |             |
| Jewish Agency, KKL, Israeli Govt.                        | 114,985     | Faculty Salaries                               | 462,916     |
| Contributions  | 604,354     | Student Stipends and Internships               | 128,091     |
| Tuition and Fees   | 244,036     | Ashira Musical Bet Midrash                     | 124,307     |
| Interest and Miscellaneous                               | 20,152      | Torah Lishmah Bet Midrash and Online Learning  | 117,624     |
|  |             | Administration                                 | 150,588     |
| Sub-Total  | \$983,526   |  | \$983,526   |
| 4. Midreshet Schechter – Israel                          |             |  |             |
| Jewish Agency  | 30,000      | Neve Schechter and other Learning Communities  | 137,909     |
| Foundations and Federations                              | 151,667     | Cultural Programming at Neve Schechter         | 396,567     |
| Israeli Government/Municipalities                        | 186,970     | Neve Schechter Maintenance and Operating       | 143,192     |
| Contributions  | 220,796     | Administration                                 | 131,886     |
| Rental, Participation, Other                             | 220,121     |  |             |
| Sub-Total  | \$809,554   |  | \$809,554   |
| 5. Midreshet Schechter – Ukraine                         |             |  |             |
| Federations, JAFI, Israeli Govt.                         | 52,250      | Educator Training – Courses, Seminars          | 134,873     |
| Foundations  | 164,439     | Ramah NOAM – Camps and Youth Activities        | 150,000     |
| Contributions  | 329,916     | Rabbi/Shaliach Salary and Housing              | 57,242      |
| Masorti Olami  | 133,000     | Kyiv Center Rent and Expenses                  | 59,152      |
|  |             | Direct Support for Other Communities           | 54,300      |
|  |             | Administration                                 | 116,538     |
|  |             | Emergency Campaign for Ukraine                 | 107,500     |
| Sub-Total  | \$679,605   |  | \$679,605   |
| Total  | \$7,921,973 |  | \$7,921,973 |

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