



בארִי וּבֵעֵרִי

מכון שאלום הרטמן  
SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE

# Be'eri Newsletter

## Pesach 5772

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### Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar Meets the Be'eri Program at His Former High School

In the beginning of February, Israeli Minister of Education Gideon Sa'ar visited his former high school—Tichon Hadash in Tel Aviv. He attended an 11th grade Tarbut Yisrael (Jewish studies) class comprising students who completed grades 7-10 of the Be'eri curriculum and are now majoring in Tarbut Yisrael.

At the school Minister Sa'ar witnessed firsthand the Be'eri program for Jewish-Israeli identity education in action. Following the class, Sa'ar conducted a discussion with the students to gauge their satisfaction with the program. Many of the students studying the Be'eri curriculum, which is mandatory for grades 7-10, go on to choose Tarbut Yisrael as their high school major.



Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar attends an 11th grade Tarbut Yisrael class

In his conversation with the students, Sa'ar emphasized that Jewish culture does not belong to any specific stream of Judaism but rather belongs to the entire Jewish nation—the very same message that the Be'eri program disseminates to its students by empowering them to take ownership of Jewish texts and to develop an understanding of their own Jewish-Israeli identity. Following the visit, Minister Sa'ar enthusiastically shared his experience on his Facebook page: "I enjoyed a

moment of satisfaction (nachas) this morning when I visited the Tichon Hadash school from which I graduated in 1984. I participated in a grade 11 Talmud class; I was impressed both by the teacher and the very engaged students. I was particularly pleased to learn that over 40 students in this class will major in Jewish oral law... The students expressed their satisfaction with the Be'eri program and indicated it as the reason that they decided to major in Talmud."

### "They Too Were Included in the Miracle" - Be'eri Celebrates Women in the Public Space

The lighting of the Hanukkah candles is one of the very few time-dependent mitzvot that women are required to carry out. In Tractate Shabbat 23a, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi explains that the reason for this is that "women too were included in the miracle." The recent exclusion of ultra-Orthodox Israeli women from many public activities prompted the Be'eri School of Teacher Education to dedicate its annual Hanukkah open day of learning to a study of women in the public space. On December 21, close to 200 high school educators from Be'eri and non-Be'eri schools throughout Israel joined SHI scholars and prominent feminist thinkers and activists to examine the place of women in Jewish tradition and Israeli society.

The day began with an opening lecture by Dr. Tova Hartman of the Gender Studies Department at Bar-Ilan University, who provided a historical and contemporary overview of the place of women in the public sphere. The teachers then had a choice of several sessions pertaining to the role of women in Jewish tradition and contemporary Israeli society. In the afternoon, the teachers were addressed by Rabbi Uri Ayalon, a Conservative rabbi and one of the change agents behind the recent struggle against the exclusion of women in the public sphere in Israel. Throughout



School for Teacher Education participants attend day of learning at the Hartman Institute

the day, large placards of women were on display throughout the Institute, as a statement against the censorship of women's faces from public space in Jerusalem and as a way of sparking conversation.

This was the second such seminar for Be'eri and non-Be'eri educators that has taken place in the 2011-2012 academic year. The first took place before Sukkot, with more than 150 teachers convening at the Hartman campus in Jerusalem for a full day of workshops and lectures on the theme of introspection and the state of the Jewish home. These events, which are quickly becoming highlights of the Be'eri year, attract increasing numbers of teachers from outside of the scope of the Be'eri program. Two seminars were held before Passover, one on *Freedom and Commitment: From the Exodus to Mount Sinai* and the other on new approaches to teaching Bible studies.

## Spotlight on Modi'in



Modi'in has succeeded in attracting a young, diverse and for the most part highly educated population from a variety of locales in Israel, with one of its main advantages being the high quality of life it offers young families raising children. Education is therefore of primary importance on the city's agenda. The city has met the requirements of its citizens by developing a wide range of informal educational facilities as Modi'in residents do not view education as being limited to the classroom.

The city is home to a plethora of institutions and congregations that meet the religious and spiritual needs of the community, be they secular, Conservative, Modern Orthodox, Reform, or any other denomination. In the context of this diversity, issues of Jewish-Israeli pluralism in education hold particular relevance.

In 2009, the Modi'in-Be'eri partnership was created to lead an initiative for integrating Jewish-Israeli identity studies into all facets of formal and informal education in this city boasting a young, diverse, and educated population. "The Be'eri program and the Shalom Hartman Institute have been the perfect partners to lead the Jewish-Israeli identity education process and with which to fulfill our dream," says Haya Shitay, Head of the Education Department of the Modi'in Municipality. "The senior staff of our local schools participated in an intense learning process. All of the city's secular high schools have joined the Be'eri program and are benefiting from close professional guidance and assistance in promoting learning and action in the schools. The joint effort with the Be'eri program has broadened the awareness towards Jewish-Israeli identity to wider circles of our municipal community."

All six Modi'in high schools now participate in the Be'eri program and the Be'eri-Modi'in partnership has led to the establishment of teacher and principal enrichment programs run in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

These advanced study seminars, led by Shalom Hartman fellows and faculty, cover subjects within the Tarbut Yisrael curriculum, including Jewish philosophy and culture as well as teacher leadership. In Modi'in, 15 outstanding teachers from the city's high schools gather for 10 three-hour sessions thematically based on a range of topics, such as the culture of controversies, teaching methodology, and Hanukkah. These teachers, chosen to participate in the program due to their excellence as educators, come from the fields of Tarbut Yisrael, literature, and history, each bringing a unique personal and educational worldview to the cohort.

The sessions serve not only as a way for teachers from different schools to get to know and interact with their colleagues but for them to discuss issues that arise in their schools, engage in Jewish-Israeli identity discourse, explore pedagogic methodologies, engage in text study, and develop a beneficial educational project that can be implemented at the school and municipal levels. This year's projects are still under discussion, but proposed initiatives include a joint teacher-parent learning program and an extracurricular Pizza and Philosophy club.

Furthermore, all the principals of Be'eri high schools in Modi'in, led by the head of the Modi'in Department of Education, participated in an eight-day seminar.

## Be'eri at a Glance

Participating schools throughout the country	95
Students in the Be'eri program	75,000
Municipal partnerships	6 - Haifa, Modi'in, Be'er Sheva, Karmiel, Nazareth Illit, Golan Regional Council
Teachers in the MoE-certified School for Teacher Education	100 in training courses, hundreds in seminars
Full curricular program	Grades 7-10
Be'eri textbooks sold	40,000
MoE joint venture support	\$500,000

## Transforming Bible Studies

One of the lessons learned from the enthusiasm of secular high school teachers to adopt the innovative Be'eri Tarbut Yisrael curricula and teaching is that it is now time to begin addressing and providing alternative teaching approaches to the antiquated ones used for Bible study. The Be'eri School for Teacher Education is launching this initiative in cooperation with the Head of the Bible Studies at Ministry of Education, Roni Magidov, who prior to her current position was a SHI faculty member and taught in the School for Teacher Education. We are planning the 2012-2013 school year launch of a major new initiative to transform the way Bible is taught in secular Israeli high schools.

The goal of these new teaching methodologies is to make Bible studies a discipline that students find engaging and are able to identify the relevance of it to their lives and experiences. Based on a combination of classical Jewish sources and modern Biblical teachings, this methodology will place emphasis on ethical and existential questions arising from the scriptures while focusing on the meaning and relevance of learning and open dialogue among students, sources, and teachers.

A select cohort of approximately 35 leading Bible study coordinators and/or teachers will be chosen to pursue an intensive training course on the new Bible teaching methodologies and will serve as a pilot group for testing these methodologies in the field. The training will comprise five full-day meetings at the School, and a three-day seminar (including overnights), after which the cohort will disseminate the new methods to their peers as well as serving as consultants, enhancing and fine-tuning these new approaches based on feedback from the field.

The initiative was launched with an open seminar day for Be'eri and non-Be'eri teachers dedicated to the subject of Bible studies and best practices for teaching the subject. More than 150 teachers attended.

## Second-Year Teachers at Be'eri School for Teacher Education Create Kabbalat Shabbat Ceremony

In January, as the culmination of a process designed to empower teachers to work with their students in creating meaningful ritual, the second-year teachers in the Be'eri School for Teacher Education basic track presented a unique Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony to the rest of the participants in the school. During the weeks preceding the event, the teachers were guided in selecting a Jewish text that in some way reminded them of Shabbat on a personal level, be it traditional, contemporary, lyrical, or prose. After discussing the texts as a group, they worked together to put the texts into a booklet, which was distributed to all ceremony participants.

During the ceremony, the teachers were accompanied by a quartet of musicians who specialize in piyutim, Jewish liturgical poems set to music. This exercise enabled these Tarbut Yisrael teachers to explore texts and rituals in a way that enhanced their knowledge of the subject. Furthermore, it gave them the tools and empowered them to implement similar exercises in their classrooms, which will help students to connect with various sorts of Jewish texts while reclaiming Jewish rituals as their own – whether the ritual is Kabbalat Shabbat, a Tu BiShvat seder, or a ceremony for Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day). Some of the teachers have already used this process with their students, to great success, and others are planning to do so in the future.



Teachers in the Be'eri School for Teacher Education share their Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony

## Be'eri thanks the many dedicated partners who help make our ongoing efforts possible:

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### Public Partners

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Municipality of Haifa  
Municipality of Modi'in  
Municipality of Be'er Sheva  
Municipality of Nazereth Illit  
Golan Regional Council

## About the Be'eri Program

Creating a critical shift in the personal and national identity of tens of thousands of Israeli youth, Be'eri advances the transformation of young Israelis into proud Jews, and reveals - often for the first time - that there are many different and inspiring ways to be Jewish. Through the program, Israeli students learn how deeply intertwined Israel and the Jewish people are and recognize that the foundation for a proud national identity lies in reclaiming their Jewish identity.

For more information about Be'eri, visit our website at <http://beeri.hartman.org.il>

## About the Shalom Hartman Institute

The Shalom Hartman Institute is a center of transformative thinking and teaching that addresses the major challenges facing the Jewish people and elevates the quality of Jewish life in Israel and around the world. A leader in sophisticated, ideas-based Jewish education for community leaders and change agents, SHI is committed to the significance of Jewish ideas, the power of applied scholarship, and the conviction that great teaching contributes to the growth and continual revitalization of the Jewish people.

[www.hartman.org.il](http://www.hartman.org.il)

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