



בארִי עֵבֶר

מכון שאלום הרטמן  
SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE

# Be'eri Newsletter

## Rosh HaShana 5774

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As one year ends and another begins, we contemplate our deepest aspirations. May the New Year bring with it a bounty of blessings. Shana Tova U'Metuka.  
The Be'eri Team



### Be'eri Impact – From the Field

*The Be'eri team was pleased to receive the letter below from Rabbi David Thomas, a North American rabbi and educator and graduate of the third cohort of the Hartman Rabbinic Leadership Initiative. Rabbi Thomas witnessed first-hand the impact Be'eri has on the students it reaches and consequently on the face of Judaism in Israel and on the global Jewish conversation.*



As one who has labored in the field of Jewish education for more than 15 years, I know that evidence of our effectiveness as Jewish educators is often hard to come by. We invest deeply of ourselves and our resources, often intuitively sensing that what we do is meeting our

goals in valuable and important ways. I am writing today to share an anecdote that testifies to the efficacy of the Be'eri program which you might otherwise not have known.

My community, Congregation Beth El in Sudbury, MA, has developed and implemented a teen exchange program in collaboration with the Hugim High School in Haifa for the past eight years. Each year, when the Israeli 10th grade students visit us in Sudbury, I teach a *shiur* on religious pluralism from traditional Jewish sources, including a Mishnah from Masechet Taanit. For many years, when I introduced the text, the students confessed complete ignorance about the Mishnah as a body of work. They knew virtually nothing about its historical context or its place in rabbinic literature. Other than

the fact that it is written in Hebrew (rabbinic Hebrew at that), they related to the text as something utterly foreign to them. I was not so much frustrated at having to teach them these basics as saddened by the fact that they had been deprived of a national treasure whose wisdom and insights are rightfully theirs.

All this until last Sukkot, when a new group arrived for their ten day exploration of Jewish identity with our community. When I asked, as I always do, who knew something about the Mishnah, most of the students raised their hands! Not only could they place the text historically, they knew its function in the canon of Jewish sacred text and a little about how it works. It was clear to me how proud these students were to have claimed part of their birthright from our people's treasure and to make it their own.

When I asked their teachers if this was a particularly bright group, or if something had been changed in the way the students prepared for their trip, they simply smiled and said, in a word, Be'eri. It seems in the last few years, as the Be'eri program has taken root in Haifa, and in the Hugim School, students have successfully learned about and taken ownership of texts and traditions which are their inheritance.

Less tangibly, I also observed that the Israeli students have more knowledge and experience with streams of Judaism beyond orthodoxy. Above all, as they reflect on their own religious sensibilities they do so with far more subtlety and sophistication, rarely resorting to identifying themselves simply as "secular."

*Rabbi David B. Thomas, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley, Sudbury, MA*

## Be'eri-Inspired Tikkun Leil Shavuot Programs Across Israel

Shavuot is one of the pinnacles of the Be'eri year. The holiday, which is traditionally celebrated with a festival of learning, provides an opportunity for Be'eri communities to put into practice many of the ideals they have studied during the school year.



This year, for the first time, all eight secular middle schools in Haifa participated in a city-wide Shavuot initiative under the banner of *Hativa Loveshet Lavan – Middle Schools Wear White* in honor of the holiday. The Friday before Shavuot, all 4,000 middle school students came to school dressed in white for a festival of learning. School educators, who had been trained by Be'eri facilitators, together with student leadership, led study on *midrashim* related to Shavuot. The program also included musical events and plays put on by students on themes related to Shavuot such as the Book of Ruth, receiving the Torah, and holiday customs. This successful event represents the start of a Haifa tradition.

Be'eri also facilitated Shavuot festivals of learning in partnership with the local municipalities and more than 50 Be'eri schools throughout the country that hosted their own study programs.

## Spotlight on Golan Regional Council - Be'eri Partnership



Golan Regional Council Head of Education Michal Reikin

Be'eri municipal partnerships represent the most robust framework for maximizing program impact and growth, deepening and widening the breadth of the Be'eri program within and outside participating schools. The municipal model creates a complete ecosystem in which Be'eri can operate at all levels, reaching students, educators, municipal leadership, and community members.

Since 2011, Be'eri has partnered with the Golan Regional Council to strengthen Jewish education and Jewish-Israeli identity in the region. The demographically complex Golan Heights region is comprised mainly of Druze and Jewish populations. The Jewish population is concentrated in the city of Katzrin and in over thirty small communities, scattered over a relatively large geographical area. The Golan Regional Council, led by Michal Reikin, head of the region's education department, made a strategic decision to introduce Jewish-Israeli cultural activities into secular communities in the region and chose to partner with Be'eri to implement this vision. The Be'eri partnership facilitates cultural activities for secular communities in the area, including region-wide events that bring the various communities together.

"The decision to strengthen Jewish identity education in the Golan Regional Council stemmed from a desire to enable our children, youth, and adults to form a deep and intimate connection with their Jewish heritage. A connection that we believe will make Judaism a cornerstone of their world from which we can derive our values, relationships and the very structure of our community. The current situation in which most of the non-observant population excludes itself from the Jewish world has encouraged the local government to be active in changing the situation," said Reikin.

The process for the enhancement of Jewish-Israeli identity education in the Golan is led by a steering committee run by Reikin and Be'eri regional facilitator Itay Yavin. By implementing Jewish education and Jewish-Israeli identity programs in local formal and informal educational programs, Be'eri has increased the level of Jewish-Israeli identity education in schools, within the local education department, and in the communities in the region. Be'eri has also partnered with the Oranim Academic College to create a seminar for Golan regional community leaders to implement programs such as pre-holiday ceremonies and regular study groups.

Be'eri is now running in the three secular schools in the Golan. In the region's high school, students study the Be'eri curriculum in grades 9 and 10 and take a matriculation exam in *Tarbut Yisrael* (Jewish heritage studies) at

the end of grade 10. Plans are in place to begin offering a *Tarbut Yisrael* major in grades 11 and 12. In the region's two elementary/junior high schools, Be'eri operates in grades 7 and 8. As part of a shift towards increasing the depth of Be'eri programming nationwide, the program has recently started running in grades 4-6 for the first time.

Be'eri facilitates seminar days to train Golan teachers, principals, administration staff, and council members. This past year, Be'eri, together with the regional council, facilitated a monthly seminar for eight advanced community facilitators from secular communities who had already completed a two-year training course. Participants engaged in text study, presented texts that were meaningful to them, discussed educational dilemmas from their own experience, and met council members to discuss the creation and implementation of pluralistic Jewish identity projects in communities in the Golan. Projects that came out of this seminar include a pluralistic women's study group led by a graduate of the seminar, communal Kabbalat Shabbat ceremonies, and a region-wide festival of learning in honor of Shavuot.

Be'eri impact can already be felt in the Golan. "We chose to partner with Be'eri after meeting the program's management and becoming enamored with their world of knowledge and values, and their ability to connect current events to traditional Jewish sources and the Jewish calendar and lifecycle," Reikin said. "School principals, formal and informal educators, and community leaders have found it easy to identify with the non-threatening and pluralistic Be'eri approach to Jewish heritage."

*Be'eri is pleased to announce the launch of two new municipal partnerships in Fall 2013. The municipalities of Herzilya and Kiryat Ono, both in the Tel Aviv region, join Be'er Sheva, Haifa, Karmiel, Modi'in, Nazareth Illit, Or Akiva, and the Golan and Hof HaKarmel regional councils as Be'eri partners.*

## School for Teacher Education 2013-2014 Initiative Highlights

The Jerusalem-based Be'eri School for Teacher Education has grown exponentially since its establishment in 2010 and now offers training courses and seminars for hundreds of educators.

### **Karmiel Branch Joins Jerusalem and Be'er Sheva –**

The School will open a new branch in Karmiel in Fall 2013. The establishment of this regional branch in coordination with Be'eri municipal partners in northern Israel – Karmiel, Nazareth Illit, Haifa, and the Golan Regional Council—will allow teachers from this region to easily access Be'eri resources, just as the Be'er Sheva branch, launched in October 2012 in partnership with Keren Daniel, the Be'er Sheva municipality, the Beit Yatziv regional educational center, and Ben Gurion University, serves southern educators. The inaugural Karmiel cohort will include 30 teachers from northern Israel.

Like their Be'er Sheva colleagues, Karmiel teachers will travel to the Jerusalem-based School at the Hartman Institute several times a year to meet their peers and study with additional Hartman faculty members, increasing their familiarity with the Institute and its all-encompassing attitude to pluralistic Jewish-Israeli identity education.

Altogether, 100 teachers and more than 20 principals will participate in the training courses at the School in 2013-2014.

### **Leadership Program for Senior Municipal**

**Professionals** – This program will launch in 2013-2014 thanks to the generous support of Keren Nadav. Professionals from partner municipalities and the Ministry of Education will convene for full-day seminars focused on pluralistic Judaism in the educational and public spheres, Jewish peoplehood, and what it means to live in a Jewish and democratic state.

**Leading Educators Course** - This group of 30 participants will meet with Dr. Ariel Picard, Educational Director of the Be'eri program, fourteen times throughout the year. Curriculum will be dedicated to deepening participants' *Tarbut Yisrael* expertise by pairing traditional classes with a Beit Midrash setting, fostering leadership skills, and improving pedagogic knowledge through educational seminars. Experiential learning seminars will enable participants to study principles of school facilitation through practical case studies.

**City-Wide Teacher Training Initiative** for advanced *Tarbut Yisrael* teachers is a learning experience led by Be'eri municipal facilitators, covering *Tarbut Yisrael* curriculum subjects such as Jewish philosophy and culture and teacher leadership. Participants are empowered to develop educational projects for implementation in schools and municipalities. An additional training group of 15 educators will begin studying in north, joining 45 outstanding teachers participating in this program in Tel Aviv, Modi'in, and Jerusalem.

**Primary Schools Pilot Program** - The result of a Ministry of Education partnership with the Haifa Municipality, a group of approximately 50 Haifa-based primary school teachers will participate in a 90-hour Be'eri training course, which will take place over two years. This pilot represents the strength of the municipal partnership and the potential for growth available through this model and provides an opportunity to add primary schools to Be'eri, thereby upgrading the municipal implementation of Jewish pluralistic education and fostering a more

comprehensive system that reaches students in younger grades.

**MoE facilitators** - At the request of the Ministry of Education, facilitators will meet monthly at the Jerusalem-based Be'eri School for Teacher Education for a full day of study. These facilitators are trained in Hartman philosophy to have a more pluralistic understanding of Judaism, which enables them to better implement the *Tarbut Yisrael* curriculum in non-Be'eri schools. This program, which is now in its third year, thus widens Be'eri's impact even in non-Be'eri schools.

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

### **Philanthropic Partners**

The Russell Berrie Foundation  
Keren Karev  
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### **Israeli Philanthropic Partners**

Keren Nadav  
Mr. Alan Feld and Dr. LeeOna Fisher  
Ms. Raya Strauss Ben Dror  
Tmura: The Israeli Public Service Venture Fund

### **Public Partners**

Israel Ministry of Education  
Municipality of Haifa  
Municipality of Modi'in  
Municipality of Be'er Sheva  
Municipality of Nazereth Illit  
Golan Regional Council  
Municipality of Karmiel  
Municipality of Or Akiva  
Municipality of Kiryat Ono  
Municipality of Herzliya  
Hof HaKarmel Regional Council

*Be'eri extends deep gratitude to Keren Nadav, the program's newest partner and supporter.*

## **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-Israeli 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.

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