

2
Tzohar
19

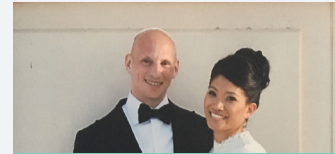


TZOHAR
Impact Report • 2019

What's in our **2019** Annual Report?



05 | Bnei Mitzvah



06 | Jewish Marriage



08 | Shorashim



10 | Prenuptial Agreements



11 | Tzohar for the Bereaved



12 | Jewish Holidays



14 | Conferences



15 | Kashrut



16 | Center for Jewish Ethics



18 | Pastoral Training



20 | Volunteer Empowerment



22 | Tzohar in the Media



23 | Planning for the Future

Dear Friends,

Nearly twenty-five years ago, as Israeli society found itself in a period of deep internal tension following the assassination of PM Yitzchak Rabin z"l, a small group of rabbis came together with a vision to establish an organization which would address these tensions and create unity among the People of Israel. This was the original concept behind Tzohar- to act as a window between different worlds and to remind Israeli society that despite our differences, so much more unites us than divides us.

Twenty-four years later, Tzohar is now an organization whose activities touch the lives of over one hundred thousand Jews annually, as well as significantly impacting the national agenda. While we know that so many tensions remain and issues still need to be resolved, Tzohar leads the effort to change the discussion and make Jewish heritage relevant and accessible to Israelis from diverse backgrounds.

In a growing number of areas, we are providing a more compassionate and accessible alternative to give every Israeli Jew the understanding that their voice matters. Guided by Jewish Law and a love for each and every Jew, our programs and activities reach hundreds of thousands of Jews- both in Israel and around the world- every year.

In 2019 Tzohar continued to impact Jewish society in significant and meaningful ways. Tzohar has changed the religious discourse to one of tolerance and compassion in areas including marriage, Kashrut, death and bereavement, and ethics.

In addition, Tzohar activities positively engage each and every participant in their Jewish heritage helping to create a more united Israel and Jewish people.

Tzohar is constantly seeking ways to increase our impact by expanding our programming and introducing new areas of focus. Tzohar looks forward to helping more people throughout Israel and across the Jewish world.

The onset of 2020 ushered our world into new, and in many ways, unprecedented challenges. The Coronavirus has changed so much of how we relate to others, to our society, and to religious practice. Throughout these trying times, Tzohar has been required to adapt and we have been actively working to respond to the myriad of unique needs presented by our community in Israel and across the Jewish world.

Our work is only possible due to your ongoing friendship and support. Together we are able to advance our mission to create a better Jewish future for Israel and the Jewish nation. For this we express our deep thanks and look forward to continuing to work together.

Sincerely,

Rabbi David Stav, Founder and Chair
Rabbi Dr. Moshe Beer, CEO
Rabbi Boaz Genut, Director Resource Development

Board of Directors

Madelaine Black
Kim Efrat
Alan Gelman
Nadav Kidron
Joel Koschitzky
Eyal Shekel

Contact Us

9 Hamelacha St., Lod 7152015
058.432.1445
mashabim@tzohar.org.il

Tzohar's mission is to foster vibrant and inspiring Jewish identity to guarantee the Jewish future of the State of Israel. Tzohar provides an array of Jewish lifecycle programs and services for hundreds of thousands of Israelis every year. Tzohar shapes Jewish life in Israel through advocacy and legislation and cultivates an influential and responsive Modern Orthodox leadership. With over 1,000 volunteers and a firm commitment to Jewish Law, Tzohar is a socially conscious movement securing an ethical, inclusive, and united Jewish society.

In 2019 Tzohar continued to advance this mission, registering significant achievements throughout the year. This report provides a window into Tzohar's programs and accomplishments and their impact on the Israeli public and the national agenda.

Bnei Mitzva

For many young people, preparing for their Bar / Bat Mitzvah constitutes their first personal encounter with their Jewish heritage. As such, the importance of this program cannot be overstated as it sets the stage for engagement and attitudes to Jewish life as adolescents mature.

Tzohar's Bnei Mitzvah mentors are hand-picked and specially trained to develop a deep and close connection with the youth as they guide them through the importance behind the Jewish concept of "coming of age."

The National Impact Tzohar Bar and Bat Mitzvah programs provide a unique customized Jewish experience that creates a lasting connection with Jewish tradition for Bnei Mitzvah youth and their families. The message behind the Bnei Mitzvah program is clear: Jewish tradition should not be regarded as something coercive or stale; rather, there is a beauty and sense of relevance that can be appreciated by all ages, regardless of one's level of observance.

This program goes far beyond simply preparing youth for the ceremony; it empowers and engages young people as they join the adult Jewish world, encouraging pride in their Jewish heritage.



The Jewish Marriage Project

The Jewish Marriage Project is Tzohar's flagship program designed to address the growing sense of alienation from tradition experienced by many when marrying through the Chief Rabbinate.

We understand that when a bride and groom choose to marry in a traditional Jewish ceremony, they need to feel comfortable and welcome. This understanding has driven our marriage project for more than twenty years and we have assisted over 100,000 brides and grooms through the entire marriage process. Each and every couple receives individual attention, delivered with compassion and understanding of their personal needs and interests. They are treated with the utmost respect at this special time in their lives.

The National Impact In recent years a trend has emerged wherein traditional Jewish marriage is called into question. Tzohar has risen to the challenge and is responding to this trend, increasing our presence around the country with a heavy focus on amplifying our efforts in the population centers around Tel Aviv.

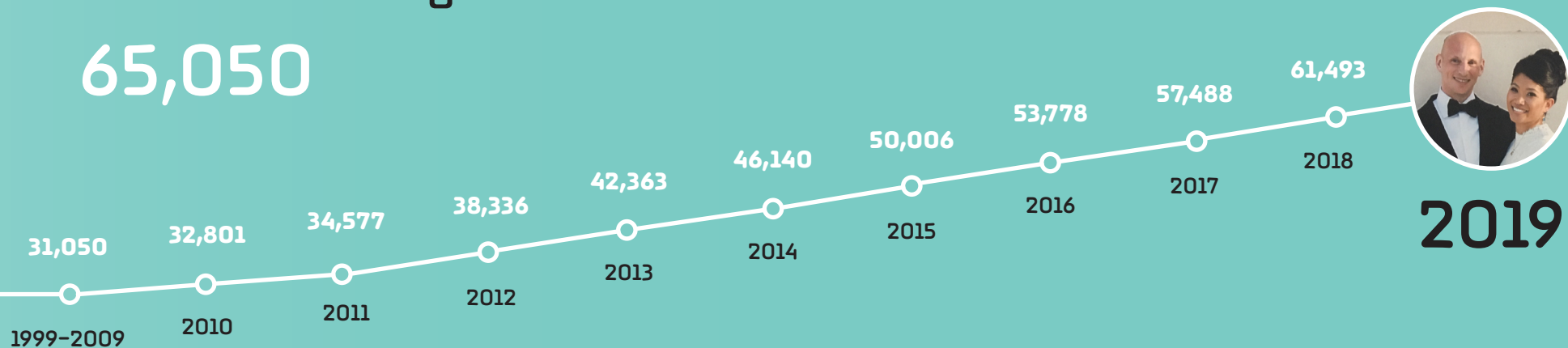
Our warm, meaningful, and personalized Jewish marriage service strengthens ties to Jewish heritage and reaffirms Jewish identity among Israeli Jews from diverse walks of life. Tzohar's Jewish marriage program has succeeded in increasing the number of couples choosing to marry according to Jewish tradition.



Total number of couples who used Tzohar's marriage services

65,050

65,050



Activities in **4**
Branches:
Jerusalem,
Tel Aviv,
Haifa and Lod

3,989
Marriage
Registrations
Processed
by Tzohar

2,046
Weddings
Officiated by
Tzohar Rabbis

3,718
Pre-Wedding
Counseling
Sessions for
Brides & Grooms

05.09.19
Tzohar had its
busiest wedding
night of the year-
We performed
no less than 30
weddings in just
five hours!

Shorashim

For ten years, Tzohar has been operating the Shorashim program committed to proving Jewish roots primarily for immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, who want to marry legally in Israel.

In 2019, Tzohar continued to operate nine offices across Israel, providing easy access to Shorashim's services and helping thousands of Israelis. Many of our activities require work deep in the FSU and for that purpose we have offices in the Ukraine and Russia. These branches enable us to effectively prove the Jewish roots of all those who turn to us for assistance.

In 2019, Tzohar assisted 4,025 people to prove their Jewish roots impacting a total of 18,112 individuals.

The National Impact Currently approximately 800,000 people live in Israel with this undetermined status. Many of these people consider themselves Jewish but lack the ability, resources and often motivation to tediously prove their Jewish roots in a way that meets the Rabbinates' high hurdle of proof. As a result, they are forced to opt for civil marriage abroad. Not only is this a terrible blow to their Jewish identity, but also a ticking assimilation time-bomb. If today's Russian couples do not prove their Jewish status, their children will almost certainly find it impossible to do so, thus effectively condemning future generations to assimilation.



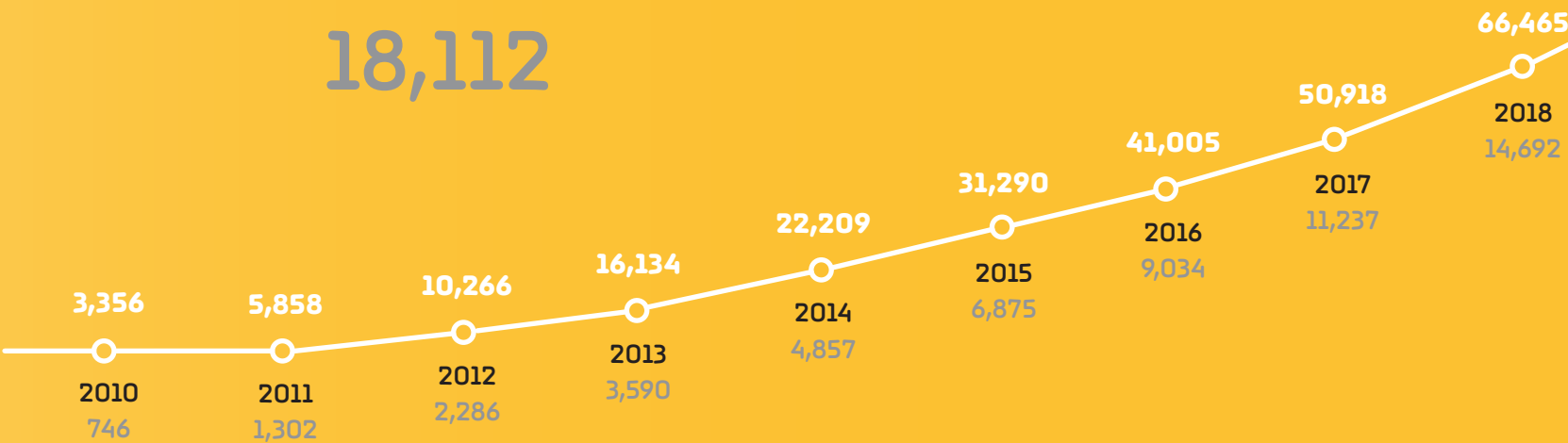
■ Total People Impacted
84,577

■ Total Cases Resolved
18,112

2019
84,577



18,112



Each case resolved by Tzohar impacts approximately 5 more people.
97% more cost effective than conversion!

Prenuptial Agreements

Given our role in helping to facilitate the marriages of tens of thousands of Israelis, we also know that not every marriage ends happily. That recognition has led us to serve as a key player in addressing the devastating 'agunah' issue of women trapped by recalcitrant husbands who refuse to grant their wives a Get (Jewish divorce document).

In 2015 Tzohar drafted its own halachic prenuptial agreement specifically designed to provide the legal framework to protect both the husband and wife from being trapped in an unhappy marriage, and to prevent the issue of 'agunot' should a marriage end.

Entitled Heskem Ahava (An Agreement of Love) the Tzohar document has been signed by over 4,000 couples with the message that true love demands that the bride and groom look out for one another in every reality.

The National Impact Tzohar's Heskem Ahava has addressed this untenable situation of agunot by partnering with the Israel Bar Association and crafting a prenuptial agreement that is both halachically acceptable and legally sound. In addition, Tzohar is the only organization that actually marries thousands of couples each year – giving us the advantage of actually being able to reach out to couples as they turn to Tzohar to register to marry.



+4,000

couples have signed
this agreement

Tzohar for the Bereaved

For most non-observant Israelis who are not members of a Synagogue, the absence of a Rabbi in their lives is most profoundly felt at a time of loss. Thousands of Israelis are forced to manage this process without the practical, spiritual, and emotional support of a rabbi during this most difficult time.

Tzohar's Bereavement Program provides families with a rabbi who is able to support, guide, and comfort them throughout this difficult period. Tzohar ensures that both the practical and emotional needs of a family are taken into consideration, including information concerning religious practice and customs, answering halachic questions, and providing comfort and spiritual guidance.

The National Impact It is often following the death of a loved one that a person searches for a connection to their heritage. Families seek someone with a real understanding of their situation and lifestyle, who can guide and direct them with extreme sensitivity through the mourning period.

Unfortunately, at this time of distress many mourners find themselves pre-occupied with practical matters. They are unable to find time and space to contemplate their loss and to experience a connection with their Jewish heritage which often takes on specific significance at this time. Tzohar for the Bereaved connects Israeli bereaved families to their Jewish heritage and to Halachic Judaism at this most painful time.



+1,500
families accompanied

The Tzohar Jewish Holiday Project

In Memory of Dr. Aryeh (Leon) & Tzipora Kronitz

Tzohar's Jewish Holiday Program in Memory of Dr. Aryeh (Leon) and Tzipora Kronitz serves to unite diverse communities within Israeli Jewish society around educational, inspiring, and accessible Jewish holiday activities and prayers. This approach has resulted in increased engagement. We are deeply encouraged to see growth in the number of people who participate in these meaningful and welcoming activities.

Tzohar's Jewish holiday events, held in association with Ohr Torah Stone's Yachad program, experienced substantial growth in 2019. These programs held on Purim, Shavuot, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, engaged well over 100,000 people in 2019.

The success of the Jewish Holiday Program reflects a growing thirst for Jewish tradition that is presented in a warm and welcoming environment among the secular population. This program engages tens of thousands of Israelis every year, playing a central role to making Jewish heritage and tradition accessible to all Jews while ensuring the Jewish future of the State of Israel for generations to come.



Rosh Hashana

32,000 participants
in 240 locations

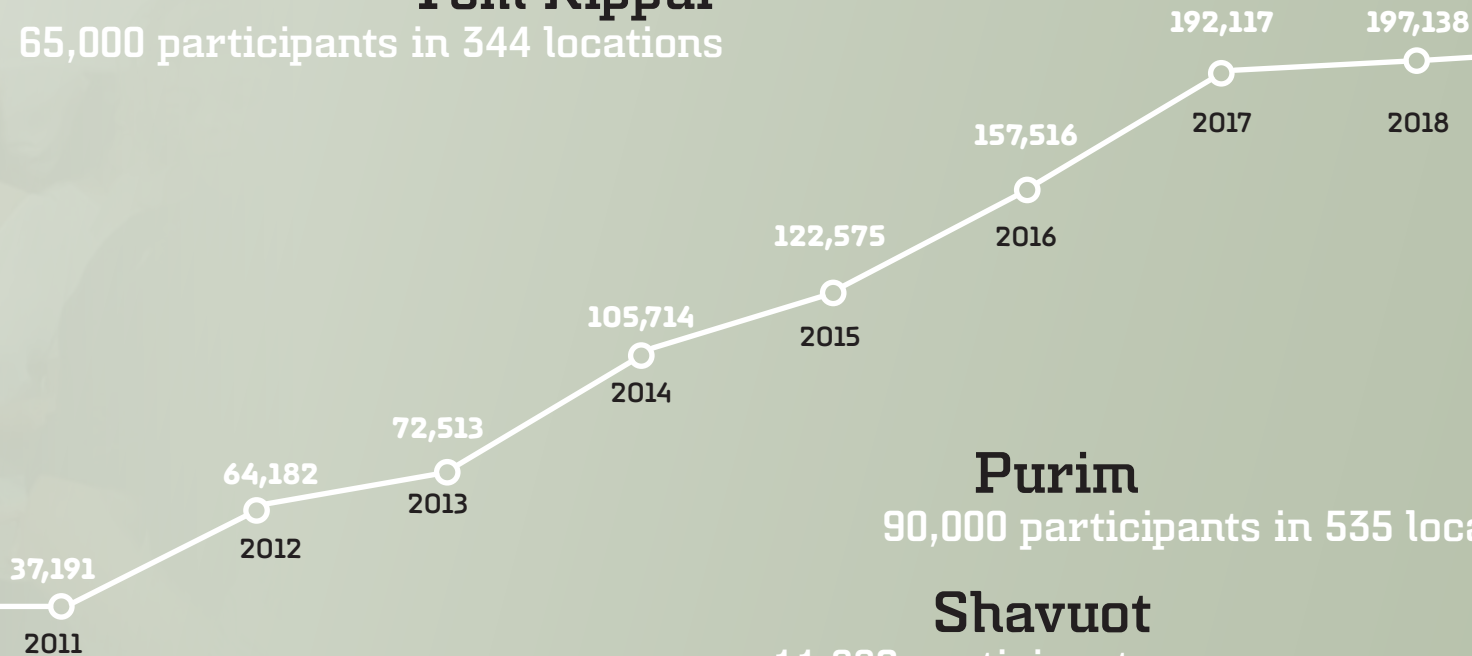
Yom Kippur

65,000 participants in 344 locations

200,899



2019



Purim

90,000 participants in 535 locations

Shavuot

11,880 participants
in 157 locations

Summer Conferences

A central part of Tzohar's mandate is to regularly engage with the Israeli community and promote an ongoing dialogue on issues of relevance to our organization's mission.

Toward that end, in the Summer of 2019, we held a series of mini-conferences aimed at the Modern Orthodox community, that brought together our senior leadership to discuss topics of particular interest relating to society, Jewish identity and halacha.

By creating several smaller events across the country as opposed to one larger conference as we have done in the past, we succeeded in creating more intimate settings that increased engagement and discussion within our audiences.

Topics included inspiring vibrant Jewish identity in the next generation, thereby bridging the religious-secular divide in Israeli society and responding to challenges imposed by modernity. In addition to speakers from Tzohar's rabbinical council, sessions were facilitated by public personalities and well-known journalists such as Amit Segal.

The National Impact All too often it is the voice of extreme elements of society that speak the loudest. Tzohar's summer conferences for the Modern Orthodox community counteract this extreme voice by bringing Tzohar values to the forefront on relevant issues facing this community. Tzohar's summer conferences play a critical role in securing an ethical, inclusive, and united Jewish society.



Kashrut

The Tzohar Kashrut program was launched in early 2018 with the goal of combatting the monopoly of the Chief Rabbinate on the provision of Kashrut. Kashrut Tzohar introduced a new standard of supervision that is based on halacha, professionalism and full transparency.

For decades, Kashrut supervision in Israel has been managed by one entity- the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. Sadly, as per the Israeli State Comptroller report, as well as independent reviews, this monopoly has led to inefficiency and corruption. It was this quest for greater integrity and transparency that motivated Tzohar's decision to enter the Kashrut arena.

The National Impact Kashrut Supervision had become a business guided by bottom lines and often characterized by corruption rather than integrity. As a result, both business owners and consumers were less interested in pursuing kashrut certification.

By the end of 2019, Kashrut Tzohar had nearly 200 businesses under its Kashrut supervision and we are more convinced than ever of the importance of our service. The vast majority of the businesses under our supervision had no certification before coming to Tzohar.

Kashrut Tzohar demonstrates to the public a model of Jewish life practiced with honesty and integrity, fostering a shared sense of Jewish identity for all Israelis, while bridging gaps between secular and religious communities.



+170
food establishments
with Tzohar supervision

Tzohar's Center for Jewish Ethics

In Memory of Bertha Kressel

Tzohar's Center for Jewish Ethics is designed to promote the importance of ethics in Jewish society and to highlight these values in daily life in the State of Israel.

This is achieved via participation in conferences, regular appearances in local and international media, and ongoing availability via digital and traditional means to respond to ethical dilemmas and questions posed by the public.

Rabbi Yuval Cherlow, as Director of the Ethics Center and a renowned ethics authority, has become an increasingly sought-after commentator on a variety of issues pertaining to Jewish ethics and utilizes various traditional and social media platforms to engage with people all over the world. This includes a highly active and dynamic Facebook page with thousands of users and a WhatsApp group that disseminates daily lessons on issues relating to current events and their relationship to Jewish tradition and ethical practice.

National & International Activities

The sheer range of topics and activities with which Tzohar's Center for Jewish Ethics engaged in 2019, is testament to the impact and reach of the Center and the need for these activities in Jewish society. In 2019 activities included:

- Drafting Ethical Codes – for both a government agency and private enterprises.
- Lectures at Conferences - The Tzohar Center for Jewish Ethics is an increasingly sought-after resource to address professional conferences. We are proud to present at high-level forums and impact the dialogue among prominent national and international thought leaders.
- Jointly Authored Essays with International Jewish Writers – This was an exciting development in 2019 with an article authored together with a leading geneticist from Washington DC on the halachic implications of genomic screening which was published in the Journal *Techumin*.
- Media Appearances - Radio, TV, print and digital media.

Academic Conferences

The Ethics Center regularly appears at important academic conferences:

- Military symposium on Ethics in Warfare.
- Beit Avi Chai on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.
- The Herzliya Forum- The Essentials of Ethics in the Rabbinic Tradition.
- Alma College- How to Ethically Relate to Married Gay Religious Couples.
- Commission on Genetic Testing- New Genetic Therapies.
- Conference of Leading National Religious Zionist Organization: Reshut Harabim - The Importance of Ethics in Religious Tradition.
- UNESCO Conference at Bar Ilan- Opening Lecture: The Ethical Line Between Medical Genetics and Racial Selection.
- Zurich Jewish Community- A weekend of topics on Jewish ethics.
- The Tantur Institute- An international and multi-faith symposium on Ethical Approaches to Environmental Issues.



+2,100
monthly views on
Ethics website

32,000
Followers on
Facebook page

25
conference
appearances

+50
Media appearances

Pastoral Training

Tzohar is Israel's largest rabbinic organization and its rabbis serve the public in numerous ways. In order to strengthen Tzohar's standing as a rabbinic organization and maintain its connection with its partner rabbis, Tzohar established a rabbinic training department specifically involved with assisting community rabbis. Our goal is to provide rabbis with the tools and resources to do their jobs with compassion and an understanding of the complex nature of modern-day life.

Our pastoral training courses focus on the following areas:

1. **Promoting a broader vision of the role of the community rabbi.** The traditional Israeli concept of the rabbi was largely focused on teaching Torah, providing halachic rulings and leading services. But in recent years, the role of community rabbi has expanded to include issues of social welfare, pastoral care, and providing inspiration and public leadership to his community and society at large.
2. **Providing rabbis with practical tools to do their jobs.** In Israel, the semicha (ordination) process for rabbis is almost exclusively focused on developing halachic knowledge. The role of community rabbi requires far more, and we are committed to providing these rabbis with the tools they need to carry out their roles professionally and with sensitivity.
3. **Assisting rabbis' wives in their communal roles.** The place of the rabbi's wife has become increasingly important in the functioning of the community and we work to provide them with relevant support and advice.
4. **Assisting rabbis in specific areas of need.** Every community has its own areas of need and individual challenges and our goal is to help train rabbis to respond to these diverse issues and be available to assist wherever and however relevant.

The National Impact Tzohar offers a number of pastoral training options to community rabbis, including a professional development course for existing community rabbis, courses for rabbinical students and for rabbis' wives. In addition, in 2018, with the generous support of the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles, Tzohar launched a pioneer initiative designed to provide rabbis with the tools to develop a significant online presence to counteract the extreme rabbinic voice which is often heard on social media platforms.

Rabbinic leaders in Israel have outstanding social and political influence. Many of the failures of public Jewish life in Israel, as well as the consequent international impact, are due to extreme Zionist rabbinic factions who have influence and public leverage, way beyond their respective constituencies. Tzohar's pastoral training trains a cadre of powerful, inclusive rabbis who represent the majority of Zionist religious society and are a positive driving force in Israel's social arena.



106

rabbis participated in our professional development course

199

rabbinic students participated in our community rabbis workshops

95

rabbis' wives have participated in our conferences

21

rabbis participated in our Virtual Community Rabbis program

Volunteer Empowerment & Education

Tzohar's volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. Over 1,200 women and men work tirelessly to ensure that every person who engages with Tzohar has a meaningful Jewish experience. Tzohar's volunteers are provided with professional tools, relevant education, and support to carry out their important roles.

In 2019, Tzohar continued to utilize a variety of methods to engage our volunteers on an ongoing basis. We launched a website with professional resources on a variety of topics, we delivered monthly updates via dedicated WhatsApp broadcast groups, provided our volunteer bridal counsellors, rabbis and mentors with conferences, workshops and personal guidance, and we demonstrated appreciation for their dedication with gifts for Jewish holidays and a volunteer appreciation day. Tzohar rabbis and their wives also participated in the Eva and Les Erdi humanitarian Charitable Foundation Shabbaton.

The National Impact

Tzohar's volunteers are our ambassadors. Our volunteers meet and inspire a diverse cross-section of Israeli society, providing tens of thousands of secular Israelis with warm and personalized life cycle experiences whilst spreading the Tzohar message of creating an ethical, inclusive and united Jewish society. Tzohar's grassroots work, which is engendered by the dedicated work of our volunteers, enables Tzohar to positively impact Jewish society in Israel and affect the religious/secular discourse.

More than
1,200
volunteers

9 Conferences



Tzohar has impacted over

1,000,000

Jews across Israel

Tzohar in the Media

Sample of 2019 Coverage

Malka Leifer's failed judicial process

JPOST | 31/12/2019

Two major days when we rejoice around Torah: Shavuot and Simhat Torah

JPOST | 20/10/2019

'Most Israelis seek to connect to their heritage'

ARUTZ SHEVA | 7/10/2019

Countering civil marriage trend, Tzohar announces development of Tel Aviv center

ISRAEL HAYOM | 26/09/2019

To protect Jewish marriage, we must accept divorce

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL | 15/08/2019

Ancient tragedy and modern democracy

JPOST | 25/07/2019

The wandering religious traveler: Rabbi Oren Duvdovani explains how to keep Kosher in Georgia

ISRAEL HAYOM | 15/07/2019

Tzohar annual Shavuot learning programs go global

ARUTZ SHEVA | 06/06/2019

Hotels cut costs by forgoing rabbinic kosher certificates

GLOBES | 27/03/2019

Over 90,000 expected to join national Megillah campaign on Purim

ARUTZ SHEVA | 14/03/2019

ARUTZ SHEVA 7
israelnationalnews.com

ISRAEL HAYOM
This is where we stand

JPOST

GLOBES

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Planning for the Future

Tel Aviv Marriage Registration Office

As marriage across the world declines, Israel is experiencing a similar phenomenon, with a decrease in the number of secular couples choosing to marry in traditional Jewish ceremonies. Over the past several years, there has been an annual decrease of 8 percent. This reduction has also been felt within Tzohar – albeit slightly less. Despite that decrease, we are encouraged that our Tel Aviv branch is experiencing growth at a rate of about ten percent annually.

Tzohar plays a pivotal role in encouraging couples to marry in a traditional Jewish ceremony by providing tailor-made experiences offered in a supportive atmosphere. As part of our endeavors to continue promoting traditional Jewish marriage, Tzohar plans to significantly expand our presence and activities in Tel Aviv in 2020 with a two-pronged plan:

The first step is the opening of a Tel Aviv office for bridal counseling, marriage registration and small classes. Over the course of 2020, we will purchase a property and renovate it to meet our specific needs. Tzohar's Tel Aviv Center will be designed as a welcoming space where all couples are respected and cared for.

The second step is to develop a private Mikvah center that will be part of Tzohar Tel Aviv. For many brides, one of the most challenging and alienating elements of a traditional Jewish marriage is immersion in the mikvah. Tzohar's Mikvah center will alleviate the concerns of these brides. We are very confident that this new facility will increase the number of couples choosing Tzohar. We anticipate that this project will be completed by the end of 2021.

Jewish Holidays

Recognizing the impact and the potential Tzohar's Jewish Holiday Program presents for engaging the public, Tzohar intends to further expand and develop our programs in 2020. In spite of the limitations borne of the Coronavirus crisis, Tzohar has identified the potential to engage the public with meaningful Jewish Holiday programming. As such, we have recruited a full-time Director of Holiday Programming.

Increased investment in meaningful holiday programming carries over into other parts of the year and leaves a positive impression on participants. We are hoping to therefore expand the scope of the programming to new areas of activity. One of the roles of the new Director will be to present a working plan that will carry us into 2021 and identify specific areas for potential growth.

Expansion of the Tzohar Ethics Program

Appreciating how Tzohar has become increasingly well-known and respected as a voice of influence in issues pertaining to Jewish Ethics, in 2020 we plan to further expand our reach in these areas.

In particular, we will be expanding our Ethics department to include a unit focused on guiding people through the complexities of palliative care. The Center will provide assistance to individuals and families who are coping with the terminal illness of their loved ones. The Center will train staff members who can provide immediate and timely responses to questions in the areas of halacha, medicine and social work.

RESPECT **ZOHARE** ELEVANCE