

ועד אבי  
ועד חיי

1984 – 1994

THE FIRST DECADE

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*This report is also available in Hebrew.*



# Trustees

**Zalman C. Bernstein,**  
*Chairman, AVI CHAI*  
 (standing, third from left)  
*Chairman,*  
*Executive Committee,*  
*Sanford C. Bernstein & Co., Inc.*  
*Chairman, The Tikvah Fund*  
 ISRAEL (1984)

**Arthur W. Fried**  
 (standing, fourth from left)  
*Director General,*  
*Yad Hanadiv*  
 ISRAEL (1984)

**Lauren K. Merkin\***  
*Past Managing Editor,*  
*Elsevier Science*  
*Publishing Co., Inc.*  
 USA (1994)

**Samuel J. Silberman**  
 (standing, second from left)  
*Past President,*  
*New York Federation of*  
*Jewish Philanthropies*  
 USA (1984)

**Henry Taub** (standing, left)  
*Chairman,*  
*Executive Committee,*  
*Automatic Data Processing, Inc.*  
*Chairman, International Board of*  
*Governors - The Technion*  
 USA (1985)

**David W. Weiss** (seated, right)  
*Professor and Chairman,*  
*Dept. of General and Tumor*  
*Immunology, and Chairman,*  
*Academic Committee of the*  
*Center for Medical Ethics,*  
*Hebrew University - Hadassah*  
*Medical School*  
 ISRAEL (1989)

**Ruth R. Wisse** (seated left)  
*Professor of Yiddish and*  
*Comparative Literature,*  
*Harvard University*  
 USA (1993)



\*Joined the Board subsequent to our tenth anniversary, and therefore does not appear in photo.



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# Our Mission

**AVI CHAI IS A PRIVATE FOUNDATION** established in 1984 which functions in the United States and in Israel. Eventually AVI CHAI intends to function in all regions with major Jewish populations.

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Whereas we are committed to the perpetuation of the Jewish people, Judaism, and the centrality of the State of Israel to the Jewish people, the objectives of AVI CHAI are simply stated:

- ◆ To encourage those of the Jewish faith towards greater commitment to Jewish observance and lifestyle by increasing their understanding, appreciation, and practice of Jewish traditions, customs and laws.
- ◆ To encourage mutual understanding and sensitivity among Jews of different religious backgrounds and commitments to observance.

These objectives are rooted in the two most sacred of Biblical covenants: as to the first objective, God's covenant with Israel through Moses; as to the second objective, God's covenant with Abraham.

AVI CHAI adheres to the philosophy of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, zt'l, Chief Rabbi of Israel from 1921–1935, in interpreting these covenants and in drawing guidance concerning criteria for projects designed to further AVI CHAI's objectives.

God's covenant through Moses was with a nation, the expression of which was a communal commitment to commandments, to the performance of 613 mitzvot. Rav Kook says that this Sinai covenant is an aspect of free will. The observance of the commandments involves a voluntary decision of adherence.

The covenant with Abraham is a covenant based on a family, a tribe, an ethnic identity and legacy. Abraham was the originator of

that family, the patriarch. Rav Kook says that anyone who is Jewish and feels linked to the Jewish people through a common fate is included. That is enough to qualify for the ethnic solidarity which is encompassed by the covenant with Abraham.

With the foregoing as background, AVI CHAI has adopted the following guidelines for its own operation:

*Priority will be given to projects which further both objectives. In no case will a project be funded which furthers one objective at the expense of another.*

*AVI CHAI will work within the full spectrum of the Jewish people in the interest of furthering its dual objectives.*

*Support will only be given to programs or institutions which express a positive attitude towards the State of Israel and which do not reject the value of secular education.*

*The Foundation will only sponsor projects which rely entirely on teaching and enlightenment.*

*Funding will be provided mainly to innovative programs which AVI CHAI develops itself or in concert with others.*

*The Foundation will not fund building projects or deficits.*

*Grant requests will only be considered in response to a proposal submitted at our initiative.*

*Allocations will be made as grants which conform with the guidelines for tax-exemption under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.*



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# Chairman's Message

**R**EFLECTING ON OUR FIRST DECADE from the vantage point of Jerusalem, I find myself convinced that the business of philanthropy is more complex and difficult, and in any event certainly more frustrating, than the business of business. In business, one decides to do something and then does it—for better or for worse. Whereas we, at present a non-operating philanthropic foundation, need a “partner” in the field who not only shares our sense of mission, but is able to accomplish the agreed-upon goals—not a simple task.

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## Goals and Governance

Let me first share with you the goals of AVI CHAI and then its governance and culture. We were incorporated in 1984 with a charge to foster commitment to Jewish tradition, customs and law, and to encourage sensitivity and understanding among Jews at different levels of observance. In the United States, convinced that Jewish identification and continuity were the critical issues, we dedicated most of our energy to formal and informal Jewish education. In Israel, although the Jewish fabric there is unraveling as well, we placed our prime emphasis on attenuating social tensions revolving around religiosity. We have continued to emphasize each goal in both countries, while at the same time we pursue our total mission encompassing both targets on both continents.

A study of the history of foundations in the United States shows clearly that there is very often a radical departure in the focus of a foundation over time from the goals and philosophy of its founder and grantor. As part of building our Foundation's culture, we felt it important to ensure historical continuity by

maintaining voluminous records, not only on the full two-day Board meetings held three times annually, but also of internal and external written communications. These documents serve not only to acculturate a new Trustee to the reasoning behind decisions of yesteryear, but also as a reference for staff in gaining background and understanding. We hope that this culture and method of governance will ensure that the Foundation will stay on course in the future.

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In order to prevent discontinuity, AVI CHAI has been exceedingly deliberate in its choice of Trustees, particularly since they have been entrusted not only with keeping our nose to the grindstone, but also with the responsibility of

actively directing the Foundation in pursuit of its mission. Obviously, selection and retention are critical, not only of Trustees, but also of staff. We have been fortunate to find a mix of people, both in America and Israel, who have excelled in different disciplines, who represent nearly the full span of observance, and who are bound together in their equal love for the Jewish people.



**T**HIS IS MOST EASILY EXPRESSED AS belief in the philosophy of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, zt'l, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel (1921–1935), which primarily focuses on the dual facets of ethnicity and voluntary adherence to commandments in the formation of one's Jewishness.

Our Board not only has carefully crafted our mission statement, but also has determined that we will primarily create and generate our own programs, rather than respond to unsolicited grant requests. As a result of this level of creativity and intimate involvement in each project's development (each project has a designated project Trustee), Trustees are required to devote a significant amount of time to the activities of the Foundation. They must make a real commitment to the trust which has been vouchsafed to them to guide the use of the Foundation's human and financial resources towards its objectives on behalf of the community. As Trustee Henry Taub says: "The Trustees provide a certain dynamic, catalytic, locomotive effect. We should strive for an organization that has the vitality of business."

The Board, together with its most senior staff, functions in a collegial, consensus-reaching manner. Often, initiatives are so rehashed and reshaped that we are not sure who had the thought originally, or what each of us has contributed during the process of discussion. That level of Board involvement, project by project, makes great demands not only on each of our Trustees, but also creates great demands on staff, because of the differing style of each Trustee.

To summarize my thoughts about our Board in one vignette, I would say that AVI CHAI, which to me at the beginning meant "My Father Lives," today clearly resonates to "Our Fathers Live."

### **Our First Project**

I'd like to give some examples of our efforts. Shortly after the Foundation was established, Trustee Samuel J. Silberman suggested that we sponsor a conference on the philosophy of Rav Kook marking his 50th yahrzeit in 1985. This three-day event at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem played to standing room only, thanks to the capable and exciting roster of rabbis and academics who made presentations and participated in the panels. That conference introduced us and set the tone for AVI CHAI in Israel.

### **Program Initiatives: North America**

In the United States, we made our debut in a different manner. Since some of us had a feel for the territory, we researched the state of Orthodox outreach in North America during 1984–1986. Afterwards we solicited approximately 100 institutions for grant proposals related to our objectives. The 50-odd that replied were refined by us to 15 grantees. Later on, in a second similar directed grants program, we were pleased that we were able

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to include a significant number of other-than-Orthodox institutions in the nearly 40 grants made to local institutions (detailed, along with our other grants, in the programmatic section following). This effort was endorsed particularly by Trustees who believed first and foremost in community-based grass-roots programs.

But we learned something disconcerting from these local ventures. The first thing, which shouldn't have been a big surprise, is that big grant or little grant, each takes a lot of work—if you really want to achieve the goals at hand. In a Trustee-driven foundation, with a high level of Trustee involvement, it was clearly impossible to spread Trustees over such a wide terrain.



Furthermore, it was disheartening to find out how much of our staff time would have been necessary to properly make a contribution, over and above the oxygen of the material grant itself. The most we can fairly say about this effort was that we often provided temporary succor for programs which in some cases did not continue after our grant was concluded. However, much good was accomplished, and we surely added a touch of Jewishness to the lives of many throughout the country who participated in these programs.

There are those amongst us who argue that we should devote our major effort to impacting national Jewish organizations. On this score, we have also had our share of disappointments, combined with some success. The example that comes quickly to mind was our attempt to establish, along with the Jewish Community Centers Association, imaginatively designed and produced parent/child education rooms which could motivate parents to become Jewish educators of their own children. We were hoping that our initial foray would entice more than the original four centers. A glimmer of light has recently appeared and we will see if the program will be adopted by other centers. On a more positive note, we had a sure hand in fostering "Beginners Services" and the "Turn Friday Night into Shabbos" efforts, which have been a cornerstone of the National Jewish Outreach Program (NJOP).

Another such effort was the establishment, with the Council of Jewish Federations, of the AVI CHAI/CJF Award for community initiatives towards strengthening Jewish commitment. Our construction of the grant was somewhat at variance with the CJF Committee decision. All in all, however, the presentation of the Award at a major plenary session of the CJF General Assembly emphasized our mission in a significant manner.

Our earliest priorities in the United States also encompassed the networking and training of outreach professionals, and education for parents of children who attended Jewish educational settings. We

felt that the first step to help those involved in outreach was to invite a large group of practitioners, mostly Orthodox, from throughout North America to a conference. After another such conference, and at our urging, an Orthodox core group decided to create the Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals (AJOP).

ONE OF THE AVI CHAI INITIATIVES of which we are most proud was the conference we conceived for 100 women whose husbands were outreach professionals or synagogue rabbis. These unsung heroines rarely receive recognition for the important role they play in joining their husbands' devotion to our people. They were ecstatic and we were gratified.

Maor, an effort at training Orthodox rabbis for outreach pulpit assignments, was another of our progeny. This was an attempt on our part to develop a program that could be replicated, yeshiva by yeshiva, to train rabbis for outreach positions. Later on, we established a grant with the Hebrew Union College, primarily for Reform rabbinic students.

In trying to further our goal of parental education, we took three approaches. First, we worked directly with a group of schools with different affiliations. Then, we entered into a partnership with Torah Umesorah, the national Orthodox Jewish day school society. (Believe it or not, we had difficulty in convincing them that our agenda of parental education for day school families should be a priority.) It took some time, but this effort finally got off the ground, and apparently has had some success—but the end of this story has not yet been written. And finally, after a valiant attempt with the Board of Jewish Education (BJE) in New York City, we were not able to get beyond a planning grant in order to create a community-wide special program for parents of children in day schools.

Although our initial grants were for the Orthodox community, we desired to reach all Jews in the United States. This was a goal clearly enunciated and also, we thought, obvious from the diversified Jewish



identifications of our Trustees. But, try as we might, it took a long time for us to be able to convince the mainstream institutions of our sincerity. Eventually, we were able to establish partnerships in parental education, as mentioned above, and synagogue transformation. An interesting example is the role we are trying to play between the national Camp Ramah organization, the local Camp Ramah in New England, and three synagogues, in their attempt to interface in a manner that will invigorate all the participating institutions in furthering family education. We hope it will work.

**W**ITH THE AIM OF MAKING THE synagogue the spiritual, religious and educational center for Jews in America, we organized a conference entitled "Creating an Environment That Transforms Jewish Lives." More than 100 laymen and rabbis, spanning nearly the full range of observance, attended this ground-breaking event. Naturally, we had some trepidation, as we were walking through a mine field. However, the conference proved an outstanding success, and we think it will be a seminal milestone in our efforts to energize the synagogue as the central Jewish-American institution. We expect this arena to receive a great amount of our attention in the future.

In attempting to reach out to the largely unaffiliated, we entered into a partnership with a for-profit partner, to develop media products for the most-observed holidays, Passover and Hanukkah. Although we had a very experienced marketing consultant, we made the mistake of not having agreed upon specific evaluatory standards for each element of this project from its inception. After an intense and costly effort on our part, we decided to halt our participation, since we had reservations about the applicability and marketability of the materials.

Uncovering information, analyzing it and then trying to develop programmatic responses in line with the facts have been hallmarks of our Foundation. Because of this

research emphasis, we decided on a policy of publication and distribution, when we felt the facts we had uncovered would be of help to the broader Jewish world. (Later on in this first-decade report, you will see a presentation of some of the books, pamphlets and brochures we have published.)

Perhaps the most well-known of the documents focusing on the U.S. was the interrogation of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, entitled "Jewish Involvement of the Baby Boom Generation." The Executive Summary stated:

- ♦ At least nine years of Jewish education mark the most significant upward jump in Jewish involvement.
- ♦ Jewish day schools are the best vehicle for implementing Jewish involvement and are the only type of Jewish education that stands against the very rapidly growing rate of intermarriage.

### **Program Initiatives: Israel**

In Israel, the Trustees of AVICHAJ, like many other Jews there and in the Diaspora, have been deeply troubled by the tensions which have beclouded the atmosphere of relations among Jews of differing religious practices.

The common perception of Israel had been that the nation was composed largely of totally non-observant Jews on the one hand, including a local sub-group that would like Israel to be a nation like other nations, rather than a "light unto the nations," and fundamentalists on the other.

Our Board felt that we had to understand if this was accurate. We therefore decided to employ The Louis Guttman Israel Institute of Applied Social Research to investigate "Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction" among Hebrew-speaking, adult Jews in Israel. The research encompassed 2,400 face-to-face interviews, double the usual in-depth Israeli number, plus 150 face-to-face interviews with those living in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. To our knowledge, this was the first in-depth study of any kind there.



**T**HE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND analysis flew in the face of the widespread misconception mentioned above, and were so surprising that we decided to make available the full 400-page study, in Hebrew and English. What turned out to have an even greater impact on public opinion was our decision to ask Guttman to produce a summary. These 20-plus-page *Highlights*, in both languages, were widely distributed. Russian and Spanish editions have now been published, with a French version on the way.

In addition, we held conferences, both in Jerusalem and New York, on "The Jewishness of Israelis." To quote one of the participants at the Jerusalem conference, "It was attended by the most comprehensive assembly of outstanding social science academics in the history of the State." The interest in the conference was sparked by the outstanding study, the extraordinarily fascinating and diverse academic and rabbinic papers solicited, and the high level of media coverage, before, during and after.

The engrossing conclusions of the Guttman researchers, on the cover of the *Highlights*, read as follows:

- ◆ . . .the rhetoric of secular and religious polarization generally used to characterize Israeli society is highly misleading.
- ◆ . . . Israeli society has a strong traditional bent, and, as far as religious practice is concerned . . . there is a continuum from the "strictly observant" to the "non-observant," rather than a great divide between a religious minority and a secular majority.
- ◆ Israeli Jews are strongly committed to the continuing Jewish character of their society, even while they are selective in the forms of their observance. They believe that public life should respect the tradition, but are critical of the "status quo" governing State and Religion.

**...use the data and its analysis to enable those who are in fact the dominant majority in Israeli society to feel emboldened in their search for the Jewish character of the State.**

Here was an attempt to gather facts for ourselves and therefore help us to develop programs to achieve our philanthropic goals, but perhaps even more importantly, we were able to present a sound, studied report of benefit to a wider audience.

We hope that we, as well as others, will use the data and its analysis to enable those who are in fact the dominant majority in Israeli society to feel emboldened in their search for the Jewish character of the State.

This study was used, and is being used, as the basic reference source by academics in Israel and throughout the Diaspora in analyzing the Jewishness of Israelis. Interestingly enough, but not surprisingly, by culling the data, enterprising advertising and marketing people are also using this study as the basis for consumer-product campaigns, amongst other innovative twists for supporting ideas and projects.

Based on the study, our Trustees and staff presented a large menu of potential program initiatives. But to date, we have embarked upon only a few, since one must tread gingerly on this delicate path. Until now, our emphasis has been on Jewish education, both for junior high schools and teacher training, as well as education in Judaism and Zionism for officers in the Israel Defense Forces.

The Board of AVI CHAI, more convinced than ever that facts and analysis are necessary to understand the evolving sociological mosaic of Israel, plans to commission a comparable study at the end of this decade. In the meantime, we have commissioned Guttman to prepare an in-depth study of high school age youth, the findings of which could well be at variance with the relatively pleasing picture presented in the adult study. We expect to have the final results and publish them in 1995.



We have tried, in addition to the dissemination of this sociological study, to develop other programs which would encourage understanding and sensitivity among Jews of different backgrounds and commitments to observance in Israel. A prime example is "The AVI CHAI Prize in Israel," now in its third year. It is awarded to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to increasing understanding among Jews of different religious backgrounds. A distinguished cross-section of Israelis chooses the Prize recipient.

**I**N ISRAEL, EDUCATION ABOUT JUDAISM in the State (General) School System has been abysmal for some time, and as a consequence, many young Israelis prefer to identify themselves as Israelis rather than as Jews. I have found that non-observant Israeli-born friends of mine in their 40's and 50's have a broad and deep understanding of Jewish history and our Torah, whereas their children, to put it mildly, are virtually ignorant about their Judaism. Aware of this appalling situation, a few years ago we commissioned the Centre for Educational Technology, the country's largest educational research and development organization, to create a program of Jewish studies for the State junior high schools. We also made a multi-year grant to Oranim, the Kibbutz teachers seminary, for the integration of Jewish subjects in teacher training.

In response to the widely-perceived educational shortcoming in failing to convey Jewish values to Israeli youth, the Minister of Education appointed the Shinhar Commission in 1991. Its recently-published report confirms that we should heighten our efforts.

We were from our beginning interested in finding a way to train rabbis for pulpits in Israel who would be able to integrate modernity and Jewish tradition. Obviously,

the first step was to do research in order to analyze previous efforts in this regard. An in-depth study concluded that, despite previous unsuccessful attempts, the establishment of Beit Morasha of Jerusalem could prove to be a worthy endeavor. We breathed initial life into this institution and continue to provide a large share of its funding. To quote Trustee Arthur W. Fried, who shepherded our involvement since the concept surfaced in 1986, "They have created an oasis, a beacon, a lighthouse of excellence in Jerusalem." However, contrary to our original goal, most of the graduates have been attracted to a myriad of educational institutions rather than to pulpit positions

which, so far on the Israeli scene, often have limited influence. We hope to also create such an institution focused on Sephardic heritage.

In today's world, it is no secret that the media is the message. Both in Israel and the United States we have made forays into this field, but in each case we were not

satisfied that our somewhat complex goals could be achieved or that our partners and we were on the same wavelength. Earlier I mentioned our aborted USA attempt. In Israel, we attempted to create a television situation-comedy which would, in a light vein, deal with relationships between Jews on different parts of the spectrum of observance. The script, the acting and the scenery were home-grown Israeli products. However, we did not proceed with the series, as our Board felt that the flavor and taste were not quite appropriate for our message.

Because of the nature of our philanthropy, there are at times Halakhic (Jewish law) implications. Our Orthodox Halakhic consultant serves as a source of guidance when we pose a question regarding Jewish law and its interface with our programmatic initiatives. Rabbi Shlomo Riskin serves us admirably in that role.

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Shortly after our first decade, our seventh Board member, Lauren Korngold Merkin, joined us. We are confident that this youngest of our Trustees (we're not telling her age either), will make a significant contribution to our second decade and beyond. Rav Kook offered an interesting insight which I believe pertains here. In discussing a minyan he pointed out that the force of the minyan was more than just the arithmetical total of its ten members. He then asked who is the most important person in a minyan? Few get the answer right. Rav Kook answered, "Everyone, because if anyone left, there wouldn't be a minyan." So who will be the most productive of our Trustees?

It came as a great disappointment to our Board that Avraham Y. HaCohen, our Executive Director since 1986, has decided to resign from the Foundation. Personally, and as Chairman, it is sad to lose an associate who toiled in the same vineyard, often alongside me, and often for even longer hours. We wish him well.

### **In Retrospect**

When one looks back at the large number of grants, publications, projects and other efforts of this Foundation during the past decade, it is obvious that we have spread ourselves too thin. No matter how we tried, we didn't learn well enough to say no to some of our ideas. I venture to say that in the years to come, we will sharpen our focus on fewer, larger targets. It may even mean our becoming an operating foundation and running programs ourselves. This issue will be on the agenda again during our Board meeting as this ten-year report is being distributed.

Notwithstanding our disappointments, we have been fortunate to work on behalf of our people with many wonderful individuals in our Jewish world. And that in itself was

rewarding. We hope that the experiences of the last ten years will help us better to achieve our goals in the future, and that we ourselves will be as good a partner as possible when that is required.

**M**Y FELLOW TRUSTEES WILL UN-  
doubtedly feel that I have been too hard on us, for we have accomplished much. My Jewish soul is brimming with satisfaction from our successes, chagrined at our failures, and humbled by the enormity of our task. As Rabbi Tarfon, in *Ethics of The Fathers* 2:20, states, "The day is short, the task is great . . . and the Master of the House is insistent." We believe that He has been at our side, as we tried

to use our precious time, His gift, to further His design for the Jewish people.

### **As We Look Toward the Future**

Despite the dissonance of the current Israeli scene, the society reinforces the goals of AVI CHAI in many ways that are significant: the calendar, the free Haggadahs in the

newspapers, the language, "Shabbat Shalom." On the other hand, in the United States, the Jewish agenda has difficulty in being heard, as we are but a small, dispersed minority. The calendar is different, the language is different, Shabbat is Sunday, and the acculturating influences are not accommodating to Torah and Yiddishkeit. However, although many Jews see it as a mixed bag, the larger U.S. society's increasing public attention on religious affirmation may well provide a positive element in helping to further our own Jewish agenda.

Trustee Ruth R. Wisse puts it well when she says, "As for us in America, remaining Jewish requires militancy of another order: the ability to withstand the strong temptation to merge with those around us. Remaining distinctive is much more difficult than we admit. There are not many historical

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models of Jewish communities that retained their vibrancy within an atmosphere of tolerance.”

Keeping the above in mind, it should be clear that the all-too-prevalent pareve Jewish education which has mostly been served up in America, and which does not convey the vitality of our religion and traditions, is doomed to continued failure. Consequently, I postulate that our Foundation’s most important priority in the United States will remain Jewish education, as we attempt to confront the crisis facing that community.

In Israel we must continue to till the field of understanding amongst Jews. At the same time, we must strengthen both the educational system and general societal environment in finding ways to synthesize our Torah heritage and modernity.

We must remember that our religion and traditions are the reasons we have survived these thousands of years.

#### **AVI CHAI Philosophy**

I would like to conclude with some words of Trustee David W. Weiss. In his remarks, delivered in Hebrew, at The AVI CHAI Prize presentation ceremony in the Knesset last year he said:

“The aspiration of AVI CHAI is to stimulate the basic, organic connection between Jew and Jew. . . a connection not of tolerance only, but of true mutual respect . . . a connection of peace between the Tribes of Israel.

“As Jews, we were expelled from our land, and our sages claimed that this was because of the sin of ‘baseless hatred’ and because the principle of the unity of the people went unfulfilled.

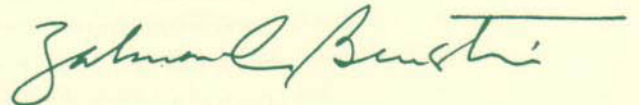
“As Jews we were scattered to the four corners of the earth, and as Jews we enriched the cultures of the world. As Jews we were persecuted, and we suffered. As Jews we returned to our land, and as Jews we aspire to build a society based on the principles of justice.

“When we stood at the turning points of our history, we were not asked, as individuals, whether we were orthodox, traditional or secular, which commandments we observed and which we neglected, were we members of the Western communities or of the Oriental communities? We were Jews. And we are Jews today.

“And today . . . we are faced with the great responsibility—to remember, not to forget our unity. To emphasize over and over again, in a loud voice, that despite all differences in background, approaches and viewpoints among us, the common historic uniqueness which identifies us all as a people, must take precedence over all our variations as individuals.

“These are the guidelines of the AVI CHAI Foundation, and we hope that in this way we shall contribute towards the unity of our people.”

Sincerely,



Zalman Chaim Bernstein

Adar II 5755  
March 1995

**We must  
remember that  
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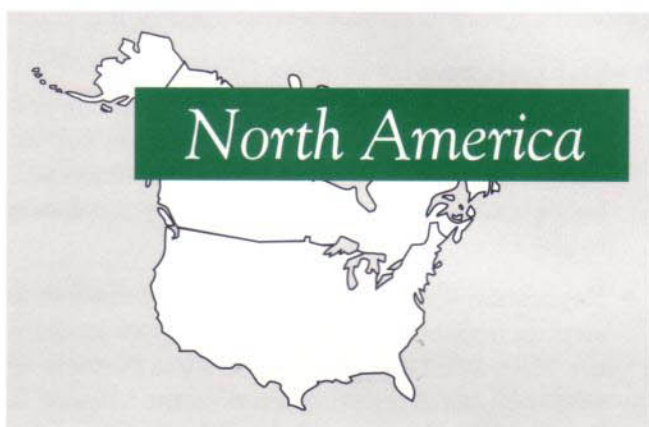


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# Programs

**A**VI CHAI HAS ATTEMPTED TO PURSUE ITS OBJECTIVES through areas of focus established by the Board of Trustees. Individual grant programs were developed toward broadly formulated goals within a conceptual framework. The presentation of programs in this report is done according to those categories, rather than chronologically.

The size of any particular grant is a reflection of the needs of that program, not an assessment of its importance relative to other activities. Therefore, the reader will not find any dollar figures in this report. Similarly, the duration of grant funding varies according to stated programmatic objectives. In the case of most grants, the duration has been two to three years; but in a select number of projects, funding has been in excess of four years.



## JEWISH EDUCATION

AVI CHAI's initial emphasis was on programming for adults. Therefore, when we looked at Jewish education through institutional settings the focus was on reaching out to the parents. Many non-observant parents demonstrate a connection to their heritage by enrolling their children in Hebrew Day Schools, Synagogue Supplementary Schools, and Jewish Community Center programs. It is our goal that parents should be offered an opportunity to increase their Jewish knowledge in concert with their children's learning. While we have seen some fruit of our efforts in this regard when it comes to day schools, we have been disappointed that we have not been able to make a greater impact on programming in Jewish Community Centers and synagogue supplementary schools.

The Board of AVI CHAI has now broadened its agenda to include initiatives to improve and expand Jewish day school education. It is clear that more must be done to encourage parents to send their children to day schools, the single most effective educational vehicle available to the North American Jewish community.

### DAY SCHOOLS

#### Torah Umesorah, the National Society of Hebrew Day Schools

Through AVI CHAI's initiative, Torah Umesorah created a major national program to promote parent education as part of the essential mission of day schools. A four-year start-up grant has enabled this agency to provide leadership and guidance to individual schools, as well as a series of grants to stimulate local development of parent education programs, national conferences for parents, and the creation of a newsletter, *The Jewish Parent Connection*, to which over 100 day schools subscribe.

#### Individual Schools

AVI CHAI directly supported parental education programming initiatives at the following Community, Orthodox, and Solomon Schechter Day Schools:

**Be'er Hagolah Institutes**  
Brooklyn, NY

**Epstein School**  
Atlanta, GA

**Hebrew Academy of Nassau County**  
West Hempstead, NY

**Hebrew Academy of West Queens**  
Jackson Heights, NY

**Hebrew Day School of Orange County**  
Middletown, NY

**Hebrew Day School of Sullivan County**  
Kiamesha Lake, NY

**Hillel Academy of Broome County**  
Binghamton, NY

**Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy**  
Overland Park, KS

**Jonathan Netanyahu Academy**  
San Antonio, TX

**Rockland Hebrew Day School**  
Monsey, NY

**San Diego Jewish Academy**  
La Jolla, CA

**Solomon Schechter of Greater Boston**  
Newton Centre, MA

**Yeshiva Institute**  
Flushing, NY

**Yeshiva R'TZAHD**  
Brooklyn, NY

## **JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS**

**Jewish Community Centers Association (JCCA) (formerly JWB)**

The Foundation sought to reach adults whose affiliation with the Jewish community focuses primarily on their children's participation in programs at community centers. It seemed to us that in order to reach this group on a broad basis the avenue for development should be the JCC Association, the national umbrella organization of community centers.

AVI CHAI encouraged and funded development at four demonstration sites of the concept of a Jewish Family Discovery Center. This is designed as an interactive, parent/child learning environment which seeks to promote the participation of parents in the Jewish education of their children.

## **Jewish Community Center on the Palisades**

A grant was designed to enable professional and prominent lay leaders of the Jewish Community Center on the Palisades to promote the implementation of their Center's study group model at up to ten other Jewish Community Centers. Also, funding was provided for the expansion of adult Jewish education programming at the Palisades Center itself.

## **COMMUNITY-WIDE PROGRAMS**

**Board of Jewish Education (BJE)–  
Greater New York**

A grant was designed to enable the BJE to hire staff and develop a plan for parental and family education to be implemented in day schools and synagogue supplementary schools representing the full spectrum of the Jewish community in the Greater New York area. Although the BJE has continued to be active in this field, the Foundation and the agency were not able to develop a mutually agreeable project beyond this enabling grant.

**Jewish Experiences for Families (JEFF)**

- ♦ **Evaluation** – A grant was made to the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit for an independent evaluation of this community-wide family education program which may serve as a model for other locales.
- ♦ **Replication** – AVI CHAI has provided funding to attempt replication of the Detroit program model in the MetroWest area of New Jersey, in partnership with the United Jewish Federation, the Mandell L. Berman Foundation, and the Whizin Center for Jewish Family Life.

## **RESEARCH**

One of the important contributions which a philanthropic foundation can make is to develop knowledge which is of meaningful value to others interested in its goals.

**The Louis Guttman Israel Institute  
of Applied Social Research**

After the Council of Jewish Federations published the findings of its 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), the Foundation took steps to understand the implications of the data for programmatic initiatives.



A grant was made to the Guttman Institute to analyze the 1990 NJPS with regard to select sociodemographic variables and their correlation. After review of the report, the Trustees felt that it could be of benefit to make the findings available to the broad community, and the Foundation, therefore, published and widely distributed the study, *Jewish Involvement of the Baby Boom Generation: Interrogating the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey*.

#### **The Mandell L. Berman Institute - North American Jewish Data Bank**

Funding was granted for technical support, editorial assistance and an authors' conference in an effort to assist in the production of a series of monographs from the NJPS data.

#### **Survey of Jewish Day Schools in the U.S.**

In an effort to gain a sense of the landscape of Jewish day schools across the United States, AVI CHAI began to compile basic information from the various movement-affiliated day school networks. During the course of our research, we discovered that there was no single source that provided information based on affiliation, location, grade categories, enrollment and student composition. A comprehensive effort was then made by AVI CHAI staff to gather accurate information both via the national movements and through questionnaires and telephone calls to day schools across the U.S. A document was created and published containing demographic data and maps presenting 146 Jewish communities and their day schools in the U.S., shown by movement affiliation and grade level. The Foundation widely distributed this survey to Jewish communal lay leaders and education professionals.

#### **Study of Jewish Education**

Towards the end of our first decade of operation, the Board of Trustees sought to critically re-examine how the Foundation can best pursue its objectives in North America. A consultant was engaged to conduct a year-long study of the field of Jewish education toward presenting an action-oriented paper to the Trustees addressing how AVI CHAI can pursue its mandate through initiatives to improve and expand Jewish education, with particular focus on day school education through high school. This internal document was submitted and, as of the writing of this ten-year report, the Board is continuing to deliberate on its contents and recommendations.

## **OUTREACH**

Outreach, as AVI CHAI uses the term in North America, refers to the development and implementation of social, cultural, and educational programs designed to encourage greater Jewish commitment and observance, mostly among Jews who are marginally involved or unaffiliated with Jewish communal institutions.

## **PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING AND TRAINING**

With the emergence and recognition of outreach as a professional Jewish education specialty, it is essential to develop educational materials, curriculum, and programs designed to train and encourage qualified individuals to enter the field, as well as to improve the skills of outreach professionals who are already active. This area of professional education and training was a high priority of AVI CHAI activities during our first decade. Nevertheless, we cannot claim to have succeeded in establishing outreach training as part of the basic curriculum in the training of Jewish educators and rabbis.

#### **Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals (AJOP)**

After a developmental period of two years under AVI CHAI's auspices, which entailed a considerable investment of staff time and Foundation resources to operate programs, the Association for Jewish Outreach Professionals was incorporated as an independent body on June 1, 1988. AVI CHAI made the founding grant commitment for AJOP's first ten years of activities. AJOP creates services to address specific needs defined by Orthodox outreach practitioners in the field and conducts regional and international conferences which provide a forum for educational seminars and information exchange.

#### **Women with Husbands In Outreach: Conference**

The wives of men who function as Jewish outreach professionals rarely receive recognition for the critical role they play. Their homes and families function with the pressures which result from their husbands' intense devotion to the community. AVI CHAI created and subsidized a conference for 100 women in order to (a) honor them; (b) give them strength and reinforcement for their important role; and (c) create an opportunity for them to share mutual concerns and address common needs with their peers.



### **Hebrew Union College (HUC)- New York/Cincinnati**

A three-year grant was made to enable HUC to develop a year-long, elective, training component, primarily for rabbinic students, which consists of a professional development class, a field experience at a synagogue where rabbinic and lay leadership are committed to outreach, and a supervised internship involving a program of outreach to the unaffiliated or the underaffiliated.

### **Maor, Inc.: Adult Education and Outreach Training Program**

The primary sources of educational training for those who enter the field of outreach in North America are the rabbinical seminaries. Yet, to the Foundation's knowledge, outreach did not exist as a defined track in any of those institutions' curricula. After an initial study at AVI CHAI's initiative, a founding major grant over six years enabled Maor, Inc. to be established as an independent organization to attract and train gifted Torah scholars for the field.

### **Yeshiva University: In-Service Professional Training**

A study grant was made to the Max Stern Division of Communal Services at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) to develop an outreach training program for those serving as pulpit rabbis, Jewish educators, and communal workers, as well as for their spouses. After the study grant, the Foundation and the University were unable to develop a project.

### **Outreach Case Studies**

Case study methodology is well recognized for its success in business and other professional training programs. The Foundation experimented with the application of this methodology in an outreach curriculum. A series of Outreach Case Studies were written which reflect the dynamics of people in the process of change in their religious observance. They highlight the interaction of outreach professionals with such individuals. Field-testing of the case method was conducted among outreach professionals at AVI CHAI-sponsored conferences. Although we had hoped to develop these materials as a curriculum text for training programs at educational institutions, we were unable to bring this effort to fruition.

## **INCREASING COMMITMENT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

AVI CHAI believes that the central institutions of the Jewish community must make both outreach to the unaffiliated and inreach to the affiliated high priorities of their institutional missions. In furtherance of this goal, the Foundation has initiated grants to encourage a cross-section of synagogues, day schools and outreach organizations toward enhancement of their efforts through administrative development, innovative program development, and replication of successful programs.

The requirements of the process of submission of proposals created an important challenge for many, to present their programs in an organized way for others to assess. The review process, as well as monitoring of the actual grants, included site visits and other developmental work by the Foundation's staff and consultants to aid in the definition of goals and a process of goal achievement, evaluation tools to measure success, and general analysis of the organization with suggestions for improvement. Grants were limited to a maximum of three years and often required a matching component.

Through independent evaluations commissioned by AVI CHAI and study of the regular reports which were required in each of these grants, we believe that most often the programmatic efforts achieved positive results. However, as a form of grantsmanship we must acknowledge that the impact of AVI CHAI's involvement on the organizations frequently lasted only as long as the funding for the specific programs. In fact, whereas our goals were always to enable the institutions and organizations to expand their efforts in a way which would be incorporated into their ongoing programming, in many cases once the grant funding ended, to our chagrin the programs were discontinued as well.



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## LOCAL PROGRAMS

### **Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple**

Beachwood, OH

Support for a “back-to-basics” program to expand adult learning for congregants and the unaffiliated.

### **Anshe Emet Synagogue**

Chicago, IL

To support the hiring of teachers for specialized workshops and classes, and the development of materials for home study, geared toward the young adult population in their catchment area.

### **Ashreinu Learning Network**

Los Angeles, CA

To support the expansion of a program which focuses on individualized study geared toward men and women of diverse backgrounds between the ages of 18–40.

### **Atlanta Scholars Kollel**

Atlanta, GA

To support the creation of a professionally directed National Singles Torah Network to foster opportunities for newly and potentially observant singles to meet one another.

### **Beth Jacob Congregation**

Mendota Heights, MN

To support general program activities and the development of a “Daf Yomi” program which aims to involve congregants in daily Torah study.

### **Columbia Jewish Adult Education Program**

Columbia, MD

To expand a successful voluntary program servicing a highly assimilated Jewish community by hiring a part-time administrator and a part-time rabbi.

### **Congregation Adat Ari El**

North Hollywood, CA

To support a “back-to-basics” study program geared to provide a fundamental understanding of Jewish texts, synagogue skills and life cycle events.

### **Congregation Beth Shalom**

Seattle, WA

To support a part-time coordinator for the expansion of their Introduction to Jewish Life program featuring formal classes, a Learner’s minyan, mentoring, and educational events.

### **Congregation Keshet Israel**

Washington, DC

To support the expansion of their adult education activities that include a Learner’s minyan, a videotape library, classes and lectures.

### **Congregation Ohab Zedek**

New York, NY

To support a comprehensive adult education program, including Beginners Services, skills workshops and Shabbatonim, to reach out to those residing in its neighborhood.

### **Etz Chaim Center for Jewish Studies**

Baltimore, MD

To reach adults in new suburban areas to encourage commitment to Jewish living and a sense of being significant members of the Jewish community.

### **Hebrew Academy of San Francisco**

San Francisco, CA

To hire a full-time educator for an Institute for Adult Education which focuses on home study groups throughout the Bay area.

### **Highland Park Conservative Temple**

Highland Park, NJ

To support a variety of outreach programs including a Beit Midrash, intermarriage counseling, parent education, and a study program with scholars from Israel.

### **Jewish Community Council of**

**Washington Heights and Inwood, NY**

To support an education outreach coordinator to heighten Jewish consciousness and commitment in a target group of 3,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants.

## LOCAL PROGRAMS (cont.)

### **Jewish Renaissance Center**

New York, NY

Support to enhance this full-time learning program for women by providing funds for the production of a newsletter, promotion and follow-up, and for general programming.

### **Machon L'Torah**

Detroit, MI

To hire two part-time staff members so that Jews from various backgrounds will have a place to learn and ask questions in an unthreatening environment.

### **New Springville Jewish Center**

Staten Island, NY

To hire a part-time outreach coordinator to reach families who have not yet shown any desire to identify Jewishly; and also to support a Community Jewish Awareness Campaign to attract new participants.

### **Peninsula Temple Beth El**

San Mateo, CA

Support for personnel to help coordinate the establishment of a comprehensive adult education literacy program in the community in cooperation with other local organizations.

### **Project Identity**

Great Neck, NY

To hire a part-time staff person to follow-up with program participants to respond to their individual interests in experiencing various aspects of traditional Jewish life.

### **Temple Beth Shalom; Torah Bamidbar**

Santa Fe, NM

Grants were made to two congregations for programs in which appreciation of Jews for one another is given equal emphasis with growth in Jewish commitment.

### **Sephardic Educational Center**

Los Angeles, CA

Support for the expansion of its adult education programs to reach out to marginally affiliated and unaffiliated

young married couples and high school students in the community.

### **Shalom Torah Centers**

East Windsor, NJ

To hire a program director to expand their one-to-one learning program in other communities in central New Jersey.

### **Shorefront YM/YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach**

Brooklyn, NY

To employ a full-time professional to create educational programming for a community of 25,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants.

### **Sinai Academy**

Brooklyn, NY

To support the hiring of part-time teachers to reach out to Soviet Jewish immigrant parents and integrate them into the Jewish community.

### **Southwest Torah Institute**

Tucson, AZ

To expand their program offerings by targeting the needs of specific groups in a city in which 80% of the Jewish community is not affiliated with any congregation; and also to support a full-time program director to guide these efforts.

### **Stephen S. Wise Temple**

Los Angeles, CA

To support the hiring of additional teachers to reach out to the marginally affiliated and increase their Jewish involvement.

### **Taylor Road Synagogue**

Cleveland, OH

Support for programming to mainstream participants from their Beginners Service into the regular synagogue service and into other activities such as leadership training, and one-on-one learning.



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**Temple Beth Am**

Los Angeles, CA

To support a part-time Russian-speaking coordinator to familiarize newly arrived Russian families with traditional Jewish beliefs, prayer and the synagogue community.

**Temple Eilat**

Mission Viejo, CA

To support the hiring of new educators to involve adults in their children's Jewish education by providing them with a parallel learning environment.

**Temple Israel**

Boston, MA

Support for the hiring of additional part-time staff to implement expanded educational programming targeted for newly-arrived Soviet immigrants in the community.

**Temple Kol Ami**

Plantation, FL

Support for expanded programming to reach out to a community in which a large percentage of Jews are unaffiliated, with particular emphasis on the young adult population.

**The Hebrew Academy Lubavitch**

Westminster, CA

Support for programs that reach out to parents in their school, including introductory programs, Shabbatonim, counselling, and home visits to targeted families.

**The Jewish Education Program**

Toronto, Ont.

To reverse the trend of deterioration in the content of Jewish life in the urban center of Toronto by providing a dynamic rabbi to service the area.

**The Jewish Family Institute**

Brooklyn, NY

To hire a part-time administrator to upgrade the program and provide follow-up for their target group of young professionals who are disaffected from the organized Jewish community; and also to hire a full-time administrative secretary to help facilitate their fundraising efforts and to systematize office operations.

**The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah**

Kansas City, MO

Support to acquire and outfit a mobile vehicle as a resource room to project a Jewish presence into outlying areas of the community.

**Wisconsin Institute for Torah Study**

Milwaukee, WI

To create a special full-time department devoted to adult education in response to the burgeoning interest of young adults in the community to seek Jewish education for themselves as well as for their children.

**Young Israel of Flatbush**

Brooklyn, NY

Support for programs to expand the role of this synagogue as an outreach center.

**NATIONAL PROGRAMS**

To make nationally-known program models for beginners and the unaffiliated available to synagogues and educational centers across the continent by creating professional literature and assigning staff to work toward their successful implementation.

**Lincoln Square Synagogue**

New York, NY

"Turn Friday Night Into Shabbos"

**National Jewish Outreach Program (NJOP)**

New York, NY

"Beginners Services" and

"Turn Friday Night Into Shabbos"

**OUTSTANDING OUTREACH**

Special grants of three years' duration awarded in recognition of efforts being conducted by practitioners and organizations whose work contributes to the field of outreach beyond their local communities.

**Congregation Beth Jehudah**

Milwaukee, WI

**Hebrew Institute**

Riverdale, NY

Lincoln Square Synagogue  
New York, NY

National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY)  
New York, NY

National Jewish Outreach Program (NJOP)  
New York, NY

### THE AVI CHAI/CJF AWARD

The Council of Jewish Federations responded to the Foundation's initiative and created, through its own processes, an annual award for innovation and excellence in community initiatives toward strengthening Jewish commitment. During this three-year grant, awards are presented at a major plenary session of the CJF General Assembly. Below are the winning communities and programs for 1993 and 1994:

**Boston, MA** Through an ongoing process of planning and evaluation, the community has created new institutional relationships between Federation and synagogues to enhance Jewish family life education, and raise teaching standards and the quality of professional staff.

**Cleveland, OH** Through an in-depth, multi-year process of planning, implementation, and evaluation, Cleveland has successfully pioneered interdisciplinary and interagency approaches towards strengthening the Jewish education system, while at the same time deepening Jewish commitment through the communal partnership between the Federation and the congregational community.

**MetroWest, NJ** An individually directed outreach program to unaffiliated Jewish families which has involved several hundred families in a self-determined process of Jewish involvement and participation.

**Palm Beach, FL** A model interorganizational effort of 30 organizations, synagogues and agencies to provide a month of Jewish learning to make Jewish study a community priority.

**Washington, DC** A Jewish educational framework and strategy, through a partnership of local synagogues and other communal agencies, for teens from the bar/bat mitzvah years to college entry, to provide an Israel experience during high school, as well as ongoing Jewish education and participation in community-wide activities.

## UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

AVI CHAI joins the leadership of the North American Jewish community in recognizing that more must be done to strengthen the Jewish commitment of young adults on campuses. The Foundation is weighing how it can serve as a meaningful philanthropic partner in such efforts.

### North American Jewish Students Appeal

In order to strengthen the efforts of this student-led organization which seeks to support outreach and leadership development on college campuses, funding was provided to expand its Beneficiary Grants program, through which a variety of student-initiated projects are funded on campuses throughout North America; and to enhance the infrastructure and fundraising capacity of the national organization.

### University of Michigan Hillel

The Foundation initiated and funded an evaluation of the University of Michigan Hillel program to assess whether involvement with programming based on this model can have a significant impact on the Jewish commitment and involvement of young adults in post-college years and, if so, to assess the replicability of the model. The evaluation report did not provide a sufficient basis for the Foundation to develop programmatic initiatives related to the University of Michigan model.

## ADVANCED JEWISH EDUCATION

### Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University

A five-year grant was made to help restore and strengthen this school as a seminal academic institution of advanced Judaic studies.

### Jewish Theological Seminary

A special one-time grant was awarded in recognition of assistance rendered to AVI CHAI in working toward its goals.



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## SYNAGOGUES

The Board of AVI CHAI views the synagogue, along with day schools, as the two central communal institutions which are the primary vehicles for Jewish continuity in North America. Many of the Foundation's grants at the local level (listed earlier in this report) have gone to strengthen programming in individual congregations. The Foundation has now taken initial steps toward broadening its focus on strengthening synagogues as vibrant educational environments.

### **Camp Ramah**

Through AVI CHAI's initiative and funding, the national Ramah office formulated a project to enable regional Ramah camps to expand the influence of Jewish educational camping by building new and transformative connections between Camp Ramah, congregations and families. It is hoped that the initial pilot phase of this project, with Camp Ramah of New England and three congregations, will prove to be a basis to expand the project to other regional Ramah camps and local synagogues.

### **Conference on Transforming the Synagogue; Resource Book**

AVI CHAI organized and sponsored a three-day conference that focused on the transformation of synagogues into dynamic education and outreach enterprises. Participating were over 100 lay and rabbinic leaders from congregations throughout the United States reflecting nearly the full spectrum of observance. A resource book, entitled *Creating An Environment That Transforms Jewish Lives*, was later produced and distributed nationally, including keynote speeches and samples of successful program models. In the months following the event a consultant was engaged who conducted telephone interviews of conference participants to learn how the conference may have impacted their own congregations and to determine how they perceived the needs which AVI CHAI might continue to address. The Trustees are committed to a continuing role for the Foundation in the area of synagogue revitalization.

## MEDIA

It is obvious that in a community which is dispersed over a large geographic area and increasingly mobile, as is the case of the Jewish community in North America, consideration should be given to the use of communications media to attempt to convey Jewish knowledge to those who do not participate actively in educational and religious institutions. As indicated in the Chairman's Message earlier in this document, we cannot claim success in our efforts thus far in this field.

### **Shalom Sesame Television Program**

A grant was made toward educational and promotional components of the Public Broadcasting System's national airing of episodes of *Shalom Sesame*, a fun-filled program with images of Israel and Jewish culture for children and their parents.

### **Shalom Sesame Family Education Project**

AVI CHAI sought to explore whether the quality of *Shalom Sesame* video programs, and their success in attracting a wide audience of viewers and subscribers, could offer a powerful opportunity to utilize the series for Jewish Family Education purposes. The Foundation approached Comet International, whose principals created the *Shalom Sesame* video series, to develop a project to create and market family education materials complementing the videos, with the goal of encouraging marginally affiliated families towards greater observance at home and increased participation in Jewish educational and religious institutions.

The Trustees recognized from the outset that there were fundamental questions which focused on the possibility to achieve behavioral change via printed and video materials designed for private usage in the home, as well as the challenge of marketing the materials. In addition to consultants who advised Comet during the development of the project, AVI CHAI engaged its own independent evaluators. After a major grant towards research, development and production of the materials, the Board of AVI CHAI came to the conclusion that continuing questions about the ability of the project to achieve the Foundation's goals, as well as its capacity for independent viability, did not warrant continued involvement by AVI CHAI in its further development.





## RAV KOOK PHILOSOPHY

AVI CHAI adheres to the philosophy of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, zt'l, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, in pursuing its philanthropic objectives. The Board of Trustees sought to convey the Foundation's identification with Rav Kook's philosophy through a number of initiatives.

### **Rav Kook Conference; Publication of a Book**

In 1985 the Foundation sponsored a three-day conference in Jerusalem on the teachings and philosophy of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his passing. The conference brought together academics and rabbis of various perspectives to discuss the implications of the teachings of Rav Kook as they apply to contemporary society. Based on presentations at the conference, a book was published in Hebrew entitled, *Yovel Orot*, with a subsequent English edition, *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*.

### **Beit HaRav Kook**

This institution is an educational center located in the home of the late Rav Kook. Grants were made to create the following:

- ♦ **Pedagogic Center** – A resource library has been established to collect and disseminate materials on the life and teachings of Rav Kook.
- ♦ **Audio-Visual Presentation** – A multimedia presentation to describe the life and teachings of Rav Kook for visitors to this historic and educational center.

## INCREASING UNDERSTANDING AMONG JEWS

The primary objective of our activities in Israel is to encourage mutual understanding and sensitivity among Jews of different religious backgrounds and commitments to observance. In order to develop informed philanthropic initiatives, it was felt that we had to first develop a factual understanding of the complex societal problems which this subject touches. Investigation through a number of different means resulted in insights which were not only informative for our own considerations, but which the Trustees decided to publish and circulate widely both in Israel and abroad. Projects have also been implemented to draw public attention to this subject, as well as educational programming for specific sectors in the population.

### **Literature Search: Religious/ Non-Religious Relations**

As a first step toward understanding the facts of behavior in Israeli society among those perceived as "religious" and "non-religious," a researcher was engaged to conduct a broad review of information available in both Hebrew and English sources on the interaction of these segments of the population. Primary research, secondary literature, attitudinal surveys, and government reports were surveyed and a report submitted to the Board of Trustees.

### **Societal Case Studies: Religious/ Non-Religious Interaction; Book**

Simultaneous to the literature search, a series of case studies was undertaken under the direction of Professor Charles Liebman, designed to offer anecdotal insights and a better sense of the dynamics of religious/non-religious relations. Researchers and journalists were enlisted to examine in various settings the manner of interactions, particular causes of tension, and some ways in which the tensions were overcome.

Upon review of these studies, the Board realized that the insights gained into the complexity of these situations can be helpful to Jewish leaders to increase understanding of the societal conflicts which have arisen in recent years over religious issues. Therefore, this compendium of studies was published in book form, *Religious and Secular: Conflict and Accommodation between Jews in Israel*, in both Hebrew and English, and distributed in Israel and the Diaspora.



### **Perspectives on Societal Tensions: Creative Thinkers**

To gain further perspective on the problem of societal tensions, a select group of creative thinkers representing a wide gamut of philosophies was invited to submit papers to the Foundation. These essays reflected on historical background, as well as offering suggestions for philanthropic steps.

### **Social Interaction and Religious Practice: Sociological Study**

Following initial efforts listed above, the Board concluded that in order to understand the facts of behavior in Israeli society which can guide AVI CHAI in developing programmatic initiatives, it was necessary to undertake comprehensive sociological research. The Foundation commissioned The Louis Guttman Israel Institute of Applied Social Research to undertake a study of *Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews*. The final report was published in Hebrew and English in the full edition, and a *Highlights* version was printed and circulated worldwide in Hebrew, English, Russian and Spanish. A French version is in production.

In order to provide forums for analysis of the study findings and their implications, AVI CHAI sponsored academic conferences in Jerusalem and New York on "The Jewishness of Israelis." Papers prepared by the presenters were circulated to all participants in advance in order to engender discussion from many different perspectives.

The findings of the study received wide attention both in Israel and overseas. A volume containing highlights of the study, analyses of the proceedings of the conferences, responses to the report by Israeli intellectuals and the media, and essays on the study's implications is being prepared for publication.

#### *High School Age Study*

Since the primary Guttman Institute study only surveyed adults above the age of twenty, AVI CHAI subsequently commissioned the Institute to examine similarly the beliefs, religious practice and social interaction of high school age youth in Israel. A companion piece by another research organization, based on focus groups, has been designed to complement the Guttman study.

### **The AVI CHAI Prize in Israel**

The Foundation has established an annual award to recognize outstanding endeavors by individuals in increasing understanding and sensitivity among Jews of

various backgrounds and levels of observance in Israel. The award was presented to Dr. Daniel Tropper, founder of Gesher, in 5753 (1993), and to Aryeh Ben-Gurion, founder of the Interkibbutz Holiday Archives at Kibbutz Beit HaShita, in 5754 (1994) in ceremonies at the Knesset.

### **Shorashim: Educational Project with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)**

With the understanding provided by the Guttman Institute study findings, the Foundation has redoubled its efforts to develop program initiatives targeted towards different segments in the society, as part of the overall goal of encouraging mutual understanding and sensitivity. The first such project to be implemented is a program in conjunction with the Education Corps of the IDF developed by Shorashim, an independent educational organization. The program is designed to increase knowledge of Judaism and Zionism for officers as they come to grips with their own sense of identity. Currently in a trial phase, if the evaluation so warrants, it is the hope of the partners in this project that it will be expanded throughout the officer corps of the IDF.

### **Melitz—Centers for Jewish-Zionist Education**

The Foundation provided a study grant to develop proposals for programming to target (a) new immigrants from the CIS and (b) English-speaking groups visiting Israel, in relation to the Guttman Institute study findings. After review, the Board decided not to implement either of the programs proposed.

## **NURTURING EXCELLENCE IN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**

The complexity of life in the modern Jewish State and the tensions which have developed among different streams in the community require a special kind of leadership which is capable of impacting the society in a positive direction with regard to our shared heritage. The Foundation has made this a primary area of focus for its activities in Israel.

### **Beit Morasha of Jerusalem**

With the above goal in mind AVI CHAI funded a study to consider the need for the establishment of a new Post-Rabbinic Training Program which would prepare rabbis to better address the needs of contemporary Israeli



society. After the report was completed, we asked a distinguished cross-section of scholars and rabbinic leaders to present their thinking to our Board. The conclusion of the study was that a new program was indeed necessary, and a founding grant was made towards the establishment of Beit Morasha of Jerusalem. AVI CHAI continues to serve as a major funding partner in the continuing development of Beit Morasha.

Beit Morasha is a center for leadership and research for men who have completed their basic military service. It combines the yeshiva system of learning with modern scholarship methods and offers a Jewish studies program on an advanced level along with courses in the general humanities. In addition to theoretical studies, practical courses are provided in order to train rabbinic leaders who will promote commitment to Jewish tradition through greater understanding and tolerance. Almost every one of the graduates of the full, three-year program has entered the field of Jewish education or the rabbinate.

#### **Elul**

A learning center, based on equal involvement of "observant" and "non-observant" participants, devoted to the concept of Jewish studies as a legacy that has been jointly entrusted to all Jews, and the creation of dialogue and understanding between these sectors in Israel. Support has been provided for the Beit Midrash, which forms the core of Elul's programming, and a satellite program at the Experimental High School of Jerusalem.

#### **Eretz Hemdah Institute**

Eretz Hemdah Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies conducts a seven-year study program designed to prepare outstanding scholars who have served in the Israel Defense Forces to become Rabbinic Court Judges. AVI CHAI funding has been targeted to expand the student body and scholarships.

#### **Mevaseret Zion Educational Center ("Meretz")**

Meretz is an institute for the preparation of rabbis, teachers, and community leaders, which places and supports teams of its graduates and their wives in educational positions in development towns and communities throughout Israel for a minimum of four years of service.

- ◆ **In-Service Training and Placement** – The Foundation provided assistance to graduates of the Meretz program with placement in the field and ongoing in-service training programs.

- ◆ **Merkaz Torani** – An educational center has been established in Nahariya that utilizes graduates of the Meretz rabbinic training program to teach supplementary classes in local elementary schools, offer weekly lectures and seminars for adults, conduct continuing education courses for local teachers, and develop special holiday-oriented programs and materials for the greater Nahariya area.

#### **Sephardic Rabbinic Training**

A grant was made to study the need for a new rabbinic training program to produce modern Zionist spiritual leaders of Sephardic background in Israel, with an emphasis on the traditional Sephardic interpretation of halakha and religious customs. After review of the study report, the Board of AVI CHAI was persuaded of the importance of such a venture. Further funding was provided to develop a proposed program and curriculum for Sephardic rabbinic training. However, despite a prolonged effort we have not yet been able to consummate this objective.

## **JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE STATE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

In order to strengthen the sense of shared values and heritage in the nation, the field of Jewish education in the State (General) Schools is a high priority of the Foundation's activities. Since our initial efforts focused on two long-term projects which have not yet been completed, it is too early to assess their impact.

#### **Centre for Educational Technology (CET)**

In an effort to increase knowledge of Jewish sources and culture at the junior high school level, the Foundation initiated a grant for a five-year project to the Centre for Educational Technology in order to develop a new curriculum for the State School system. The program, which will be tested and evaluated, includes specially prepared texts, computer and video components, and parent/child study components, and may be adapted for informal as well as formal settings.

#### **Oranim–School of Education of the Kibbutz Movement**

AVI CHAI has served as a major funding partner in a projected five-year comprehensive plan for integrating Jewish subjects and thought into the training of teachers



at Oranim. The training includes both formal curriculum and informal education, as well as field work activities.

#### **Papers from Leaders in Education**

A number of leaders in the field of education were asked to write papers on their perception of the main problems in the teaching of Jewish Studies in the State Schools, and possible solutions to these problems. Based on its review and ongoing deliberation of these papers, the Board of Trustees has begun to refine its program efforts to strengthen Jewish studies in the State School system.

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

In pursuit of its dual objectives, AVI CHAI has supported programs which communicate Judaism and a religious, Zionist spirit while reinforcing unity, tolerance, and positive relations among all sectors of Israeli society.

#### **Index of Outreach Programs in Israel**

Research consultants identified over 130 outreach programs, to increase the commitment to Jewish heritage among adults in Israel. Upwards of 100 organizational profiles were included in an *Index of Outreach Programs in Israel* that was printed and distributed to outreach professionals and other interested parties in Israel and abroad.

## **LOCAL PROGRAMS**

One time grants were awarded to the following institutions and organizations for educational work toward the Foundation's objectives:

#### **Amiad**

Jerusalem

Programming to strengthen commitment to Jewish values and observance.

#### **Bnei David Preparatory (Military) Institute**

Eli

One-year program for observant 18-year-olds to prepare them for life in the army and officer training.

#### **El Ami**

Jerusalem

Programming to strengthen commitment to Jewish values and observance.

#### **Hecht Synagogue Beit Midrash, Hebrew University**

Jerusalem

Joint study of Jewish texts by observant and non-observant university students.

#### **Isralight Institute**

Jerusalem

Programs oriented to English-speaking young adult visitors to the Old City, Jerusalem, toward commitment to Jewish identity and Israel.

#### **Livnot U'lehibanot**

Safed

Study program combining Jewish topics and work projects for young adults without previous Jewish Studies backgrounds.

#### **Pardes Institute**

Jerusalem

Program of studies for university graduates from abroad to increase their sense of identity and knowledge of Jewish sources.

#### **SHAI Institute**

Ramat Gan

Religious Zionist program, housed at Bar Ilan University, that attempts to bring appreciation of Judaism to high school and university students, primarily from the non-observant population.

#### **Tikvateinu/Keren Yaldenu Community Centers**

Jerusalem

National network of centers that foster mutual understanding among youngsters of diverse backgrounds through educational and recreational activities.

#### **Ratzon Yehudah Kollel**

Petach Tikvah

Zionist Kollel for graduates of Yeshivot Hesder who, in addition to their studies, are involved in community-oriented programs.

#### **Yaacov Herzog Center for Jewish Studies**

Ein Tzurim

Under the administration of the Religious Kibbutz Movement, the Center offers programs to bring observant and non-observant Israelis together to study Judaism.

## NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

### **El Ami**

National

Educational outreach organization that runs study groups, lectures, training seminars, retreats and media campaigns designed to convey a religious Zionist message to all segments of Israeli society.

### **Ohr Torah Institutions**

Gush Etzion and Jerusalem

Network of religious Zionist educational institutions for youth and adults.

## USE OF MEDIA

The public perception, as well as the tone, of relations among different sectors in Israeli society is directly impacted by the national media, both electronic and print. As reflected in the Chairman's Message, we have not yet been able to capitalize on the use of media toward the Foundation's goals; nor have we yet taken effective steps to try to counter negative statements and images projected through national media.

### **Television Series Pilot**

A situation-comedy television series was conceived by the Foundation with a view to increasing understanding and sensitivity among different groups in Israeli society. After a pilot episode was produced and tested, although the professional evaluations were largely favorable, the Board was not confident that the program would contribute to our goals, and the project was discontinued.

## LIFE CYCLE

The Guttman Institute sociological study (referred to earlier in this report), found that "there are certain traditional attitudes, values and practices that embrace almost all Israeli Jews: the commitment to Jewish continuity, the celebration of major holidays, and the performance of life cycle rituals with a Jewish religious character." At significant moments in their lives, virtually all Israeli Jews have contact with functionaries of the official, government religious establishment. Much needs to be done to improve the quality of

interface between the public and those representatives of tradition so that such occasions will be positive experiences.

### **Amiad: Pre-Marital Counselling Program**

Funding was provided to Amiad for a program that introduced young couples, engaged to be married, to matters of marital life and Jewish values in the home. The course was led by specially trained rabbis, psychologists, and social workers who approached the questions and concerns of observant and non-observant couples alike with sensitivity and respect.

### **Young Israel Rabbinical Council:**

#### **Service for Rabbinical Courts**

Counseling to observant and non-observant individuals with cases of personal status (marriage, divorce, adoption) before the courts.

## PROGRAMS FOR JEWS FROM, AND IN, THE CIS

The wave of immigrants from the CIS at the beginning of the 1990's brought hundreds of thousands of Jews to Israel who had been estranged from Jewish culture for 70 years. Projects were undertaken to help acquaint those Jews, as well as those still in the CIS, with their heritage and the national culture of Israel.

### **Centre for Educational Technology:**

#### **Jewish Heritage in Ulpanim**

Russian-speaking newcomers to Israel are exposed to Jewish history and culture as they learn the Hebrew language through the use of *B'rukhim Ha-Ba'im*, a book produced through AVI CHAI funding by the Centre for Educational Technology.

### **El Ami: Lecture Bureau**

A service to provide speakers on topics of Jewish interest in Ulpanim and study groups to recent arrivals from the former Soviet Union was organized by El Ami, in order to present a message of modern religious Zionism to the newcomers.

### **Lishkat Hakesher: Emissaries**

Religious Zionist couples from Israel were dispatched as emissaries to outlying Jewish communities in the CIS as teachers and communal workers for the fall Jewish holidays.



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**Lishkat HaKeshet: Calendar with Explanations in Russian of Observances**

As an introduction to life in the Jewish State, a calendar with explanations of Jewish observances in Russian and appealing photographs of traditional customs as they are practiced in contemporary Israel was published and distributed to Jews in the CIS.

**Survey of Programs for Russians**

In an effort to determine the programming needs of recent Russian immigrants to Israel, the Foundation commissioned a representative survey of organizations involved in the field of Jewish educational and cultural programs being targeted to this audience.

**Tal Haim Community Center**

Programs of assistance for absorption and adult Jewish education for recent Russian immigrants.

**Yaaleh Veyavoh**

A grant was made to the Yaaleh Veyavoh organization for a community-based, volunteer program to activate members of neighborhood synagogues to assist Russian families in their adjustment to life in Israel.

**Yaacov Herzog Institute:**

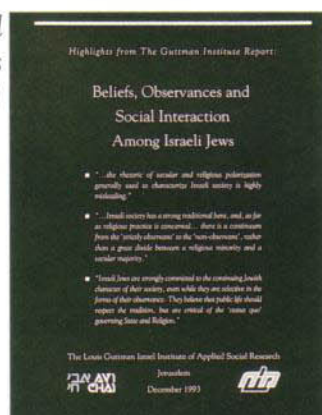
**Spiritual Leadership Program**

Training a new generation of Jewishly literate teachers and laymen for the Russian immigrant community was the goal of the Spiritual Leadership Program at the Yaacov Herzog Institute in Alon Shvut. Participants in two-month long seminars and subsequent continuing education programs encountered Jewish sources and were encouraged to pursue careers or voluntary work in communal service.

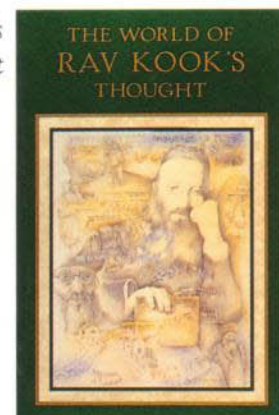
# Selection of AVI CHAI Publications



*Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews (English Highlights)*



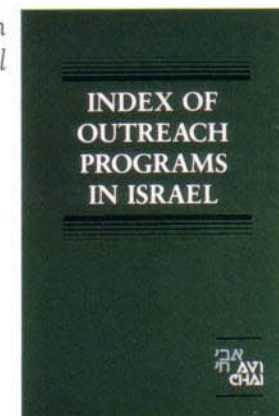
*The World of Rav Kook's Thought*



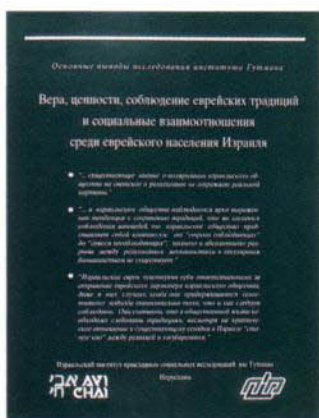
*B'rukhim Ha-Ba'im (Jewish History and Heritage for Russian Immigrants)*



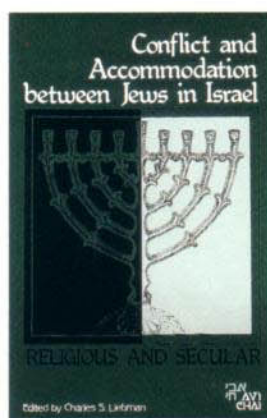
*Index of Outreach Programs in Israel*



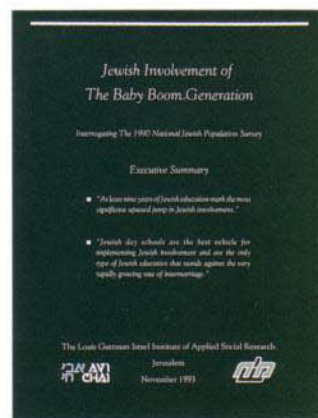




Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews (Russian Highlights)



Religious and Secular: Conflict and Accommodation between Jews in Israel



Jewish Involvement of The Baby Boom Generation-Interrogating The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey



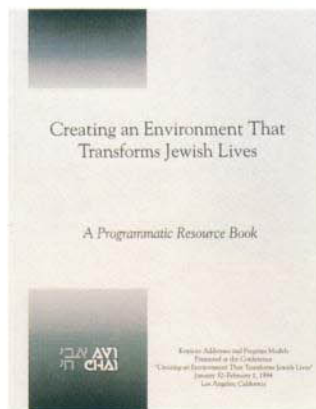
Calendar with Explanations in Russian



Yovel Orot (The World of Rav Kook's Thought)



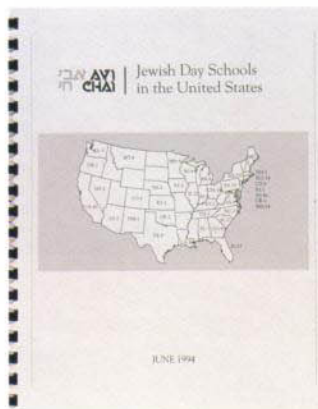
Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews (Complete Hebrew Study)



A Programmatic Resource Book for Synagogues



The AVI CHAI Prize in Israel



Survey of Jewish Day Schools in the United States







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