



Update and Accomplishments - "From Suspicion to Solidarity: Religious Zionism Meets the Five Tribes"

We present the following updates on our program - in partnership with Ne'emanai Torah Va'Avodah and Pnima - in the Religious Zionist community, which seeks to build solidarity amongst key Religious Zionist leaders and other groups in Israeli society and the Jewish Diaspora.

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2. Updated Accomplishments
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"We Israelis need to wake up and act to connect the two parts of the Jewish nation"

Program Update



A recent socially-distanced program meeting

Both the first and second program cohorts have continued meeting virtually and in-person.

The first cohort continues in its second year, expanding on ideas from the first year and working with the Prima Social Movement (led by Religious Zionist Rabbi and former Knesset Education Minister Shai Piron) to design interventions and widen their impact.

The second cohort is undergoing the program as planned, encountering diverse communities and viewpoints in Israel, reaching into the Jewish bookshelf to arrive at new interpretations of modern life and the Religious Zionist community's role, and growing their sense of solidarity with the society around them.

"We are here together, and no matter how much we argue, we will end up going to sleep in the same place we all call homeland."

Updated Accomplishments



A conversation between a female Reform rabbi and an Orthodox Rabbi in Makor Rishon's recent, first-ever International Diaspora Conference

We are proud to present the following list of 17 real-world interventions carried out by program participants, working to build solidarity in Israeli society and the Jewish diaspora (full list [here](#)).

Highlights:

1. Religious Zionist Diaspora Conference

Makor Rishon, the central newspaper of the Religious Zionist community and settler movement, recently held its first-ever [International Diaspora Conference](#). The newspaper's CEO, **Moriya Shalom**, was a participant in "From Suspicion to Solidarity", and said the event came out of her experience traveling to the US with the program.

One event during the conference raised particular controversy in the Religious Zionist community – a [panel discussion with a female Reform rabbi](#).

Another program participant, journalist and settler **Shlomo Piotrkowski**, wrote a response in Makor Rishon defending the panel. Shlomo wrote:

"For many years, I have also shied away from public meetings of Orthodox rabbis with Reform and Conservative rabbis. One of the things that I learned the last time I was in the United States, as part of a delegation in "From Suspicion to Solidarity", is the price of shying away from such meetings."

2. Bnai Akiva "Novi God" Celebration with Russian-Speaking Community

Led by program participant **Yair Shahal** - secretary-general of the community's central youth group, Bnei Akiva - the Youth Movement joined young people from the former Soviet Union to celebrate Novy God (The Russian New Year's Eve). One of the participants interviewed in a [Ynet article](#) about the event mentioned: "It's an exciting step. It's time to open a new chapter in the relationship between the Russian community, Generation 1.5, and the Religious Zionist sector."

3. Book on the History of Zionism in the Mizrahi/Sephardic Community

Program participant **Amichai Berholz**, a senior editor at Yediot Aharonot, directed and edited a book about the history of Zionism in the Mizrahi/Sephardic community (the book will be published later this year).

"It's time to open a new chapter in the relationship between the Russian-speaking community, Generation 1.5, and the Religious Zionist sector."

Religious Zionist Program Leader Enters Knesset



We are proud to share that Tehila Friedman, our Religious Zionist program leader, is a new Member of Knesset with the Blue and White Party. Tehila's agenda remains with her longtime goals of building solidarity between Israel and the Diaspora, and advancing religious pluralism and feminism in Israel.

New Religious Zionist Program Leader



Now Member of Knesset Tehila Friedman will be replaced in her role as director of our Religious Zionist program by Rabbi Ilan Ofran - a psychologist, Orthodox Rabbi, and published author.

Rabbi Ofran is the Director of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah's Israeli Rabbinic Leadership Fellowship and is the Rav of Kvutzat Yavne, Israel's largest religious kibbutz. He is the founder and head of "Mechinat Ruach Hassadeh" - a pre-military Jewish academy for religious boys, and taught at Tzahali, a pre-army program for religious girls. Rabbi Ofran's book "תורה של הנפש" explores the stories of the Torah from the perspective of contemporary psychological theories. Rabbi Ofran is a graduate of Yeshivat Kibbutz HaDati in Maaleh Gilboa and of the Beit Midrash in Beit Morasha, and received his Semicha from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. Rav Ofran holds a BA in Talmud and Psychology from Bar Ilan University, and is a licensed psychologist with an M.Sc. in psychology.