



SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE
Midrashiya High School for Girls

Faculty

Merav Badichi has been the head of the Midrashiya High School for Girls since its establishment in 2007. Merav has twenty years of experience as a teacher and educator. She completed her BA in Jewish studies and Hebrew literature and holds an MA in education. Recently, Merav completed courses in bibliotherapy and management at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Renana Pilzer Ravitzky is the head of the Midrashiya High School for Girls Beit Midrash. Leading an experiment in religious, feminist social change, Renana is developing the Midrashiya's Orthodox feminist curricula, which the Israeli Ministry of Education has commissioned to be used in religious girls' high schools across the country. Renana is currently pursuing her doctorate in midrash and gender in the Bar-Ilan University Gender Studies Program.

Avital Brenner heads the Body-Soul-Consciousness Program and is the supervisor for 12th grade students. She serves as the school's spiritual advisor (*melavah ruchanit*, in place of a school rabbi). In this capacity, she is responsible for the Jewish character of the school and ensuring that the educational mission of the school fully integrates body, soul, and consciousness. She holds an MA in Jewish studies and has recently completed additional coursework on gender.

Yael Turner Grossman leads the physical side of the Body-Soul-Consciousness Program. She is the head of Studio 6, a local studio dedicated to movement, and is responsible for the movement and dance classes in the school. Her classes use a method that integrates the psychological (soul) side into the physical (body). In addition to overseeing the movement curriculum at the Midrashiya, Yael trains the movement and dance teachers who teach in the school.

“For years, there was no real answer for a segment of the religious population that was looking for an Orthodox girls’ school that views Judaism from a feminist and pluralistic point of view. Many girls and their parents eagerly awaited a school that not only offers academic excellence, is open to the wider world, and encourages leadership and social awareness, but also teaches girls to lead prayer, read from the Torah and be leaders not just in general society but also in Jewish life.”

– **Merav Badichi**, Midrashiya principal

Empowering Young Israeli Women

While Israeli society has taken great strides toward gender equality over the past few decades, a significant gender gap persists. The Shalom Hartman Institute seeks to empower young Israeli women to become confident leaders now and in the future through educational programs aimed at developing women who are confident with their self-image and with their intellect and who have been trained to be at the forefront of changing the Israeli discourse.

Established in 2007, the Midrashiya High School for Girls has successfully implemented an authentic and coherent educational vision that fuses respect for Jewish tradition and learning with an obligation to halakha and feminist ideology. The Midrashiya has the benefit of being able to draw on resources from the Shalom Hartman Institute, including the Institute's award-winning Charles E. Smith High School for Boys, to develop its unique curriculum.



Innovative, Experimental Education

The school instills its students with a strong self-image by providing a holistic environment in which Orthodox teenage girls can advance spiritually, physically, and intellectually. The school's Body-Soul-Consciousness Program, which has recently been chosen by the Israeli Ministry of Education to be developed for use as the Orthodox feminist curriculum for the state religious school system, uses a "golden triangle" methodology to enable students to cultivate each of these elements equally. This comes at a time in their lives when social edicts often draw them to favor one element over the others.

The Midrashiya Body-Soul-Consciousness Curriculum

Body: The school offers a range of mandatory movement classes—from yoga to hip hop—that educate girls not only in the technical aspects of the discipline but also to appreciate their bodies, increase self-esteem, and engage in team work. At the end of every semester, the girls perform as a group. Weekly theoretical workshops focus on themes related to physical development, nutrition, body image, gender, and feminism.

Soul: While the Midrashiya is not the first religious feminist school in Israel, it is the first to make reading from the Torah in daily prayer a normative part of girls' education, instilling in them the idea that they are integral members of a religious community whose voices can be heard. This unique approach facilitates the development of values-driven, confident, and socially committed women equipped to serve as leaders in the Jewish community and wider multicultural society.

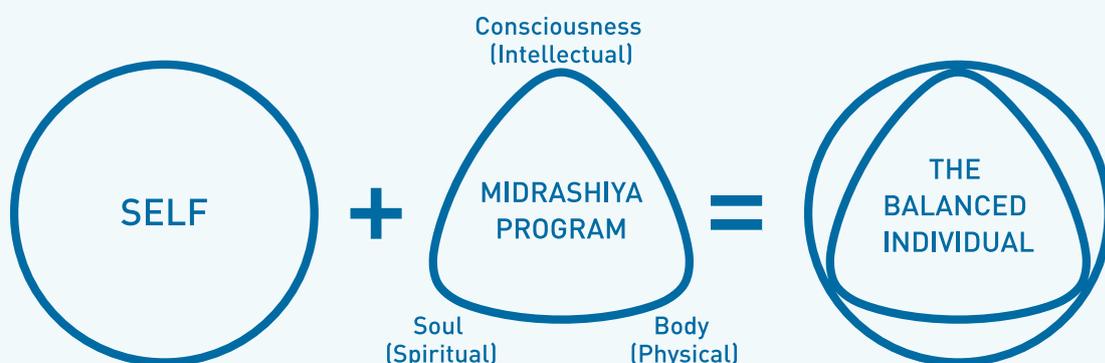
Consciousness: All Jewish studies classes are taught in the intimate, informal atmosphere of a Beit Midrash, in which a smaller group of students study together with a mentor. The Beit Midrash format is particularly suited to empowering young women to find their own voices. Students are guided in analyzing subject matter, formulating their own interpretations, and expressing their ideas in a peer setting. These methodologies are also applied in general studies education.

Recognizing that these are needs that do not end after adolescence, the Midrashiya offers its teachers a series of enrichment workshops.

Keeping Body, Soul, and Consciousness in Equilibrium

The Body-Soul-Consciousness Program equips young women to deal with the emotional, psychological, and physical development that they experience in their teen years by:

- > Embracing the body through physical activity (dance, yoga) and academic study (women's health and feminist theory)
- > Cultivating the spiritual through public prayer and Torah reading
- > Developing intellect through Beit Midrash and general studies

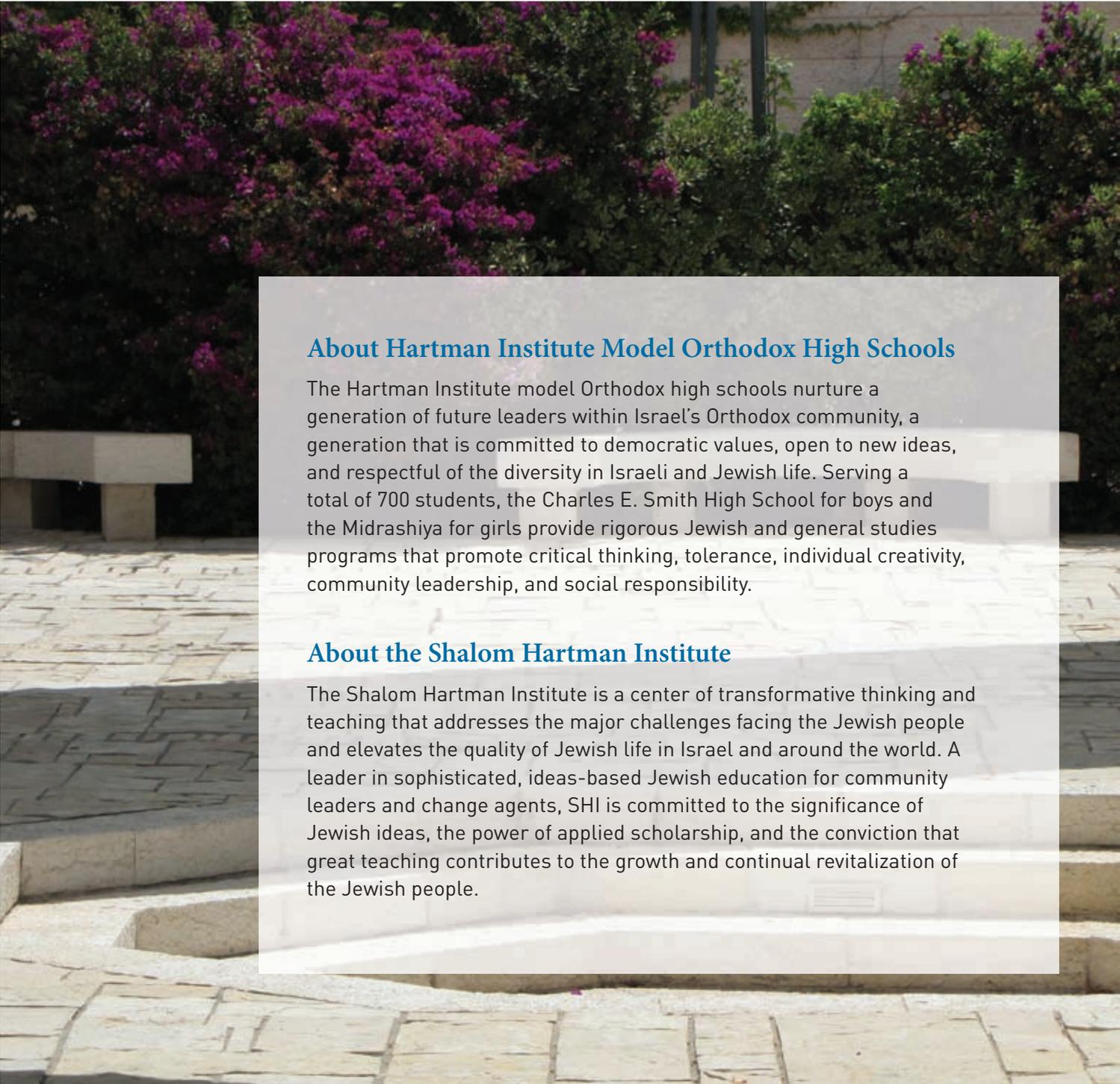


The "golden triangle" methodology enables students to cultivate physical, spiritual, and intellectual elements equally and to integrate them into the development of a balanced self.

Commitment to Social Action

The Midrashiya instills in students a profound sense of responsibility for the Jewish people and the State of Israel. The school focuses not only on its own inner environment but also on the community in which it is situated, facilitating each student's active involvement in life around her.

Through yearlong projects appropriate to each grade — from the distribution of food baskets to initiating social activities with underprivileged youth to computer instruction for the elderly — Midrashiya students learn about the challenges facing various segments of Israeli society and develop the initiative and leadership skills to take an active role in responding to them. The Social Action Program guides students in developing and implementing innovative, entrepreneurial initiatives that contribute to others.



About Hartman Institute Model Orthodox High Schools

The Hartman Institute model Orthodox high schools nurture a generation of future leaders within Israel's Orthodox community, a generation that is committed to democratic values, open to new ideas, and respectful of the diversity in Israeli and Jewish life. Serving a total of 700 students, the Charles E. Smith High School for boys and the Midrashiya for girls provide rigorous Jewish and general studies programs that promote critical thinking, tolerance, individual creativity, community leadership, and social responsibility.

About the Shalom Hartman Institute

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



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן

Shalom Hartman Institute

11 Gedalyahu Alon Street
Jerusalem 93113 Israel

Tel: +972 2 567 5320

Fax: +972 2 561 1913

**Shalom Hartman Institute
of North America**

One Pennsylvania Plaza, Suite 1606
New York, NY 10119

Tel: +1 212 268 0300

Fax: +1 212 239 4550

www.hartman.org.il

