

MA'AYAN
PROGRAMME

Office of The
CHIEF RABBI

Ma'ayan Programme Information Pack

"Hashem's Torah is perfect; it restores the soul. Hashem's testimony is trustworthy; it makes the simple wise. The directives of Hashem are upright; they gladden the heart. Hashem's mitzvot are clear, enlightening the eyes" (Tehillim 19:8-9)

These are the words chosen by King David to praise the Torah as the perfect and inimitable vehicle through which we can perform the will of the Almighty.

"Mitzvat Hashem Barah, Meirat Eynayim" he says – 'the mitzvot are clear, enlightening the eyes'. Rashi explains that the word '**barah**' here means not that the mitzvot are 'clear' but that they 'shine' and it is that which '*enlightens the eyes*'. The ability to harness the shining light of our mitzvot so that they do not become a blinding glare, is a very special gift which many with wisdom and experience have, enabling them to explain, guide and advise on matters of Torah observance.

I have been privileged to meet women in the UK and abroad who are blessed with this gift and who are a great source of inspiration to others. Our communities should have the opportunity to harness the talent of such women, appointed in a formal capacity, to '*enlighten the eyes*' of those around them.

It is for this reason that I am delighted to introduce this course which will ultimately provide our communities with exceptional female educators who will have a particular expertise in matters relating to women's health and the area of **Taharat Hamishpacha** (family purity). Experience shows that there is a real need within our communities to place women in a position to offer guidance and advice on issues which women members may feel more comfortable discussing with a woman. The course will also provide advanced pedagogical training with a focus on adult education - a skillset which I have long considered an essential ingredient for Jewish life to flourish.

As such, greater access to qualified and experienced women in our communities who can guide and teach will surely be a positive leap forward in encouraging a greater appreciation of and adherence to Torah and mitzvot.

It is no accident that the phrase '**Meirat Eynayim**' can be contracted to '**Ma'ayan**', a Hebrew name which translates as 'fountain' or 'spring'. The Torah is frequently compared to water: just as there can be no existence without water, the Torah is the fundamental and eternal constant without which we as a nation simply cannot survive.

The '**Ma'ayan**' programme will strengthen our communities' Torah observance and learning, in order '**Lehagdil Torah uleha'adira**' – to magnify Torah and bring glory to its name.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis



The Chief Rabbi is delighted to launch the '*Ma'ayan*' programme, with the support of the London Beth Din.

The programme will train women as *Ma'ayanot*, with expertise in the area of *Taharat Hamishpacha* (family purity) along with the ability to take on roles as educators, to teach and inspire in communities across the country.

The *Ma'ayan* programme will create a cadre of women who will be available in our communities to be approached by women on issues of *Taharat Hamishpacha* and related matters. The programme will also create a greater number of female educators within our communities.

There are three components to the programme:

- 1. Halachot of *Taharat Hamishpacha***
- 2. Women's Health and related medical issues**
- 3. Community Education**

The programme will be taught by experts in these areas and will consist of learning through texts, lectures, chavruta learning and practical exercises.

The components will span the course as follows:

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5
Taharat Hamishpacha					
Medical knowledge					
Wider medical issues					
Community education					



Taharat Hamishpacha

This module will include:

- The areas of *niddah*, *tevilah* and *chitzitzah*
- Challenging issues relating to gynaecological procedures
- Matters relating to childbirth
- Contraception
- Abortion, miscarriage and early pregnancy issues
- Infertility and IVF
- Genetic testing

This module will explore medical advancements and how they impact on *Taharat Hamishpacha*, as well as the ethical considerations in this area.

This module will be led by Dayan Shmuel Simons of the London Beth Din and will include other Dayanim, Rabbanim and teachers.

Women's Health

1. Medical Knowledge

The first part of this module will be run in conjunction with the UCL Institute for Women's Health and will be taught by lecturers and professionals from the Institute.

Topics in the following areas will be taught:

- Anatomy, physiology and menstrual cycle
- Sexual development and menstrual disorders
- Contraception and sexual health
- Infertility and IVF
- Early pregnancy, miscarriage and termination of pregnancy
- Antenatal care and screening, labour and postnatal care
- Menopause and post menopausal problems
- Genetic testing

These sessions will complement and link with those in the *Taharat Hamishpacha* module.



Women's Health

2. Wider health issues

This part of the course will focus on wider issues relating to women's health, giving participants the tools to identify issues that may arise.

These will include:

- Psychosexual issues and disorders, including intimacy issues and sexual dysfunction
- Mental health issues that can have an impact on practicing *Hilchot Niddah*
- Counselling skills
- A wider understanding of the communal and statutory services available
- Protocol when practicing in the role

These skills will enable the Ma'ayanot to deal more comfortably with wider issues that may arise when dealing with women in the community.

Community Education

This module will include theoretical and practical sessions on becoming an educator in the community.

Participants will be taught various models of education and be given practical training on giving a shiur, as well as running an educational programme in a community. This module will be taught by the Chief Rabbi, who will be joined by a range of speakers who will present case studies of successful programming.

All participants will be required to carry out a practical project which will see them delivering an educational programme in a community and sharing feedback with the group.

Logistics

The course will take place every Wednesday during term time from 10am—3pm.

Timeline

Term 1: Winter Term 2016

13th September—21st December
Break—w/c 3rd October (Rosh Hashana)
Break—w/c 17th-24th October (Succot)

Term 2: Spring Term 2017

4th January—5th April
Half term—15th February

Term 3: Summer Term 2017

26th April—12th July
Break—w/c 29th May (Shavuot)

Term 4: Winter Term 2017

6th September—13th December
Break—w/c 18th September (Rosh Hashana)
Break—w/c 2nd—9th October (Succot)

Term 5: Spring Term 2018

3rd January—28th March
Half term—14th February

Cost

The course will be heavily subsidised and participants will be asked to pay a fee of £200 per term. Subsidies may be available and this should be discussed further with Michelle Bauernfreund.

To apply

To find out more about the course and for an application form, please email michelle@chiefrabbi.org or call on 020 8343 6219.

To be eligible to apply, applicants should be able to demonstrate:

- Detailed knowledge of *Taharat Hamishpacha*
- A proficiency in Jewish texts
- Experience in delivering educational programming
- A desire to serve in a community, following the course
- A good knowledge and understanding of the mainstream Orthodox community in the UK

Applicants will need to be committed, enthusiastic and personable, showing discretion at all times. The application process will comprise a number of stages.

Assessment

During the final term, there will be an overall assessment. The different components of the programme may involve project related elements. Each project/assessment for each component will need to be passed or successfully completed in order to graduate.

