

RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA – MONTREAL REGION  
*CONVERSION PROGRAMME*

*Geirut Committee:*  
Rabbi Sidney Shoham  
Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz  
Rabbi Moshe Jablon  
Rabbi Michael Whitman

*Administrator:*  
Edward Shostak

(Date)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest in our program. We are delighted to help you explore the possibility of conversion to Judaism. Our mandate is to give you the support you need and treat you with absolute dignity and sensitivity. We hope you find your experiences with the program enlightening and meaningful.

Conversion is more than a course of study; it requires a serious, life-long commitment. Successful candidates - and their partner, if applicable - will undergo a personal religious transformation and sincerely commit themselves to being Jewish and living a traditional Jewish lifestyle. In addition, successful candidates are expected to have integrated socially into an observant Jewish community where they will find the social support necessary for future Jewish growth.

Due to financial constraints, we must charge fees to defer part of the program's costs. However, we will consider requests for partial scholarships in cases of serious need; we do not want finances to be a barrier for sincere candidates.

Enclosed is our application form, guidelines, and curriculum. We look forward to seeing you,

Sincerely,

Eddie Shostak  
Administrator

RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA – MONTREAL REGION  
*CONVERSION PROGRAMME*

*Geirut Committee:*  
Rabbi Sidney Shoham  
Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz  
Rabbi Moshe Jablon  
Rabbi Michael Whitman

*Administrator:*  
Edward Shostak

**GEIRUT STANDARDS**

*In order for candidates to be considered for conversion, they must be admitted to the Conversion Programme and fulfill the following criteria:*

1. A candidate must have attended a minimum of 12 months of classes, and all topics of the curriculum were completed. (There are no classes in July and August). Attendance at these classes is mandatory. Candidates must live a Jewish lifestyle and adhere to traditional Jewish law and practice. Candidates must have the knowledge and experiences to be able to commit to observing all of the laws of Judaism. Candidates must be able to read Hebrew. Completion of the program does not automatically necessitate the candidate's conversion. The duration of the programme is dependent on the rate of progress of the candidate as deemed by the Bet Din.
2. A candidate must be living in a Jewish community, and within walking distance from an Orthodox synagogue.
3. A candidate must have a sponsoring Rabbi and a supporting family that are deemed appropriate by the Bet Din. A candidate will celebrate a number of Shabbatot and Yomim Tovim in their homes. This will be arranged by the administrator of the program.
4. A candidate must observe kashrut in and out of the home. A candidate must submit the name of the approved person who koshered the home.
5. Couples living together must separate for a period of time prior to the completion of conversion. It is the candidate's responsibility to inform the Bet Din of the arrangements for separation, i.e. addresses, date of separation.
6. A single candidate who is involved with, or who becomes involved with a Jewish partner must immediately notify the Bet Din.
7. A reference letter from both the sponsoring Rabbi and the support family or families will be requested prior to the Bet Din considering a conversion.

8. The candidate and partner must have a minimal Jewish library (see required book list), kosher Tefilin (for men), and kosher Mezuzot.
9. A candidate will meet the Bet Din a minimum of 3 times during the conversion process.
10. Following the conversion, follow-up classes and events relating to pertinent topics in Judaism will be offered.
11. There is a 90-day waiting period after conversion of a woman before marriage can take place.
12. All programme standards apply to the candidate as well as to a Jewish partner.
13. Fees for conversion program:
 

Single candidate:	\$600 Administration Fee + \$2000 Class Fee
Couple:	\$600 Administration Fee + \$2500 Class Fee

*There is a \$100 administration fee for the Beit Din of America in New York.*

*All payments must be made in advance through monthly post-dated cheques.*

Private tutoring may be required, as needed, at the expense of the candidate.
14. Upon conversion, there will be a \$150 Mikveh charge.
15. Throughout the conversion process the candidate will have an opportunity to attend a variety of special events and programs, including festive dinners, weekend Shabbatons and life cycle events. You will also have opportunities to meet with others who have completed the conversion program. These activities are designed to provide you with additional experiences to assist in your integration into the Jewish community. Your attendance is expected and additional fees may be charged to defray the costs of these programs.

I have read the statement and understand the above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of candidate

RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA – MONTREAL REGION  
*CONVERSION PROGRAMME*

*Geirut Committee:*  
Rabbi Sidney Shoham  
Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz  
Rabbi Moshe Jablon  
Rabbi Michael Whitman

*Administrator:*  
Edward Shostak

**REQUIRED JEWISH LIBRARY AND READING**

Artscroll Tannach  
Artscroll Siddur and Machzor (Interlinear?)  
Handbook of Jewish Thought, 2 volumes, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  
Maimonides Principles, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  
Living Each Week, Rabbi Abraham Twerski  
Triumph of Jewish History, Rabbi Berel Wein  
To Be a Jew, Rabbi Halevi Donin  
To Pray as a Jew, Rabbi Halevi Donin  
To Raise a Jewish Child, Rabbi Halevi Donin  
Shemirat Shabbat, Rav Yehoshua Y. Neuwirth (English, 2 volumes)  
The Sabbath, Dayan Grunfeld  
Practical Guide to Kashrut, Rabbi S. Wagschal  
The Book of our Heritage, Eliyahu Kitov  
The Secret of Jewish Femininity, Tehilla Abramov  
The Holocaust, Martin Gilbert

**GEIRUT STUDY CURRICULUM**

**Theology and Beliefs**

- Basic Theology, Nature of and Belief in God
- Fundamental Principles of Belief

Reading: Kaplan's Maimonides Principles and Handbook to Jewish Thought

**Survey of Tannach**

- Survey of major events and personalities in Tannach
- Process of Torah interpretation, Midrash vs. literal meaning

Reading: Artscroll Tannach, Living Each Week

Experience: Read weekly Parshah

**Survey of Jewish History**

- Major periods, movements, and personalities
- Picture of contemporary Jewish world

- Traditional ideologies
- Organizations
- Challenges
  - Assimilation, Intermarriage
  - Jewish Education
  - Modern Anti-Semitism

Reading: Triumph of Jewish History, Rabbi Berel Wein; The Holocaust, Martin Gilbert

### **Israel and Zionism**

- Place of Israel within Jewish thought
- History of Zionism
- Contemporary Picture of Israel
- Cities and sites
- Aliyah

Experience: Visit Israel, if possible

### **Halachic Process**

- Structure and methodology
  - Written and Oral Torah
  - Biblical and Rabbinical laws
  - Minhag
  - Differing opinions within Halacha
  - Majority
  - Precedent
  - Extraordinary circumstances
    - Stringencies and leniencies
  - Role of a Rabbi
    - Accepting a Rabbi upon oneself
    - Asking a shailah
    - Personal matters
  - Talmud, Shulchan Aruch, Responsa
- Maintaining spirituality amid details of observance

Experience: Meet and discuss Halachic issues with sponsoring Rabbi

### **Prayer**

- Philosophy
  - Why pray?
  - Do prayers affect God?
  - Response to prayer
- How to pray?
- Structure of service
- Selected prayers
  - Bircat HaShachar, Shema, Shemonei Esrei, Aleinu, etc.
- Kavanah
- Individual vs. communal prayer
- Spontaneous prayer

- Berachot for food and various
- Tallit, tefilin, tzitzit, head covering (men and woman)
- Hebrew (or outside the program)

Reading: To Pray as a Jew, Artscroll Siddur and Machzor

Experience: Regular synagogue attendance, daily prayer

### **Shabbat**

- Meaning and Philosophy
- Positive Mitzvot of Shabbat (candles, kiddush, bircat habanim, etc...)
- 39 Melachot

Reading: Shemirat Shabbat, Rav Yehoshua Y. Neuwirth; The Sabbath, Dayan Grunfeld

Experience: Practice Shabbat, leaving out one detail

### **Chagim** - Taught as they occur

- Meaning and Philosophy
- Positive Mitzvot
- Practical Observance

Reading: Book of Our Heritage

Experience: Practice Chagim

### **Kashrut**

- Ethics and Spirituality
- Principles
- Practical Observance
- When to ask a question
- Staying informed
  - VAAD Mailing list, etc.

Reading: Practical Guide to Kashrut, Rabbi S. Wagschal

Experience: Implement practice of laws as they are learned, Tour a supermarket

### **Gender Issues**

- Differentiation of men's and women's roles in Jewish life

### **Family Purity**

- Tzniut
- Dating
- Marriage
- Intimacy
- Romance
- Shalom Bayit

Reading: The Secret of Jewish Femininity

Experience: Visit to a Mikveh

### **Ethics**

- Business Ethics

- Medical Ethics
- Middot Tovot – Positive personality traits
- Slander, Gossip
- Confidentiality
- Law of the Land
- Modesty
  - Dress
  - Behaviour
- Honouring Parents
- Raising Children
- Gemilut Chassadim
  - Tzedakah
- Human Rights
- Kiddush HaShem

Experience: Put into practice as they are learned

### **Life Cycle Events**

- Details and significance of each

Experience: Attend at least one of each life cycle event

RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA – MONTREAL REGION  
*CONVERSION PROGRAMME*

*Geirut Committee:*  
Rabbi Sidney Shoham  
Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz  
Rabbi Moshe Jablon  
Rabbi Michael Whitman

*Administrator:*  
Edward Shostak

**CONVERSION PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE**

Due to the all encompassing personal and lifestyle transformation which is Conversion, it is important to gain knowledge as to the background of the candidate and his/her family.  
*All information is strictly confidential.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Answer each question as fully as you can.*

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Given \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_

Street Apt. #

\_\_\_\_\_ Cel # \_\_\_\_\_

City Postal Code

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

(Please attach copy of birth certificate)

Education \_\_\_\_\_ Degree/Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Institution \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Work \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ # of years \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Previous employer \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years worked \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Is still living \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Is still living \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been married? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, is the divorce finalized? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please provide copy of divorce papers)

Do you have any children? \_\_\_\_\_

What ages are they? \_\_\_\_\_ Do they live with you or visit? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any personal & meaningful relationship with a person of the Jewish faith? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please have him/her answer the attached **Questionnaire B**.

*Answer all of the following questions as fully as you can. You may write on the back of these sheets if necessary.*

1. Describe your religious background and your parent's lifestyle

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. What has been your religious education to date?

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. How long have you considered conversion to Judaism and what has prompted this interest?

---

---

---

---

---

4. What have been your Jewish experiences to date?

---

---

---

---

---

5. List reading in Judaica by title, Author and Publisher and any formal classes you have attended.

---

---

---

---

---

6. Is there any history of mental illness or emotional problems, addictions, or criminal record affecting you either in the past or the present?

---

---

---

---

---

7. Do you have a sponsoring Orthodox Rabbi? If yes, please provide us his name, address and phone number.

---

---

8. Provide us with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two references.

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I have fully read and filled out this application to the best of my ability.

---

CANDIDATE

For office use only:

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Received by \_\_\_\_\_

**CONVERSION PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE**

*To be completed by Jewish partner if applicable*

**QUESTIONNAIRE B**

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Given Names \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Apt. # Home

\_\_\_\_\_ Tel ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
City Cellular

Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been married? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, is the divorce finalized? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please provide copy of divorce papers and *get*)

Do you have children? \_\_\_\_\_ Give ages \_\_\_\_\_

Education \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Work \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation/Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years \_\_\_\_\_

Born Jewish? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, converted by which Rabbi? \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name \_\_\_\_\_

Is father a Cohen, Levite or Israelite? \_\_\_\_\_ Is father alive? \_\_\_\_\_

Martial status \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name (family, maiden and given) \_\_\_\_\_

Was mother born of Jewish parents? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, converted by which Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_

Was mother adopted? \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew name \_\_\_\_\_

Is mother alive? \_\_\_\_\_ Marital status \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your formal and/or informal Jewish education background.

---

---

---

---

---

Synagogue affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Association with other Jewish organizations \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known your non-Jewish partner? \_\_\_\_\_

Provide us with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two references.

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you prepared to attend classes and events, and participate completely in this process? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date