

RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA – MONTREAL REGION  
*CONVERSION PROGRAMME*

*Geirut Bet Din:*  
Rabbi Yechezkel Freundlich  
Rabbi Schachar Orenstein  
Rabbi Michael Whitman, *Yosheiv Rosh*  
Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz

*Administrator:*  
Rabbi Eddie Shostak

**REQUIRED JEWISH LIBRARY AND READING**

Artscroll Tannach  
Artscroll Siddur and Machzor  
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, 3 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, Inter-marriage
    - 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