

## B'NEI SICHA TESTIMONIALS

### Rabbi Nick Renner, Keneset Israel, Pacific Palisades, CA

Using traditional Jewish sources alongside contemporary poetry, Sichat Rabbanim deploys text as a lens through which to frame and uplift the rabbinic journey. And just as it has impacted my own rabbinate, I have been able to focus that impact outward to my own students, congregants, and fellow travelers in my synagogue in California.

### Rabbi Lizzi Heydemann, Mishkan, Chicago, IL

Studying with Rabbi Sager has pushed me to see myself as more than a vessel through which text gets from the ancient books into the hands of modern Jews: it's taught me how to use my natural skills, talents and passions, even my insecurities, as a text from which to teach, which helps draw out of others their deep connection to their deeper selves, too. That is the transformational part of text study: when you realize that the role of the text is to awaken a deeper connection, awareness, insight, within each person, that's where the real learning is, when that happens. But first that has to happen for the teacher. I feel grateful to have the opportunity to learn with someone whose connection to text and to himself allows him to so powerfully draw the radiant insights out of his students so that we might do the same for ours.

### Rabbi Lucy Dinner, Temple Beth Or, Raleigh, NC

My rabbinate has been an evolving process of living into my relationship with God through Yisrael -- continuing to wrestle, to grow, to reach for the potential God brings. Through Sicha I broadened that process to consider what it means to not only wrestle with the complexities, but also to sit with them in the frame of a God who is Ehiyeh Asher Ehiyeh. Rabbi Sager has mastered that art of opening the door and allowing one to sit in the sacred conversation between the texts of our past, the texts of our day, and the texture of our lives.

### Rabbi David Weiner, Knesset Israel, Pittsfield, MA

Over the two years I participated in Sichat Rabbanim, learning with Rabbi Sager was a highlight of my week. His insights into the meaning and the music of the stories of our sages enriched my experience of Torah and deepened the teaching I could offer my community. Our studies illuminated the nexus of Torah study, the creation of a congregational culture and personal engagement with the conversations that motivate Jewish thought through the ages.

### Rabbi Daniel Greyber, Beth El Synagogue, Durham, NC

It can be so hard amidst all the pressures of being a rabbi to a community to take a step back, to think about the big picture and engage in the serious and meaningful text study. Working with Rabbi Sager and Sichat Rabbanim helped me refocus not only on my own Jewish engagement but on how I wanted to share my Jewish journey with my community. It was a gift for me and my synagogue.

### Rabbi Julie Kozlow, Greenville, SC

I searched a long time for a rabbinic development program that would actually honor my soul's need for rejuvenation as a pulpit Rabbi. Then, I found Sicha, a program that met the individual needs of a rabbi—just soul and learning with no denominational politics. How inspiring and freeing!

### Dr. Charles Brown, Temple Emanuel, Gastonia, NC

One of the highlights of my week over the past couple of years has been the opportunity to study torah with Rabbi Sager. We have explored the multiple and often subtle meanings of texts, and applied them to both congregational and personal life. In addition to our sessions being helpful and enlightening, they are also incredibly enjoyable. The Sicha Rabbinic Kallah sessions have had all these positive features, but in addition, have given me the opportunity to study with rabbis who are bright, passionate about torah study, and a delight to get to know. I am deeply grateful to have been a participant in these Sicha rabbinic programs.

### Rabbi Noam Raucher, Temple Israel, Charlotte, NC

The role of a rabbi brings with it the awesome responsibility of community visioning and building. No pressure there! But alongside Rabbi Sager and Sichat Rabbanim I have come to see the sacred opportunity in each moment before me as a spiritual guide. The study and reflection we have done gives me pause to consider how I might deliberately shape the students I teach and the community I lead. Being able to think intentionally about my rabbinate has been a true blessing.

### Rabbi Philip Rice, Congregation Micah, Nashville, TN

Regular learning, authentic mentorship and project producing - it was fulfilling to continue the "conversation" with Rabbi Sager and the ancient rabbis. The program helped me as a rabbi help others see themselves in the ongoing narrative of the Jewish people.

### Rabbi Zvi Altman, Mountain Synagogue, Franklin, NC

The genius of Sicha, and of Rabbi Sager, is to elevate the conversations that arise from difficult questions over and above the need to find an answer. It is through my work with Rabbi Sager and Sichat Rabbanim that I learned to shepherd and nourish the fragile conversations that arise among my congregants as they struggle with a text, or with a question, or with the difficulties of life - instead of reflexively trying to supply them with answers. The conversation, the sicha, this is where relationships dwell - and through Sicha it is where Jewish life is nourished especially!

