

The First Golden Leaves Class Graduates

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The first class of the Golden Leaves program completed their studies and graduated recently. The students, faculty, special guests and partners celebrated the Graduation of the Class 2015 of Golden Leaves Institute.

The graduation was the culmination of an 11 month program. The students spent time in Israel and China learning a variety of skills and gaining valuable first-hand knowledge. At their graduation ceremony, they spoke about the life-changing events and the growth they experienced from being part of the Golden Leaves program.



The program had many high level speakers. Golden Leaves students visited the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef, who spoke about the importance of being leaders in their communities, and to teach others *halakha* (Jewish law).

Rabbi Doron Perez, an SSC (Shehebar Sephardic Center) alumni and President of the World Mizrahi Organization, also spoke about the need for Jewish leadership in the Diaspora.

The students attended a 5 day seminar on leadership and Jewish advocacy. They visited related organizations and venture capital companies in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Amar blessed them and said they were especially outstanding because they did something nobody else tried before. The Golden Leaves program offers a one-of-a-kind, out-of-the-box education in business and Judaism

I.G. Gindi spoke to the students about leadership and having the utmost honesty while conducting business. David Shamah spoke about the importance of communication with executives and workers to make sure that everybody is always on the same page. Steven Esses spoke the importance of a positive view. When things are going down,

the leader must know how to get out of a crisis, while remaining optimistic and encouraging employees.

The students received diplomas from the SSC as well as from YCC University in China. Rabbi Sam Kassin was the Master of Ceremonies. Graduation speakers included Rabbi Yosef Bitton, Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman and Rabbi Ezra Kassin.

The day after graduation, there was another ceremony—Director of Golden Leaves, Abraham Bitton got married in Israel. All the alumni—Morris Braha, Eduardo Attia, Menachem Benchimol, Chananel Yosef, Joseph Castillo, Yehoshua Ades, Jorge Pier, Josh Morrison, Jason Kron, Avi Gindi, David Gedallovich and Yair Salem—attended with great enthusiasm and appreciation for all Abi had done to make the program a life-changing experience. □



Sarina Roffe is a community member and owner of the Roffe Group.