

YEMIN ORDE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE
YEMIN ORDE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

D.N. Hof HaCarmel 30895, ISRAEL

Nissan 5773 / March 2013

My Very Dear Friends - Shalom ,



Happy Passover! More than 3000 years ago, a Pharaoh called Merneptah returned from battle in ancient Israel, declaring in words carved in stone:



Pharaoh Merneptah's Stele:
"Israel is annihilated - has no seed"

"Israel is annihilated – has no seed!" - meaning: "no offspring anymore". In a recent Bar-Mitzvah celebration here, as the kids impressed us with what they called a



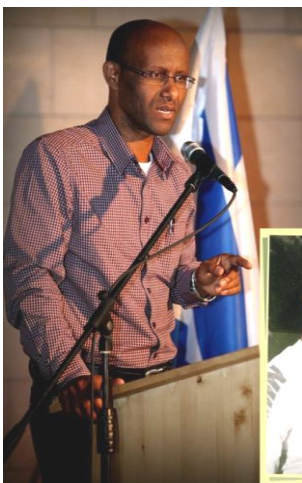
"living pyramid" (groom on top – see left), this Pharaoh's famous statement flashed through my mind, with the thought – "Well – the seed of Israel is definitely still around, alive and kicking!"

The Bar Mitzvah boy arrived to Yemin Orde from the FSU at the tender age of five. Looking through my albums, I found a photo (right), which was taken at his first birthday here. I vividly recall how hard we tried back then to cheer him up – now, as you can see, he is happily "on top of things" – and we look



forward to his critical upcoming years of successful schooling and character building.

With Passover at our gates, I often wonder how can such grand images of ancient war chariots, pyramids, slavery and redemption all be squeezed into Matzo balls and slices of Gefilte Fish - and still maintain their relevance and meaning for the children. Well, for our children, the 21st century offspring of Israel, this is a no-brainer – they themselves are a living chapter in our unfolding history. Indeed, as it is said in the Haggadah, each generation must relive redemption from its own "Egypt"...



Payback time: Your partnership over the years allows us to thoroughly cultivate seeds of greatness in the kids that arrive through our gates. In turn, our children are definitely stepping up to make this world a better place: In his first speech as Member of Knesset, our graduate Shimon Solomon (left: then and now) vowed to make sure that sensitivity and compassion are always there in the dealings of government bureaucracy with simple folks. In the same token, on Israel's upcoming Independence Day, 3 of our graduates will be honored by Pres. Peres for excellence in serving their country.

Happy to share: our doors are open wide to friends and partners who come to Israel to visit and tour the country. Needless to say, we love guests, and hope to see you among them again sometime soon. The wide spectrum of guests who come here –foreign educators, Birthright groups, AIPAC missions, Jewish and Christian leaders – they all are an added bonus for our kids, as it gives them a chance to be exposed to diverse backgrounds, engage in dialogue as equals, and boost



their self-confidence. **Above** is a JINSA group of US military cadets visiting here, and to the **left** are members of the National Conference of Black Mayors, at lunch with Werko (16). Together they discussed his life and **the Village Way**.



And... Some are here to stay: Tanya Fredman (in circle), originally from St. Louis, MO, first came to Yemin Orde as a volunteer. From here, she moved on to the village for genocide orphans in Rwanda, inspired by Yemin Orde. There, she volunteered as an art instructor. Moved by both experiences, she and her husband Len decided to move to Israel. Naturally, Tanya returned to the village, this time as the head of our arts center, - **"Beit Joie"**, to the delight of scores of enthusiastic budding artists.



Reaching out across the country, our initiative to recharge educators of at-risk youth where needed continues. Crossing borders and divisions within society, we train educators to not only "rethink education" in the spirit and methods of Yemin Orde, but also to put their new insights into practice.

In this regard, what may seem trivial can be absolutely revolutionary for a different culture... The photo on the right was recently taken in a Jaffa school, where we introduced a new approach to evaluation, as part of our "training pack". For the first time ever, at-risk youth and families were included in the child's assessment process, and together with the staff examined challenges, defined goals, and applauded achievements.



"From survival to leadership" is the motto of the training prep program for first-generation Israelis – our arm in the far north of Israel. The dream to build a home for this program has finally materialized after 13 years of hard work (right). This occasion was marked by a festive ceremony and attended by the friends from the US, UK and Israel, who joined forces to make this possible. This **intensive** 1 year program for at-risk high school grads from all over Israel, ensures that they walk out to life with **values, skills and confidence**, in the spirit and methods of Yemin Orde.



Class of 2013 performing at the opening ceremony

This unique program is highly acclaimed on a national scale by the IDF high command as well as by renowned moral figures such as **Mrs. Rachel Rabin** (the late Yitzhak Rabin's only sister), who was guest of honor at the inauguration ceremony (top left, in circle), **Lord Jonathan Sacks**, Great Britain's Chief Rabbi, who gave a passionate and moving address to the audience at the event (seated front row, left in picture), and many others.

Revealing the tricks of the trade... I just love it when graduates return to the village at a later age and ask me to disclose the secrets of our "non boarding school" method. This is something they had instinctively sensed as kids, but now as adults, they wish to logically understand and take it from there. Whether in their professional capacity or as parents



– they see themselves as agents of the Yemin Orde Way and spirit in their own circles. In the photo right- elementary school teacher; social worker; lawyer; social activist; director of manpower and senior traffic police officer.

May knowing this be a source of blessing, joy and spiritual fulfillment for you and your dear ones. Chag Same'ach – Happy Holiday,

as ever - Chaim Peiri

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