

A Thirty Year Perspective

A few weeks back, after I officiated my 20th wedding in less than a month's time, Shlomo Arzi, an iconic Israeli musician and guest at the wedding, approached me. We spoke for a while about the growing sense of a need for change in Israeli society and renewal of Jewish spirit and life. Shlomo and I have known each other for many years. His children and grandchildren celebrated their B'nai Mitzvah at the Daniel Centers and his sister (z"l) was a close personal friend. Shlomo told me that we (the Daniel Centers) are changing the face of Israeli Judaism. He added, "the fact that you are brave enough to bring a new spirit might just save Judaism in Israel." His words epitomize the mission we have carried out, with your help, over the past 30 years. There have been thousands of weddings, Bnei Mitzvot, conversions, participants in our study sessions, and worshipers who have come to us over the last three decades. Every one of them became an ambassador for the central tenet that drives our work: that Judaism can be enlightening, egalitarian, and progressive. Judaism is not about hate and



restriction. Judaism can be about love, hope, and building a dream for a better society. This is the message that we bring to Israeli society through our work in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. And, it reverberates throughout this amazing country called Israel. We are incredibly proud of our achievements. We owe immeasurable thanks to the hundreds of volunteers, the smart and dedicated staff who work alongside me and our Rabbis, and, of course, our friends and partners from all over the world. In this newsletter, I want to reflect on major accomplishments that I believe contribute to pluralism and democracy in Israel and to the continuity of world Jewry.

From the Daniel Centers clergy, staff, members, and community, wishing you a Shana Tova and G'mar Chatima Tova!

Rabbi Meir Azari

Rabbi Azari and the entire Daniel Centers community mourn the passing of Rabbi Richard 'Dick' Hirsch: builder, teacher, and visionary who was instrumental in creating Beit Daniel and in bringing Reform Judaism to Israel.