

December
2024



THE DANIEL CENTERS
FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

**BEIT
DANIEL**

**KEHILAT
HALEV**
in Mishkenot
Ruth Daniel

**KEHILAT
DANIEL**
In Jaffa

**KEHILAT
TIFERET
SHALOM**

HOPE, Unity & Working Together

My dear friends,

In the chaos and sadness of today's world-felt across North America, Europe, and especially the Middle East-building a bridge between our Jewish communities is a sacred task. Over the past year, we have rediscovered just how much we need one another. I want to thank you for your love and support of us here in Israel. It has kept our heads above water during the most horrific of times.

The rise of antisemitism globally and the daily threats we face in Israel-both to the State and its people-have drawn us closer, evoking the unity we felt after World War II and the Yom Kippur War. Despite our differences in Jewish traditions and political views, we have learned that working together is essential. To carry the flame and spirit of Judaism forward, HOPE must be our guiding force in the years ahead.

Hope is what will help us overcome the darkness, even when it feels overwhelming. At the Daniel Centers, we are committed to embodying the values of peace, human dignity, and civil rights. These are the backbone of Reform



Judaism. It is our great honor to bring these values to Israelis who are seeking a spiritual home that aligns with their worldviews.

It's always a challenge to decide what to put in our newsletters to best capture the spirit and impact of our work; made possible by your generosity. As you read through it, I hope it will fill you with pride and optimism for the future. We pray for better days, knowing the road will be filled with challenges, and hope to welcome you soon to Israel to experience firsthand the meaningful work we do for so many Israelis.

Sincerely,
Meir Azari
Senior Rabbi

Beit Daniel - The Hope That Binds Us

Many of you know Beit Daniel well. It is our flagship synagogue that was built in 1991 thanks to the vision of the Daniel family and other generous philanthropists. Last month, we had the privilege of hosting Miriam Daniel and Laurence Wolff who are an integral part of the Daniel family legacy. Miriam serves as chairwoman of the "Friends of" board and Larry is treasurer. After a Havdallah, we hosted an intimate meal with community leaders, who shared heartfelt stories about their connections to Beit Daniel.

David Gilat, a long-time member and now the chairman of the board, spoke about the profound connection between Beit Daniel and the Hebrew word *tikvah* (hope). He highlighted how the word *tikvah* contains within it the Hebrew word *kav*, meaning "line." David described hope as the line that pulls humanity through challenging times and points us toward future possibilities. For him and thousands

more, Beit Daniel embodies *tikvah*. We unify people to face challenges together leading us toward better days.

Another community member, Edna Pearlman, reflected how Beit Daniel is always ready to welcome everyone with open arms, even on the hardest days. At the beginning of the war, when many places closed their doors due to the fear of rocket attacks, Beit Daniel remained steadfast, providing a safe haven for all who needed it. Edna shared how deeply meaningful it is to know that Beit Daniel is a constant presence - always available and offering support, no matter the circumstances.

While Beit Daniel remains our anchor, we now have 5 spiritual centers led by wonderfully inspiring, energetic, and committed rabbis serving diverse populations in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and surrounding suburbs. Our next newsletter will highlight some of their creative community-building efforts.

The Power of Art To Heal

Healing from the collective and individual trauma is and will be a long, protracted process. At the Daniel Centers we realize that we have an integral role in this through the power of prayer, spirituality, community and other mediums, like art and music.

Our recently renovated lobby, made possible in part through the support of The Herbert Bearman Foundation and Shlomo Agami, was designed to also serve as an art gallery. We were honored to exhibit the works of the late Tari Kipnis z"l, a resident of Kibbutz



Members of Kibbutz Be'eri filling our lobby with songs of hope at the exhibition opening of Tari Kipnis z"l.

Be'eri that faced unspeakable losses on October 7th.

Tari grew up near Gaza, served in the Navy, and built a life with his wife Lilach on the kibbutz, where the landscape of the sea turns into the Negev desert, serving as inspiration for Tari's art. Tari, Lilach, and their caregiver, Paul, were murdered in their Be'eri home. Opening night drew a

remarkable turnout, with our lobby overflowing and visitors gathering in our outdoor veranda. Members of Kibbutz Be'eri joined us and sang a moving song about the sea and hope, creating a moment of unity. You can [watch a video](#) of this moment on our [Youtube page](#). Their voices filled us with strength and determination to support one another in these difficult times.

Kabbalat Shabbat in Park HaYarkon: Nature & Spirituality

In the fall, as the weather begins to cool, one of our cherished traditions is Kabbalat Shabbat in the park that brings hundreds together in community and prayer. We are fortunate that Beit Daniel is situated across from Park HaYarkon, Tel Aviv's largest park and green space. It is often compared to New York's Central Park or London's Hyde Park! The beauty of this evening is that it attracts passersby who are enjoying the park and find themselves drawn to the music and "avirah" (atmosphere).

Many of our newcomers would never have considered walking into a synagogue as they associate synagogues with constrained Orthodox traditions. But when surrounded by lush greenery and towering trees, the space feels open and accessible.

The afternoon begins with a family-friendly service designed especially for our youngest community members, filled with joyful play and engaging songs. Then, we begin our more

traditional service for the entire community.

These special evenings let us reconnect with nature and one another. And, our newcomers start to make their way to Beit Daniel for other “indoor” Shabbats and celebrations, further building a strong base of Reform Israeli Jews.



Rabbi Meir and Cantor Anna leading a wonderful service in Park Hayarkon

Mishkenot Ruth Daniel Guest House & Community Center: A Safe Haven in Wartime



Miriam Daniel and Laurence Wolff with soldiers we hosted at Mishkenot Ruth Daniel Guest House.

One of the cornerstones of the Daniel Centers is our guesthouse, Mishkenot Ruth Daniel in Jaffa. Since October 7th, tourism in Israel has ground to a halt, with fewer than 1% of the usual number of visitors arriving in the country.

At the onset of the war, Mishkenot Ruth housed over 90 displaced families from the south. Once it was safe to return to their homes in Sderot, we opened our doors to soldiers and police officers stationed in the

area. These amazingly dedicated individuals, unable to travel home daily, have found a place here to rest, recharge, and feel cared for. It is our honor to provide them with a temporary sanctuary as they work tirelessly to protect and serve.

We look forward to the day when Mishkenot Ruth Daniel is once again filled with travelers from around the world, eager to explore the beauty and history of Israel. May that day come soon.

The Daniel Centers By The Numbers: This is What Your Generosity Made Possible in 2024

15 schools participating in our Jewish, Christian, Muslim Art Program: [Shonim Be Yachad](#)

250 persons in our conversion school seeking to join the Jewish faith

225 Bar and Bat Mitzvahs performed in an egalitarian way

Over 400 public school children receiving Reform Jewish curriculum & instruction

5 spiritual centers serving the diverse and varied needs of Israelis

Support Us

We can't do all of this without your belief and support. Your generosity helps the Daniel Centers meet our goals of religious pluralism, multiculturalism, and service. Scan the QR code to securely donate now or go to our website: <https://www.beit-daniel.org.il/en/support-us/> Your donations will be processed through Give Cloud. Or send a check directly to Friends of the Daniel Centers to the address below. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.



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