

December, 2009

Dear Friends,

It is now eleven months since we re-gathered back here after the enforced 'winter camp' on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, resumed our usual community life and gradually adjusted to the fruitful, healthy routine of daily life. The warfare events have been grave and painful for many, and were not remote from hitting us directly, as a rocket exploded about 100 meters outside our gate. Let us hope that the suffering and destruction shall eventually be transformed into opposition to violence on both sides.

A lot has happened since then: four babies (!) were born – Elisheva Levy, Amalia Korenfeld, Binyamin Mahary and Tamar Yoel; Tiran and Martin joined as villagers in Dvir-Mahary and Mader houses; Ofer of Ben Shalom house had to leave for a thigh operation and recovery (coming back soon); And Mendy, one of the founder villagers and a former pupil of Beit Eliahu, had sadly to leave us for a more suitable institution in the center of the country.

Last August, the first co-workers moved in to live in the upper floor of house 2: now there are also 2 living downstairs, while the development ground works around the building are finally being operated, and the interior of the house is gradually changing into two homes again, after almost two years of being just 'a building', dying and resurrecting... In January, Dor and Mahary families shall move in with their villagers, and in spring the surrounding bare grounds shall hopefully be covered with lively, water-saving plants... Another remarkable new feature in the village is the paper-recycling workshop, that replaced the old silk workshop and is already in full swing, producing beautiful, environment-friendly products.

Indeed, water has been a major concern to us and to the whole country. The Sea of Galilee and all the other open and underground water reservoirs are at the lowest permissible level, due to several consecutive drought years, and the desalination plants construction is far behind schedule and need. The immediate outcome is very extreme water regulations enforced by the government: very high prices of domestic water, and severe cuts in agricultural water allowances, with threats of closure for those who use too much. All this challenge us clearly and strictly to find a way to transform our water usage accordingly: we began to reduce the area of our water-devouring lawns, ordered a re-planning of the house gardens in a water-saving direction, and are carefully looking into making appropriate changes also in the agricultural zone.

The blessed stream of the younger generation of houseparents did not bring only a joyful advent of babies and youthful energies, but also a need to study and re-explore the basics of our work. In response to this need, a weekly seminar of curative education for new houseparents is taking place every Friday morning, and in the weekly study evening we have taken again 'The Study of Man' lecture course as the major content for this year. As we are approaching the age of 30 – a generation cycle according to Judaism – the process of maturing and transformation through dialogue and handing-over of responsibilities is gradually becoming a reality; It is a delicate and challenging process that needs a lot of inner and outer work, as well as heaven's blessing, to be healthily and harmoniously carried out! Another new and most welcome feature in this field is the Monday morning seminar for villagers, and the old co-workers' seminar has also began a new phase. To these are added the Monday evening continuation study of 'Alpha & Omega' by Georg Golzer, the bi-weekly eurhythmy session, every second Friday afternoon, for houseparents and others, the Sunday afternoon choir, the lyre group...the cultural sphere is active, lively and manifold, thereby giving us direction and power to sail through the rough, occasionally stormy waters of daily life.

Our sister initiative of Waldorf education, 'Neta Erez', continues to thrive with 139 pupils in 5 classes and 87 children in four kindergartens. Donations are urgently needed to secure the viability and further development of this young initiative – either to support poor families' fees or to fund investments in building and equipment.

Hopefully, many of you are already reading this communication via the internet, thereby saving paper and post. Those who are not: please write us your E-mail address or contact us through the Forum on the village site.

And, last but not least: A new candidate member of our community - Coco the peacock, who desparately and loudly yearned for his lost beloved last spring, lost it's beautiful tail feathers over the summer, and seemingly is seriously considering applying for a permanent membership, after thoroughly observing us from above and below. We'll see...

May the year 2010 bring peace, progress and prosperity to all!