

## Village Way - Past Present and Future

### Revisiting our vision

The vision of Yemin Orde Village has always been to serve as a microcosm of an upright and resilient society, guiding youth from a life of survival to a life of worthiness. Backed by Friends of Yemin Orde, it sought to fulfill the prophetic vision of a Jewish State that is guided by compassionate justice, where no child is left behind.

The Village Way initiative was established in order to propagate this vision where needed. The Village Way heralds a renaissance in education, a grassroots movement of social and spiritual development.

### *Impact/Israel*

A quarter of a century after the establishment of FYO, our new banner marks a most relevant evolvement of this vision. This development is totally attuned to the existential juncture in which the Jewish world now stands.

### Past and Present

From its earliest days, Judaism has always been a grand-scale educational marathon – the transmission of knowledge, values and traditions from generation to generation. The realities of exile have further placed education at the heart of Jewish life - in the family circle, the Yeshivot and engaged congregations. In all cases, upholding faith and culture was reliant on the quality and centrality of education in the lives of our people.

Indeed, the Yeshiva system continues to maintain that very strictly, following an educational methodology which was initiated 200 years ago by Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin. At the same time, elsewhere in our civil society, there is much talk about the importance of education, but in fact we see a constant degradation in its public status and increasing fragmentation in its implementation.

### Future: the Third Wagon

On the eve of the establishment of the State of Israel, David Ben Gurion had a fateful discourse with the foremost orthodox leader of that time, the Chazon Ish, relating to the manner of inter-Jewish relations under renewed sovereignty. Chazon Ish (Rabbi Yeshaya Karelitz) quoted the Talmudic story (Sanhedrin 32:2) of the two wagons – the empty and the full. When these two meet on a narrow mountain pass, the "empty" wagon, it says, should give way to the "full" wagon, laden with goods. In this context they agreed that secular society should defer to the "full" wagon of religious Judaism.

Yet, at this critical juncture, Israel and world Jewry experience great inner pressure, fueled by contradictions and dichotomies. Here, the Village Way offers a "third wagon". A wagon that is full, but still has room to contain different views, cultures and attitudes; that does not look down or block the way for others, but instead paves new ways for all to fit in and interact with mutual respect. This wagon is not afraid to take the highway, to assume the dignified central role that it deserves.

**Impact/Israel is about a renaissance in education - a grassroots movement of social and spiritual development, passing onwards the baton of humaneness, inclusiveness and spirituality to future generations.**