



November 25th 2010

I had the privilege of getting to know the *Beit Israel pre-army preparatory program*, first through its reputation throughout Israel, and then firsthand - through the experiences of my own daughter, who studied there for a year and a half prior to her military service. To quote my daughter and what I saw firsthand, was that *Beit Israel* makes anyone who is fortunate to study there - a better person - improving their values, their broader knowledge, their commitment to Israel, to the Jewish people, and to Judaism.

The greatest danger facing Jewish life in the State of Israel today is mediocrity. If we fail to produce people of excellence who stand for the best of what Judaism is, and ought to reflect, we will undermine from within, the very foundation of our people and sense of national rebirth. True leadership is not a skill, but is first and foremost a quality of person, a depth of vision, and a nobility of aspiration. This is where *Beit Israel* truly shines. It is producing some of the most substantive, thoughtful and committed young people in the State of Israel, and as such is having a great impact on this country today and for generations to come.

What is most unique about *Beit Israel* however, in addition to the quality of its programs and deep commitment to volunteerism, is the modesty that it develops within the institution as a whole, and which characterizes its teaching and mission. In our complex world, with its bifurcated Jewish community, we need leaders who, through their vision and passion, have the ability to see and hear the other's need and pain. Our Jewish tradition teaches us, that our greatest leader - Moses, was also the most humble of men. *Beit Israel* is unique in that it not only understands the place of humility, but teaches it.

My family was fortunate to have been blessed with the opportunity to have our daughter experience *Beit Israel* and to become a better person, Jew, and Israeli, because of it. I recommend this institution to you, not merely out of a debt of gratitude, but out of the conviction of an individual who has committed his whole life to the service of the Jewish people, that *Beit Israel* is a gift and an oasis of excellence and value in Jewish life.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Hartman'.

Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman - President  
The Shalom Hartman Institute