

SHANA TOVA
U'METUKA

שנה טובה ומתוקה!

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלוהינו
ואלוהי אבותינו ואמותינו, שתחדש עלינו
שנה טובה ומתוקה כדבש.



MASORTI
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Enriching Masorti Jewish
lives around the world

ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
World Zionist Organization



The activities of Masorti Olami and MERCAZ Olami are implemented in partnership with the World Zionist Organization

Some time ago, I saw a YouTube video that touched me. It showed different people in motion in a hospital - at the entrance, on the stairs, in the elevator, in waiting areas, in rooms - and showed what they were thinking, how they felt at that time: their concerns, fears, hopes, dreams, promises, faith, pain and questions. Some were grateful for a new life that arrived or perhaps a new opportunity. Others broke down into tears upon hearing of a shocking death. It showed some of them afraid of old age and loneliness.

In many ways, I think and feel that the arrival of a new year projects us in a similar image. From the pulpit, I see our beloved community arriving and try to imagine their thoughts at the time. If one could read their thoughts, one would remember the words of the Seer of Lublin, "When he learns that it is not only to see, but also to understand the meaning of what you see. When you see the person, also see the human being that is inside."

I pray that this year, we all learn to see with our hearts. "It's not only to see, but to understand the meaning of what you see."

Brachot.
Shana Tova.

Rabbi Marcelo Rittner
Masorti Community Bet El in Mexico



Dear friends of the Masorti movement worldwide,

A famous teaching of the Talmud in the section dedicated to prayer and blessings (Brachot) says that when Jews pray they must turn to Jerusalem. Our prayers, to reach their destination, are directed from the start in the right direction.

Why am I mentioning this? Because wherever we are, as in any place on the planet, we have a choice. We can choose to direct our thoughts to Jerusalem, to make them travel through the air directly to the "makom", a word that means both "place" and "Hashem". Or we can have them go to the same place, but in a different path, more by land, less direct and more risky.

Personally, I have already chosen. This year my prayer will journey via many paths. It will visit the graves of victims of barbarism, in France and elsewhere. It will go to meditate in front of hundreds of migrants who died in the attempt to escape poverty and war. It will visit all those who suffer from the injustice and madness of men. My prayers will be charged with all these emotions that it will stand before God on judgment day and will ask him to do what men have been unable to achieve:

“עושה שלום במרומיו, הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל יושבי תבל”

He who makes peace in His heights may He make peace upon us and upon all who inhabit the earth.

Le Shana tova Tikatevu!

Rabbi David Touboul

Masorti Community Maayane Or in Niza



Praises and great thanks to the Holy One of Israel for our life today, that we are here again to pray together as one family and to listen to the sound of the Shofar and to be able to look each other into the eye and to say, I forgive you.

We thank God for a year of great accomplishments for the Abayudaya community. A year in which we celebrated the dedication of a new, spacious and splendid place of worship. A year in which, for the first time, a Jewish leader was elected to the National Parliament to represent Muslims, Christians, Jews and many others. We thank God for the elections of three Jews as chairpersons and councilors of two sub-counties.

Friends, at the beginning of our year, a shofar is sounded to awaken us to the fact that life is a loan advanced to each one of us by Hakadosh Baruch Hu and as if to say that time is up. That at the end of it all, having enjoyed the profits, we have to give back the principal. We come here every year to ask the Merciful One to renew and extend the due date for the loan.

As we ask for renewal and extra time, a comprehensive business plan is required. How are you going to spend your life in the next year? Given the fact that life is limited, choices must be made and I would pray that we all choose to spend our lives creating happiness for ourselves and other people. The Torah enjoins us to be and remain happy

דברים 16:14-15

”וְשִׂמְחַת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאֹמְתְךָ וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוּם וְהָאֵלְמָנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ בְּמִקּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשֹׁכֵן שָׁמוֹ שָׁם... וְהָיִיתָ אֶךָ שְׂמֵחַ.”

Deuteronomy 16:14-15

“And you shall rejoice in your Festival-you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the orphan, and the widow, who are within your cities...and you will only be happy.”

Unfortunately, happiness is very elusive, given the multitude of circumstances that combine to take it away from us. However, in the midst of such circumstances it is important that we understand that happiness depends on how we react. Anger, fear, hate and complaints are some of the ruinous reactions people usually resort to when faced with frustration.

In the face of anger, we should learn to forgive everyone for everything. Anger takes away happiness and forgiveness takes away anger. During the Ten Days of Penitence, we forgive and ask for forgiveness. When we hold onto anger and resentment, we only damage ourselves and consequently diminish the quality of our lives. Therefore we should learn to forgive even when we have not been asked to. It is for our own good.



We should also learn to be grateful and to focus on the positive in order to sustain a positive consciousness in order to generate positive energy that is essential to a better living. A Luganda (the language of Uganda) proverb says that “ bwotunulira enkoko byelya togilya,” “one who focuses on what chicken eat will never eat chicken.” Negative energy only ruins our body.

We need to be open to receiving whatever life tosses at us with gratitude so we are able to say “baruch dayan ha emet,” “blessed is the true judge,” and “gam zu letovah,” “this too is for the best,” as was presented by Nachum Ish Gam zu.

I forgive all and ask for forgiveness from all.

Shannah Tovah!

Rabbi Gershom Sizomu

Rabbi Gershom Sizomu was ordained in 2008 by the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies of American Jewish University. He returned home to Uganda to lead his community as the rabbi of the Masorti Abayudaya community of over 2,000 people. Rabbi Gershom aims to make sure the Uganda Jews have a voice. In 2016, he became the first Jewish leader elected to Uganda’s parliament.

