

# YOM KIPUR

The Masorti Movement in Latin America wishes our thoughts transform into words; our words into action, our actions into habits, our habits shape our character and our character control our destiny. May each of us can, at the end of these days, be reconciled with itself, humbly and committed to each other, with our religion and the "Tikkun Olam", abandoning the indifference that deviates us from the good deeds and waking up for life that dazzles in front of us.

May we are all inscribed in the Book of Life with good health and happiness.

Daniel Kohn  
President

In his book *Conquering Fear*, Harold Kushner relates this interesting anecdote that happened during the Holocaust. A group of Jewish prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp was spending the first night of Chanukkah. The custom during this holiday is to light candles, but, of course, in that place and time, these celebrations were forbidden. One of the men saved a morsel of bread from his dinner, dipped it in the fat in his plate, shaped it like a lamp, made the berakhah and lit it. His surprised son asked, "Father, you have just set fire to food, and we have very little. Wouldn't it be better to have eaten it?" The father answered, "My son, people can live an entire week without food, but they will not survive one day without hope."

In a couple of days we will be sharing the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur. That day in which Jewish tradition demands from us to learn to live without food, for one day. The challenge, then, is to transcend our physical needs, to disconnect ourselves from consumerism, to quench our permanent dissatisfaction, to stop wanting and asking for more. What for? What is the purpose of this? That day we must remember that our essence is spiritual. Our society, bent on accumulation, makes those who are unsuccessful to feel frustrated, while those who apparently succeed and manage to amass many possessions, never feel sated. We build our societies among envy, resentment and frustration.

Yom Kippur is a day to question ourselves. To remember who we are and where we belong. We shed the realm of the material to be able to listen to the really pressing questions and not evade the answers. It is a day to search part of our essence.

It will be a day to be full of courage, which is not the absence of fear but rather the ability to overcome it. It is this same courage that the father showed in the camp, which allowed him to keep his essence, despite the intense fear he felt. The courage transmitted by this story, our story, is the courage to understand that we can live one day without food, but we cannot live without hope, without dreams, without finding ourselves, without knowing our essence, without understanding our spiritual dimension. Today we must start to know who we are.

We must try to be heroes, which does not mean being ready to die for a cause, but rather being willing to live for an ideal. We must challenge our egotism, overcome our instinct of survival and broaden our consciousness, expand our gaze. Today we must be aware that we are unique, special, irreplaceable, sacred beings. And from there we can all contribute, guarding ourselves against false individualism, which is selfish, and finding true individualism which is when everyone gives in a positive way what he or she can only give.

Let us allow our energy to flow so we can take responsibilities and build a better world. The end of this day is to reveal to each of us, the unique, original and irreplaceable way in which every one of us contributes to the achievement of universal harmony. It is not about changing our minds, but our way of being.

Let us transmit to our children that we can live one day without food, but that we cannot live without meaning.

Chatimah Tovah,



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