



Rosh Hashanah 2018/5779

Dear Friends,

We want to share a very personal story of our family's life in Israel. We arrived in Israel seven years ago when Dan was newly appointed as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, and our primary focus was diplomatic, representing the United States and doing everything possible to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship. We were honored to play this professional and public role. But, for our family's spiritual and social needs, **we came to rely heavily on the Masorti movement as the home for our Jewish spiritual life in Israel.**

With three children, we needed to tend to our young family's needs: schooling, friendships, after-school activities, and — as important as any other — a synagogue community where we would all feel comfortable and spiritually nourished.

Good fortune brought us to Kehilat Hod v'Hadar, a Masorti synagogue in Kfar Saba. That first morning, notwithstanding diplomatic formalities, we were just a typical, disheveled Jewish family straggling into Shabbat services. We were warmly embraced by this welcoming Masorti community as "Dan and Julie and the girls" -- nothing more. Exactly as we wanted. We had found our spiritual home.

Through our years in Israel -- first in the role of diplomats and later as expats -- we heard countless versions of our own story: **Masorti enriches Jewish lives for many thousands of Israelis.** In the 40 years since its establishment, Masorti has grown from a collection of tiny synagogues in Israel's main cities, to a widespread, deeply-rooted, multi-generational Israeli movement, with communities of Sabras and newcomers, **from the Galilee to the Negev.**



We have also seen first-hand how crucial the Masorti Movement is in the social and political life of the State of Israel. Masorti leaders:

- Were among the key negotiators for an egalitarian prayer section at the Kotel;
- Defended Rabbi Dubi Haiyun, who was detained for conducting a Masorti wedding, and promote marriage and conversion legislation that is inclusive of non-Orthodox practices;
- Actively monitor the Knesset on state and religion, with a special focus on initiatives to advance pluralism in Israel; and
- Raised their voices to help Israel "love the stranger" by meeting the humanitarian needs of Israel's asylum-seeker community.

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By any measure, Masorti has been a huge success. Nearly 80 Masorti kehillot and minyanim across Israel combine to offer traditional and innovative prayer, teaching, youth and family programming-- all bringing Jewish learning, values and meaning to life and deepening Judaism in the Jewish State. And Masorti lives its values of pluralism and inclusion, creating unique programs to serve the needs of children with disabilities, women, youth, converts, new immigrants and others.

Masorti will always be key to our feeling at home in Israel. And wherever we are, we are confident that Masorti will be there every day, representing Israel at its best: deeply Zionist, committed to Jewish values and tradition, promoting tolerance and pluralism, and strengthening ties with Diaspora communities. Likewise, we will be there for Masorti.



Dan, Julie and President Ruven Rivlin

We urge that you too join in supporting Masorti. Building inclusive communities and defending Masorti values requires significant financial resources. We can think of no more meaningful, high-impact way to support Israel, the Jewish people, and the values that our countries share, than to celebrate this New Year by donating to the Israeli Masorti Movement. **Join us today by giving generously.** Help sustain the Israel we all want for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

May we all enjoy a sweet and peaceful New Year.

Shana Tova!

Daniel Shapiro and Julie Fisher

P.S. You can make a gift, by sending a check made out to the Masorti Foundation, 475 Riverside Dr., Suite 832, New York, NY 10115.

P.P.S. You can make a secure online donation at <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=b0cf2>

Daniel Shapiro served as United States Ambassador to Israel from 2011 to 2017, after numerous senior foreign policy positions in the Executive Branch and Congress, and a senior adviser role for Obama for America in 2008.

Julie Fisher, a longtime day school educator, served as president of Diplomatic Spouses of Israel during her husband's term as ambassador, leading numerous volunteer and charity initiatives. Daniel and Julie were featured speakers at the 40th Anniversary Gala of the Israeli Masorti Movement, held in Tel Aviv on January 31, 2018.

