



Masorti Foundation *News Service*

November 2019



Dear Friends,

We're hoping 5780 begins a year of continued growth and progress for Masorti Judaism in Israel.

This News Service pairs two kehillot--one just formed and one celebrating its 40th year. And we bring you another pair: Yerachmiel Meiersdorf, the rabbi of NOAM Youth Movement in

Israel, and his rabbinical-student wife, Nava Brenshtin-Meiersdorf. They're charting an exciting new path for Masorti Israel.

I'm eager to hear your thoughts about this News Service; we want it to be a valuable and useful resource for you. Email me at garonoff@masorti.org.

Warmly,

Gideon Aronoff

A New Masorti Kehill in a Storied Kibbutz: Mishmarot

A new kehilla was dedicated at Kibbutz Mishmarot in the North. The ceremony was led by Rabbi Elisha Wolfin, of kehillat Ve'ahavta in Zichron Ya'acov. This exciting and moving event was honored by the presence of the head of the Menashe Regional Council, Ilan Sadeh, and the chairperson of the Masorti Movement, Sophie Fellman Rafalovitz. Amongst the guests were were Shahar and Ehud Ariel, the sons of famous musician, Meir Ariel z"l, one Israel's iconic singer-songwriters, and a



member of Kibbutz Mishmarot.

Ehud Ariel accompanied the procession that brought the Torah scroll into the synagogue with song and joyous music. His brother Shahar spoke about the legacy of this special kibbutz:



"Mishmarot has never been an ordinary kibbutz. My grandfather, one of the founders of the kibbutz, once said that Mishmarot was a collective of individuals. My wish is that this synagogue not be just a regular synagogue, but a pioneering and exceptional synagogue."

We hope for Mishmarot that the new synagogue in the heart of their kibbutz will serve as a tent of peace for the kibbutz members and residents, and may they be blessed with many that gather there in the spirit of an awakening tradition!



Meir Ariel (מאיר אריאל) was born in 1942 in Kibbutz Mishmarot, was a paratrooper in the Six-Day War and fought again in the Yom Kippur War.

As a singer-songwriter, he was best known for his lyrical use of the Hebrew language in his writing. His influences included Hebrew poets and Bob Dylan.

Far too young when he died, at age 57, he became famous after his death. An album of Ariel's recordings was released, titled "Mode Ani", which can

be translated as "I am thankful" (based on the Jewish morning prayer).

A Celebration of Generations, I'Dor v'Dor: Karmiel

Kehilla HaKerem, a Masorti (Conservative) congregation established in 1979, celebrated 40 years of an egalitarian community in Karmiel, in the heart of the Galilee.

Joining the celebratory evening was Karmiel mayor, Moshe Koninsky and all the rabbis who have served the kehilla over the years.



The kehilla's philosophy is based on four important principles: prayer, study, community and outreach which include programs exploring Jewish values, texts and history in an open-minded environment.

Said Sophie Fellman Rafalovitz, Masorti Movement Chair, *"We started a musical kabbalat Shabbat, which will be continuing throughout the year...we are also providing activities for a kindergarten right next to us; we have a story hour and they come over for pre-holiday activities."*

Ha Kerem opens its gates to all those searching for a Jewish community that celebrates age-old traditions in a modern and inclusive way.

Dynamic Duo: Rabbi Yerachmiel Meiersdorf & Nava Brenshtin- Meiersdorf, Expanding the Reach of Masorti Judaism in Israel

Yerach and Nava both come from Religious Zionist families, but as adults they discovered Masorti Judaism, abandoned Orthodoxy and became active in the Masorti Movement. Yerach was ordained in 2017 and Nava is a rabbiical student. Together, they founded an egalitarian kehilla in Ein Kerem and work on outreach to Israelis from the Orthodox to the secular and everything in between.



Yerach, through his work as rabbi of the NOAM Youth Movement, and his personal story, is able to attract kids from diverse backgrounds and now nearly 30% of them come from Modern Orthodox homes. They're exposed to Masorti Judaism--to an egalitarian experience that is suffused with tradition and spirituality.

Yerach and Nava say people in Israel want Judaism but through the democratic and pluralistic Judaism of Masorti. They are excited about the Masorti "brand" as events like the Family Kabbalat Shabbat at the Kotel garner more and more attention.



Rabbi Reuven Hammer z"l

This August, one of the earliest and most influential pioneers of Masorti Judaism in Israel, Rabbi Reuven Hammer, passed away. A founder of Moreshet Avraham in Jerusalem, he was a renowned scholar, the head of the Masorti Beit Din, and president of the International Rabbinical Assembly.

Says Rabbi Mikie Goldstein, current president of the Rabbinical Assembly, *"Rabbi Hammer was generally soft-spoken, but always clear and firm. He was especially understanding and open to Masorti geirim (converts), assisting them in their decision to join the Jewish people. He was a great scholar and a believer that traditional Judaism can be relevant in the 21st century. He will be sorely missed by family, friends and colleagues."*



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