



CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR MASORTI JUDAISM

SUPPORTING CONSERVATIVE / MASORTI JUDAISM IN ISRAEL

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Ask yourself three questions as I did following a recent visit to Israel. "What connects me to Israel?" "What do I do to help Israel stay strong?" "What do I do to influence the character of Israel as a Jewish state?"

These are my answers.

Being connected to Israel, means that we are well rooted in a 5000 year long history that gives meaning to our faith and to the place where our history still lives and resonates. I may not live there but I can foster my connection by regular visits and by regular contact with Israelis who live there.

Keeping Israel strong is important because its very existence as a nation state legitimizes our Jewishness, in spite of our enemies' wishes to the contrary. It is our safe haven against the anti-Semite. It is our refuge from assimilation. Its successes are our successes. Its victories are our victories. Supporting Israel through Israel bonds, the JNF or other Israeli institutions is a sine qua non and not to be questioned.

But what about the character of Israel itself? The values it represents by word and deed. What about the spirit and the soul of the country, its leaders, and its people and why I should care?

As a Conservative Jew, I believe as you do in religious tolerance, and the legitimacy of different streams of Judaism. In Israel today, the state funded religion is Orthodox and therefore the state simply does not recognize or support any other religious stream.

Ask yourself two more questions, "Would I or my children be comfortable living in a society where I would have to leave the country to be legally married should I wish to be married by a Conservative rabbi?" Or "Would I want to accept the risk of the annulment of the conversion of my child or grandchild at the whim of an Orthodox rabbi?" If your answer is "No!" in either or both cases, a growing number of Israelis would agree with you.

So one more question. "How can I not support my own Masorti (Conservative) Movement which will change the political reality by providing Israelis with a meaningful alternative to Orthodoxy?"

Please read the enclosed Jerusalem Post article on our own Masorti rabbi, Mauricio Balter, for further context and for an inkling of what a full-time rabbi can accomplish.

Today we have two different mechanisms that will help us achieve our objectives:

MERCAZ- Canada and the Canadian Foundation for Masorti Judaism.

By joining [MERCAZ-Canada](#) on an annual basis you strengthen the Conservative Movement's voice in Jewish Agency funding. PLEASE TURN OVER to read WHY your MERCAZ membership is critical this year!

By making a generous donation to the [Canadian Foundation For Masorti Judaism](#) you enable us to support the hiring of more full-time Conservative/Masorti rabbis. Today there are 55 Masorti kehillot in Israel with only 8 being able to afford full-time rabbis. We need more rabbis like Rabbi Balter who will reach out to their own communities with similar success.

Join us in ensuring Israel is a place where we can identify both with our history and God willing, with the religious values we share.

Support your Movement in Israel, today and have a happy Chanukah!



Ron Hoffman, President

YES! I am proud to support the Canadian Conservative/Masorti Movement through my:

a) Donation to the **CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR MASORTI JUDAISM & MERCAZ-Canada**: (includes tax receipt*)
and \$360 \$180 \$100 \$36 Other \$ _____ Total MASORTI = \$ _____

b) Membership in MERCAZ-CANADA: \$18 per couple \$9 per Adult over 18 yrs _____ Total MERCAZ = \$ _____

E-mail address requested: _____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Payment by: Cheque: (payable to CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR MASORTI JUDAISM & MERCAZ-Canada)
 Visa MasterCard # _____ Expiry: _____

Day Phone #: _____

Signature: _____

Congregation: _____



TODAH RABAH!

*Send your donation (in the enclosed envelope) before December 31st to receive your 2009 tax receipt.
*Pay your MERCAZ-Canada membership before December 31st, 2009 to be eligible to vote in the WZO elections.



ACTION ALERT! Are you eligible to vote in the WZO Elections? Support your Conservative Movement.



VOTE for MERCAZ-CANADA in the upcoming World Zionist Organization Elections!

BUT you can only vote if you receive a ballot.

And you can only receive a ballot if you are a 2009 member of MERCAZ-CANADA.

If you are not already a 2009 MERCAZ-CANADA member

(through your synagogue's voluntary check-off on your annual dues statement, or by online registration or mail)
then JOIN TODAY!

Annual membership dues are only \$9 per adult or \$18 per couple.

4 EASY WAYS TO JOIN: (choose one)

- Return the Response Form (on the reverse side) in enclosed return envelope
- ON LINE at www.mercaz.ca. Click on "Join MERCAZ-CANADA" to pay by credit card
- Print out the PDF Response Form on the website and mail it to the MERCAZ-CANADA office with your payment
- Phone our office: 416-667-1717 or toll free 1 866-357-3384

WHY IS THIS ELECTION IMPORTANT?

The World Zionist Organization (WZO) budgets some \$1.8 million a year for religious services in the Diaspora. The worldwide Conservative/Masorti Movement receives only some \$367,000 of that. In addition, the WZO controls 50% of the Jewish Agency (JAFI) and its annual budget of more than \$300 million. This year, the Masorti/Conservative Movement in Israel received less than \$700,000 of that, despite the incredibly important work it is doing to advance the Agency's agenda of fashioning Israel as a pluralistic society in which Jews of every persuasion will feel at home.

The bottom line is simple; to the winner goes the spoils. By increasing our representation at the WZO Congress, we will be increasing our influence over WZO and JAFI budgets, priorities, and programmes - contributing in a very direct way both to making sure that Israel becomes the sort of Jewish state into which we would like to see it evolve, and to advancing a whole array of initiatives around the Jewish world which reflect the values and ethos of Conservative Judaism.

Your membership & vote will make a difference!

Your vote can help us achieve greater funding for Masorti/Conservative programmes in Israel & around the world.

IF WE ARE NOT FOR OURSELVES, WHO WILL BE?

Please Note: The article we've included with this mailing, about our Masorti Rabbi Mauricio Balter, did not mention the fact that half his salary is paid by the Masorti Movement, which receives a major part of its funding for rabbis from the Jewish Agency (JAFI).

If we were to have more MERCAZ members who vote in the upcoming elections, we could have more delegates at the WZO Congress who could lobby and vote for more funding for our rabbis and other programmes of the Masorti Movement in Israel.

Wishing everyone a Happy Chanukah!

Marion Mayman
President

Please turn over to complete the Response Form