



# MasortiOlami

## Annual Review

# 2009



*מסורתי עולמי – World Council of Conservative / Masorti Synagogues  
Consejo Mundial de Sinagogas Conservadoras  
Conseil Mondial de Synagogues Massorti*

*Welcome messages* ..... Page 2 & 3  
*Regional News: AMLAT* Page 4 & 5  
*Regional News: Europe* Page 6 & 7  
*Monthly highlights* Page 8 & 9  
*Around the world* Page 10  
*In the press* Page 11

*MERCAZ Highlights* ..... Page 12  
*MAROM Highlights* Page 13  
*NOAM Highlights* Page 14  
*Chaggim* Page 15  
*Staff team update* Page 15



In the past year, I have had the pleasure of visiting many Masorti kehillot around the world, and have been

struck by the inspiring way in which Masorti kehillot rose to the economic challenges of the past year. Even in these harder times, Masorti Olami succeeded in maintaining all of our core programs around the world. We achieved this by focusing our efforts, more than ever before, on funding and fundraising, and are already seeing positive signs of improvement. In the coming year our priorities will continue to be the economic, practical and spiritual support that we provide for our youth, our kehillot and regions everywhere.

I am very proud that in May we finally launched our new website, which is now the premier resource for finding Masorti/conservative kehillot around the globe, as well as having regular news updates about our Masorti world. To date we have had more than 55,000 page views from more than 13,000 visitors in 139 countries, showing real interest in our work.

B'shalom,  
**Alan H. Silberman**  
*President, Masorti Olami*



Dear Friends,  
 As a partner with Masorti Olami in the work of the World Zionist Organization,

the Jewish Agency for Israel and Keren Kayemeth LeYisrael, MERCAZ Olami works on behalf of Conservative/Masorti Jews throughout the world. We partner together to create a Zionist agenda for our Movement and to assist Masorti Jews to create synagogues, schools, youth groups and adult education opportunities which have significant impact upon their lives and the well-being of their community.

As we prepare for the Zionist Congress in Jerusalem (June 15-17, 2010), I urge us to be involved in our local Zionist Federations and support the work of our MERCAZ chapters in the countries in which we live. Only through a strong representation at the Congress can we achieve our goals in Jewish education, in creating a tolerant form of Judaism and in ensuring a strong Zionist component to our lives.

May we go from strength to strength, and may the work of our hands be blessed.

**Rabbi Vernon Kurtz**  
*President, MERCAZ Olami*

**Reviewing 2009 – Rabbi Tzvi Graetz, Executive Director Masorti and MERCAZ Olami**

Reviewing the past year is like a Cheshbon Nefesh for our own movement. Have we done well? Are we reaching our goals? Are we getting more Jews to connect, to observe, to study and to do? I believe that the phenomena of Jewish communities around the world is a true miracle. For 2,000 years, Jews have practiced their Judaism in so many different languages, cultures and costumes that it is hard to believe we are still one people. So, what is the glue that holds us to our Judaism? I believe that keeping our traditions alive through the special approach of Masorti Judaism is the secret to Jewish continuity and prosperity throughout the Diaspora.



In this Annual Review, we present you with a taste of what has been done by individuals, by communities, by national movements, by our regions and by our movement's headquarters. Our rabbis, cantors and lay people are the ones making it happen - they are the secret glue that binds all of this into what's called a movement.

As you read through this review, I hope you will enjoy the interesting and inspiring local stories from our kehillot, and appreciate the powerful transmission of our tradition.

I want to thank all the dedicated staff and lay people of **Masorti Olami, MERCAZ Olami and MAROM Olami** who have who

done a phenomenal job throughout the year. May we continue to grow and influence more and more.

**Kol Tuv, Tzvi**

**Upcoming events**



**Thursday, December 10th, 2009 : Masorti Olami Annual Evening of Tribute**, at Park Avenue Synagogue, Manhattan, NY. This year, we will be honoring **Rabbi Jules & Navah Harlow** with the **Rabbi Mordecai Waxman Memorial Rabbinic and Community Leadership Award**; **Cantor Nancy Abramson** with the **Hiddur Mitzvah Award**; and **Mr. Michael Abadi** with **Sherut L'Am Service**

to the Nation Award. Go to [www.masortievent.org](http://www.masortievent.org) to see the virtual journal for the event.

**Friday, March 5th to Sunday, March 7th, 2010 : Masorti Europe Conference in London, UK** – "Hayeenu KeCholimim" – we will be as dreamers - The strengths of Masorti Judaism in European Jewish Communities and vision of the future.

**Regional meeting in Bogota, Columbia**

In May, 2009 representatives of Masorti kehillot from around Central and South America came together in Bogota, Columbia for the second regional meeting of Masorti communities in Central & South America. In addition to Bogota, participants came from Cali (Colombia), Guadalajara (Mexico), Quito (Ecuador) and Lima (Peru). The meeting focused on dilemmas of lay-leadership, management models and engaging volunteers in the kehillot, as well as issues of the regional movement. **Ariel Blufstein**, Executive Director of

Masorti AMLAT and **Yoel Schwartz**, Continental Masorti shaliach, led sessions on strengthening the identity and vision of the Masorti movement in the region. Scholar-in-residence, **Dr. Daniel Fainstein**, Vice-Chancellor of the Hebrew University of Mexico, made a presentation about the origin and evolution of Masorti Judaism.



**Community Campaigns**

Throughout the year, Masorti AMLAT has run a variety of recruitment and publicity campaigns for events, festivals and celebrations in the different countries around the region. Graduate rabbis from the **Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano Marshall T. Meyer** in Buenos Aires assisted in producing content and materials for these campaigns, making them engaging and successful.



**Ma'akela vaKehila – 1st choral festival in Argentina**

FEDECC in Argentina organized **Ma'akela vaKehila**, its first ever Choral Festival, which took place in Buenos Aires on November 5th, 2009. More than 200 people attended the concert at the AMIA building to hear choirs from the **Achdut Israel, Amichai, Beit Hillel, Beit Israel, Dr. Herzl and Lehavat Chaim Masorti** kehillot in the city.



**Nofim Leadership Institute opens in Chile**



Marom and Masorti AMLAT (Latin America) opened the Nofim Leadership Institute in Santiago, Chile in August 2009. Nofim is a community-wide leadership training program which will focus on teaching and training future leaders of the Jewish community. Sessions will be practical, theoretical and spiritual, giving participants a wide skill-set for their current and future leadership work in the community.

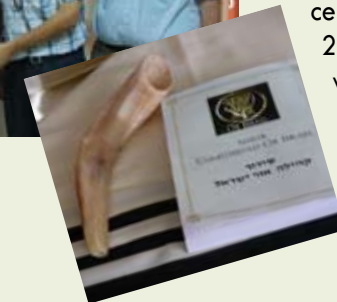
**National Va'ad HaKehillot in Chile**

In August, 2009 the Jewish community of Chile organized a Communities of the Provinces meeting - a national gathering for representatives of communal organizations from all around Chile. Representatives came to Viña del Mar from Masorti kehillot in Santiago, Iquique, La Serena, Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Chillan, Los Angeles, Concepción, Temuco, Valdivia, Osorno and Puerto Montt.



**New Siddur for Or Israel, Buenos Aires**

Members of the **Or Israel** kehillah in Buenos Aires, under the guidance of Seminario student and Shaliach Tzibur **Diego Vovchuk**, undertook the challenge of creating their own siddur in Hebrew, Spanish and in transliteration. Thanks to funding from the World Zionist Organization, the kehillah, which celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2010, was able to produce the siddur which was introduced during the High Holidays. Kehillah members **Patricia and Jorge Fojgiel** shared a copy of the siddur with Masorti Olami staff during a trip to Israel in September 2009.



## Regional News: Europe

### 1 year volunteers to Germany from Ramah USA

In October 2009, Masorti Germany started its first cycle of a volunteer program in which graduates from Camp Ramah in the USA travel to Berlin, Germany for a year. The first volunteers, **Ruth Storch, Julie Edelman and Ben Sattin**, will spend their time working in the Masorti kindergarten, Jewish primary school, Jewish high school, and at the Masorti synagogue in Berlin. They will also periodically travel to smaller Masorti communities in other parts of the country.



### France & UK youth exchanges

Masorti kehillot in Paris and the London area are engaged in a youth exchange program for 13 to 18 year olds. In November 2009 the British youngsters went to Paris, with their new French friends coming to the UK in December. This program will further strengthen the connections between Masorti communities in the UK and France.



### 3rd Masorti wedding in Netherlands

**Michael Zvi & Erna Poolman**, active members of the **Almere/Weesp** kehillah, married at the end of August 2009, in the third Masorti wedding to have taken place in the Netherlands.



### Social Action Exchange – MAROM Budapest with Jerusalem and New York



Masorti **MAROM** members in Budapest are involved in a 3 city exchange program that aims to educate participants in Jewish values of social justice, while at the same time involving them in practical volunteer work and cultural dialogue with American and Israeli Jewish students. This two year program started in Budapest in November 2009, and includes bi-weekly study sessions in Budapest, followed by a week-long visit to Jerusalem in January 2010, and New York in January 2011. Students from Jerusalem and New York will visit Budapest in May 2010.

### Seven Masorti conversions in Ukraine

On August 9th a special session of the Masorti Europe Bet Din was convened in Munkatch, Ukraine to complete the conversion process of 7 candidates. **Rabbi Reuven Resnick, Shlomo Zacharow and Chaim Weiner** (Director of the European Masorti Bet Din) were assisted by student rabbi and Masorti Olami Schorsch Fellow, **Reuven (Roma) Stamov**. After studying hard over the past 2 years, the candidates participated in one final seminar, individual interviews, and immersion in the mikvah, a closing ceremony and celebrations.



European Masorti Beit Din rabbis and the graduates of the conversion course

### Jewish tours of Portugal

Members of **Kehillat Beit Israel** in Lisbon have participated in several tours of Judiarias (Jewish neighborhoods) in Lisbon and other nearby parts of Portugal to become more acquainted with their history and heritage and in order to be able to lead groups who come to visit. They have visited Jewish neighborhoods in Lisbon, and sites where historians believe that synagogues existed until the end of the 15th Century. They also visited Cabeço de Vide, a village in Southern Portugal which once had a thriving Jewish community, but suffered badly during the Portuguese Inquisition.



# Masorti world monthly highlights



November 2008

Picture on left: Masorti kehillah **Adat Shalom in Paris** celebrated 20 years. Founded by only 12 families, the kehillah now boasts nearly 500 families amongst its members.

Picture on right: **Masorti Olami's annual Evening of Tribute** took place on November 2nd with a concert and reception at the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City. 2008 honorees were **Dr. Ismar Schorsch**, Chancellor Emeritus of the Jewish Theological Seminary; **Rabbi David H. Lincoln**, recently retired senior rabbi of Park Avenue Synagogue in New York; and **Chazzan Alberto Mizrahi**, cantor of Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago.



December

Recently formed, **Masorti Spain** held its first national activity on December 27th in Alicante. 75 members from Masorti kehillot in Madrid, Valencia and Alicante celebrated Chanukah together. Visiting JTS rabbinical student **Juan Mejia** helped lead celebrations.

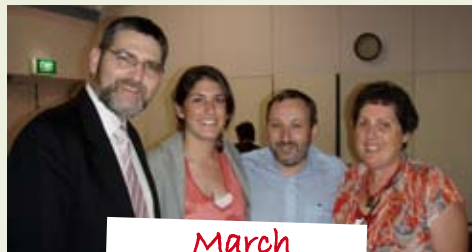


January 2009

**Masorti European leadership seminar** - 25 representatives from 9 different countries came together in Budapest. The program for the weekend included meeting MAROM activists at the Siraly café, and spending Shabbat with **Dor Chadash**, Hungary's only Masorti kehillah.

February

The UK's newest Masorti community, in **Stoke Newington, London** held their first shabbaton in early February. More than 40 people also attended a Megillah reading during Purim.



March

On March 29th, **Kehilat Nitzan in Melbourne, Australia** celebrated its 10th anniversary. The kehillah marked the occasion with a special celebration.

April

Yom HaShoah veHaGvu'rah was marked in Argentina by Masorti members who participated in the community-wide memorial service attended by over 1,300 people. MAROM coordinator, **Ezequiel Herszage** spoke about the role of youth in remembering the Shoah.

May

The **Great Synagogue, Stockholm** joined **Masorti Europe**. Completed in 1870, it is the largest synagogue in Sweden, and has fully egalitarian services in a Masorti style.



June

**EAJL (the European Academy for Jewish Liturgy)** launched by the Masorti movement visited Spain for Shabbat at **Congregation Bet El in Madrid**, and a seminar at **Kehillat Aviv in Valencia**.



July

More than 90 people came to Masorti kehillah **Bet El, Madrid** for the first cross-communal conference for both Orthodox and Masorti members of the city's Jewish community.



August

For 5 days in early August, almost 80 people from all over the Ukraine attended the **5th Masorti Family Camp in Kiev**.

September

The European Masorti Beit Din, directed by **Rabbi Chaim Weiner**, was convened for the first time in Paris, France.



October

Masorti Olami sponsored the visits of rabbis to Masorti communities throughout Europe for the High Holidays. **Rabbi Carlos Tapiero** lead services at **Congregation Beth Shalom in Alicante, Spain**. Other communities with visiting rabbis or cantors included Valencia, Spain; Aix en Provence, France; Almere, Netherlands; and Kiev, Ukraine.



November

22 representatives from kehillot across Europe came together in Berlin for a weekend seminar. They spent Shabbat at the **Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue** in Berlin lead by **Rabbi Gesa Ederberg**. The seminar included sessions on battling anti-Semitism, engaging volunteers and building future growth within the kehillot and the region.

**3rd annual Masorti AMLAT Conference** took place in Lima, Peru. Masorti rabbis, lay-leaders and community activists from all over the region gathered to debate and discuss the challenges of Masorti Judaism in the 21st century.

**New building for Kehillat Nitzan, Melbourne**

**Kehillat Nitzan** is constructing a multi-purpose synagogue building on land donated to them. The synagogue will accommodate up to 700 congregants, and will be ready for next Rosh Hashanah.



Architect's 3D model for the sanctuary

**Family Club, Moscow**

**MAROM-Moscow** has seen great success this year in its **Family Club** project, providing social and cultural activities for Jewish families of all ages in Moscow. Activities include a lecture series, festival and holiday programs, picnics with educational programming and outings to museums, exhibitions and theatre events.



**Gloria & Judy are true UN Advocates** Throughout the past year, **Gloria Landy** and **Judy Horowitz** have represented Masorti Olami in the NGO forum of the United Nation's Department of Public

Information. They work hard in the battle against intolerance, racism and prejudice. They were involved in the Durban II Counter-conference in New York in April.



Gloria Landy & Judy Horowitz protest against Ahmadinejad's speech to the UN

**First Masorti Shaliach to Beijing, China** **Ada Schwarzapel** and her husband **Elad**, spent a year in Beijing China, working for the Jewish community. This is the first time a Masorti shaliach has been sent to **Kehillat Beijing**. Ada, who grew up in Ramah camps and has led USY programs, studied Chinese at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.



**Masorti Olami helps kehillot in India after Mumbai terror attacks** When coordinated terrorist attacks killed the Chabad rabbi, his wife, and 186 others in Mumbai, India in November 2008, India's Jewish community was understandably concerned. The shock of the attacks only further highlighted the need for improved security at the 6 Masorti kehillot in **Mumbai, New Delhi, Alibaug** and **Ahemadabad**. Masorti Olami started a Masorti India fund, and was able to help provide some of the required equipment to secure and monitor these buildings.



In the press



JTA published a story about the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda and their relief work with local victims of famine. The Abayudaya, under the leadership of Conservative **Rabbi Gershom Sizomu**, are affiliated with Masorti Olami.



Israel-based website for Spanish speaking Jews, **Aurora**, covered the campaign by **FEDECC** (The Federation of Masorti communities) in Argentina to bring attention to kidnapped soldier, **Gilad Shalit**.

Read all these articles in full, and see many others in our *In The Press* section at : [www.masortiworld.org/molami/inthepress](http://www.masortiworld.org/molami/inthepress)



US National Public Radio (**NPR**) broadcasted a story about revival of kibbutz life in Israel, including at **Masorti kibbutz Hannaton**. Read the script or listen to their story online.



The **Australian Jewish News** highlighted the Masorti kehillah in Melbourne and the **chavurah** in **Sydney** in a feature length article.



JTA's wandering Jew, **Ben Harris**, visited **MAROM Budapest's Siraly Café**, and published a 5 minute video article about his visit, and how much he enjoyed Budapest's Jewish hangout.

## MERCAZ Highlights



**MERCAZ Olami** and **Masorti Olami** with the help of Keren Kayemeth LeYisrael and World Zionist Organization sponsored an educational CD about **Judaism and the Environment**. The disc presents the Masorti position on the importance of environmental conservation and contains useful activity ideas and resources, especially focusing on the environmental work of the KKL in Israel. Please go to <http://more.masortiworld.org/environment/index.html> to see the full CD online.



**Masorti reps at the Israeli Embassy Yom Ha'atzma'ut party**  
**NOAM, MAROM, Masorti AMLAT** and **FEDECC** representatives were invited to the annual Yom Ha'atzma'ut cocktail hosted by the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Masorti delegation was amongst the largest from all of the different communal organizations and movements.



**Va'ad HaPoel, June 2009**  
**MERCAZ** and **Masorti Olami** representatives from around the world took part in meetings of the Zionist General Council (Va'ad HaPoel) of the World Zionist Organization. Masorti delegates also met with Kadima and Opposition leader, **Tzipi Livni**.



*MERCAZ and Masorti Olami Delegates at the Va'ad HaPoel. Andres Kan and Daniel Kohn from Argentina; Gloria Cohen and Janet Tobin from the USA*

**The 36th World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem, Israel** will be Sunday, June 13th to Thursday, June 17th, 2010. Congress delegates will come from all over the world to 5 days of intense dialogue and debate about issues pertinent to the future of Zionism in Israel and the Diaspora.

**New MERCAZ chapter!**  
The Masorti **Kehilat Nitzan** in Melbourne together with the Masorti chavurah in Sydney joined forces to start a MERCAZ Australia chapter in December 2008.

## MAROM Highlights

### MAROM AMLAT Seminar in Chile

**MAROM AMLAT** (Latin America) representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay met in Chile in the middle of November, 2009 for an intense 3 days leadership seminar.



*MAROM AMLAT seminar in Chile*

### MAROM Long-Term programs in Israel

2009 has been a very successful year for MAROM long-term programs in Israel, with a total of 50 participants arriving on programs from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay at the start of the year. The program included leadership training at the Machon LeMadrichim, Jewish study, volunteering in development towns and for some a Holocaust themed trip to Poland. Masorti kehillah **Bet El** in Mexico was extremely successful in recruiting 26 participants for the **Lech Lecha** program which started in September 2009, and NOAM in the UK sent five people to its **Drachim** program. MAROM is expecting more than 75 participants from AMLAT on long-term Israel programs in 2010.



*Some of the 2009 SHnat MAROM participants from AMLAT*

*For more information about all of MAROM'S programs in Israel, please go to:  
[www.masortiworld.org/marom/israel\\_programs](http://www.masortiworld.org/marom/israel_programs)*

### MAROM Europe moves forward

MAROM Europe recently appointed **Eszter Susan** as the regional coordinator for the rapidly expanding regional network. An activist in MAROM Budapest, Eszter will take on the role of increasing cooperation and joint activities within the region, which includes a local MAROM coordinators seminar, which will take place in Paris in December.



*Eszter Susan at MAROM Budapest's Sivaly Cafe*

This past year, over 3,000 children and teenagers attended the world-wide network of Ramah NOAM style summer camps in Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Argentina (**Camp Elise system**), UK and Ukraine, many of which were supported by Masorti Olami.

In **NOAM Argentina**, over 1,500 young people and more than 300 volunteer staff were involved in 10 different summer camps in December 2008 and January 2009. All camps focused on educational themes making Masorti Judaism relevant to the lives of the young people who attended. In the next summer session (December 2009 and January 2010) NOAM will celebrate its 10th anniversary, and expects strong participation from across its 16 branches in Argentina.

**NOAM in the UK** sent more than 120 young people to Israel in summer 2009 on a one-

month program that included meeting Israeli NOAM members. Close to 700 NOAM members aged 11 to 15 attended the two other NOAM camps this past summer, which took place in Wales and France.

The **Camp Ramah Yachad** summer camp was held at the end of July in Munkatch in Western Ukraine. This year almost 180 children participated in the 12 day camp, with a staff team of 12 local madrichim (counselors) who grew up in the Masorti Movement in **Ukraine**.

The **Darkei NOAM** leadership training program started its 7th year of activities in Argentina, in early 2009. This year, more than 150 students from 12 different Masorti Kehillot will take part in the two year program which trains madrichim (counselors) for the NOAM youth movement.

The Masorti Jewish community of **Alicante, Spain celebrated Tu BiShvat** by planting 6 trees in the Palmgarden park, followed by a Tu BiShvat seder and meal in the synagogue.



**Ma'ayane Or in Nice, France celebrated Purim** with a masquerade costume party, treasure hunt for NOAM youth, dinner and of course Megillah reading.

Masorti Kehillah **NCI in Montevideo, Uruguay** held its second "**Succot Urbano**" (City Succot) Succot carnival for all ages. The event, which was attended by more than 800 people from the entire Jewish community, ended with a rock concert, and went on into the early hours.



In September, **Rabbi Yeshaya Dalsace** finished 9 years of service to the **Ma'ayane Or** congregation in Nice, France. Rabbi Dalsace is now the rabbi of newly formed kehillah, **Dor Vador**, in East Paris. Rabbi Dalsace will continue working with the Masorti kehillah in Marseille, France, and taking his position in Nice, is soon-to-be-ordained **David Touboul**. A native of Nice, David studied at the Schechter Institute of Rabbinical Studies in the Masorti Olami Schorsch Fellowship program.



*David Touboul's installation ceremony at Ma'ayane Or, Nice*

In March, **Ariel Blufstein** took up the position of Executive Director of Masorti AMLAT.

Ariel joins the Masorti AMLAT team with a great deal of experience as Executive Director of FEDECC (The Federation of Masorti

communities in Argentina). We wish him the best of luck in these challenging roles.

In August, **Judy Gray** retired after 8 years of service to Masorti Olami, and was an integral part of building the strength and vibrancy of the world-wide movement. **Marcus Frieze** is the new Projects and Communications Manager. Also new to the Jerusalem team is **Galit Wittman**, who joins as Office Manager.



The next team of three Masorti shlichim to go to **Bialik College**, Melbourne will be **Neva Karni** from Rehovot, **Leetal Vaknin** from Ashkelon and **Ori Yavor** from Hertzliya. Neva and Leetal will arrive in February 2010, and Ori will join in the middle of next year. The shlichim will work at and also volunteer at **Kehillat Nitzan**.



NOAM Argentina Summer camp



Camp Ramah Yachad, Ukraine



NOAM UK Israel Tour



NOAM UK Summer camp





Visit our website at

**www.masortiworld.org**

– the primary resource for information about Masorti/Conservative kehillot around the world.



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#### MERCAZ Olami President

Rabbi Vernon Kurtz

#### Masorti Olami Past President

Rabbi Alan Silverstein

#### Masorti Olami Senior Vice Presidents

Dr. David Breakstone

Janet Tobin

Ned Gladstein

#### Masorti Europe President

Gill Caplin

Masorti AMLAT President

Mario Grunebaum

#### Masorti Olami Special Liaison to Europe

Rabbi Charles Simon

#### Masorti Olami Special Liaison to AMLAT

Michael Abadi

#### MAROM Olami Chairman

Doron Rubin

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Rabbi Chaim Weiner

#### Executive Director Masorti AMLAT

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*Front Cover pictures: (Main) EAJL seminar in Madrid, Spain; Rosh Hashanah seminar in Aix-en-Provence, France; Shnat MAROM participants from AMLAT in Israel; Masorti Europe gathering in Nice, France; MAROM Budapest leaders; NOAM summer camp in Argentina.*