

BEIT SASSON

THE SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF NEWTON

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Dear Members and Friends of Kehilat Beit Sasson,

As Rosh Hashanah approaches and another year comes to a close, I find myself thinking not only about what Beit Sasson has accomplished this year, but about something much more fundamental: **What makes a group of people into a community?**

A synagogue can have a beautiful sanctuary, meaningful tefillot, Torah classes, programs, and events. But none of those things, by themselves, create a *kehillah*.

A kehillah is created when people feel that they belong.

It is created when someone walks through the door and is greeted by name. When we notice that someone has not been with us for a few weeks and call to see how they are doing. When we celebrate one another's simchas and stand beside one another during difficult moments. When our children know that the synagogue is not simply the place their parents bring them to pray, but a place that belongs to them as well.

That sense of connection has always been at the heart of what we are trying to build at Beit Sasson.

Over the past several years, Baruch Hashem, our congregation has grown tremendously. We have invested in our building, expanded our learning opportunities, strengthened our programs for children and teenagers, and created spaces dedicated to Torah, tefillah, and community. Each of these accomplishments is something we should be proud of.

But as we continue to grow, I believe our greatest challenge—and our greatest opportunity—is to make sure that we grow not only **in numbers, but in connection**.

It is easy to attend the same synagogue and still remain strangers.

Building a true kehillah requires something more from each of us.

It requires us to come not only to receive, but also to give. To introduce ourselves to someone we don't know. To invite another family to our Shabbat table. To participate in a class or program even when staying home would be easier. To volunteer. To help make a minyan. To reach out to someone who may be going through a difficult time. To notice the person standing alone at Kiddush and bring them into the conversation.

These may seem like small things. But these small acts are what transform a synagogue into a community.

Our Sephardic tradition has always understood Judaism this way. Our Judaism was never meant to exist only inside the walls of the synagogue. It lives around the Shabbat table, in the melodies and traditions passed from parents to children, in the way we celebrate together, mourn together, learn together, and take responsibility for one another.

There is a beautiful teaching in Pirkei Avot: **"Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh" — all of Israel is responsible for one another.**

That responsibility begins very close to home. It begins with the people sitting next to us.

And perhaps this is especially important today. At a time when the Jewish people continue to face uncertainty, antisemitism, division, and challenges both in Israel and throughout the world, we are reminded how precious it is to have a Jewish home and a Jewish community where we know that we are not alone.

Beit Sasson should be that home. A place where an older member and a young child both feel that they belong. A place where someone who has been part of the congregation for decades and someone walking through our

doors for the first time are both welcomed warmly. A place where our different backgrounds and personalities do not separate us, but instead add to the richness of our community.

And most importantly, a place where our children grow up understanding that being Jewish is not merely something they inherited—it is something beautiful that they themselves will want to carry forward.

As president, one of the things for which I am most grateful is seeing how many people quietly give of themselves to make this community possible. Some lead services or teach Torah. Some organize programs and events. Some prepare Kiddush, help with our children, maintain our building, contribute financially, welcome newcomers, or simply make sure there is a minyan when one is needed.

Many of these acts happen without recognition. But together, they are Beit Sasson.

As we enter **5787**, I would therefore like to ask something of every member of our community.

Find one way this year to become more connected to Beit Sasson—and one way to help someone else become more connected as well.

Come to one more Shabbat. Join a class. Bring your children to a program.

Invite someone new for a meal.

Volunteer for something you care about.

Call someone you haven't seen recently.

Introduce yourself to a person whose name you don't yet know.

Each action may be small. But imagine what kind of community we can create if every one of us takes that small step.

Rosh Hashanah reminds us that a new year is not simply another page on the calendar. It is an opportunity to ask ourselves what kind of people we want to become and what kind of community we want to build.

My hope for 5787 is that Beit Sasson continues to grow—but even more importantly, that we continue to grow **closer**.

May our synagogue always be filled with Torah and tefillah, with the voices of our children, with friendship and laughter, with compassion and kindness, and with the warmth that has always defined the Sephardic home. May Hashem protect Medinat Yisrael, the soldiers of the IDF, and Jewish communities throughout the world. May He bring healing to those who need it, comfort to those who have suffered loss, and peace and security to Am Yisrael.

5787 High Holy Day Services: we are delighted to invite you and your family to join us for the High Holy Day Services. Rosh Hashanah begins on Friday evening September 11. Yom Kippur begins on Sunday evening Sept 20. The complete High Holy Day schedule is enclosed.

In keeping with Sephardic tradition, everyone, member or otherwise, is always welcome to worship at *Beit Sasson*. Since space is limited, we highly encourage people to become members and to buy seats for the High Holy Days; purchasing is the only way to guarantee a seat. Please note that we have kept the High Holy Day Seats and Membership dues low to encourage wider participation. Please go to <https://www.sephardic-newton.org/highholidays> to conveniently make Seat Reservations, fill up Membership forms, and to make payments/donations.

May the coming year bring each of our families health, happiness, *parnassah*, peace, and many reasons to celebrate together.

On behalf of the leadership of Kehilat Beit Sasson, I wish you and your families a **Shanah Tovah U'Metukah**—a year of blessing, connection, and true *simcha*.

With gratitude and blessings,

Haim Senior

President Beit Sasson Executive Committee