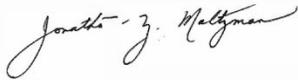


Kol Ha-Rav

Have you seen the story about the sale of Soda Stream to PepsiCo for over 3 billion dollars? (The company was originally bought for 6 million dollars!). The CEO, Daniel Birnbaum, who is responsible for its remarkable success, is the son of Conservative /Masorti Rabbi Ervin Birnbaum and his wife Hadassah. At the news conference announcing the sale in Israel, Daniel introduced his parents and shared his father's story. Ervin survived the Shoah in Hungary and after the war led a youth group going to Palestine on the ship known as Exodus. Eventually he arrived in Palestine but then left to join his parents who had immigrated to the States. In the early seventies he, Hadassah and their three sons, made Aliyah. They lived for many years in the Negev at Kibbutz Sde Boker where Ervin was the head of a program for youth from the States. Later he moved to Netanya as the rabbi of the Masorti congregation there and started a wonderful program for Russian olim called Shaarim that he runs as a volunteer to this day.

Daniel connects his father's story to his own work where he heads the company now located in the Negev. It is about to open a new factory near a Bedouin village that will provide work for hundreds of local residents. He sees this personal history as representing the story of the triumph of our people over the Shoah - going from tragedy to triumph during the remarkable existence of the State of Israel. It is also to be known that he has employed Palestinian Arabs in his plants and fought the government to be able to continue to employ them when his plant moved to another location in Israel. His current plant employs both Jews and Arabs, recognizes both their holy days and has built a Muslim prayer room and a synagogue. Daniel is also active in the Masorti movement. This proves that one can be a successful businessman and an observant Masorti Jew who holds on to Jewish values. One can be an ardent Zionist and a believer in fair treatment for Arabs and good relationships between communities. One can be a believer in Israel's existence and security and a man of peace. We should be proud.

L'shana Tovah



Rabbi Jonathan Z. Maltzman