

## KAL NIDRE ADDRESS 2020 BY SEPHARDIC TEMPLE PRESIDENT ISAAC MAYO

My Dear Friends,

I am honored to be here today as the President of the Sephardic Temple. I am confident when I say whether you are members or guests, I am pleased that you have chosen to observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur among us here at the Sephardic Temple.

One year ago, I stood before you not knowing the future. Who would have imagined that I would be presenting my Kal Nidre address on a virtual platform rather than on the pulpit of the Sephardic Temple? I certainly would not have been able to predict what the Jewish community and the world, as a whole, would look like amidst the bewilderment and anxiety of COVID-19.

I want to assure you that my primary purpose as President of the Sephardic Temple is to carry a message of unity. Here at the Sephardic Temple, the Religious Committee, Executive Board, Board of Directors, office staff, security and maintenance staff - all of us - maintain an unbroken relationship as we continue to work together to ensure the health and safety of our members as well as continuing to safeguard the continuation of our beloved Sephardic Temple.

Our mission as individuals and our connections with each other is to assure a safe transition from now and far into the future.

I would like to take a moment to honor Rabbi Arnold B. Marans of blessed memory. I am sure he is watching us from above with a smile on his face.

This is a transitional year for the Sephardic Temple. Rabbi Steve Golden is doing a remarkable job during this crucial time in our Temple's history. He has worked with diligence to guarantee that the growth of our Sephardic traditions continues seamlessly into the next phase of our future.

Thank you, Rabbi Golden, for your energies this year and for the performance of all the rabbinical duties required by our members. We are especially appreciative of your energies in visiting the sick and consoling grieving families. Your compassion for our congregants is noticed

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by all and is appreciated. Your efforts have enriched the lives of our members and we are grateful.

The Congregation wishes you, your dear wife Shira and your family - Navah and Adam and new baby Cove, Hannah and Jared - good health and long life and continued success! Thank you, Rabbi Golden and Shira.

A special thank you this year to our superb Cantor Yair Yonati. You continually add beauty to our service with your singing. Your attention to the detail of the service is greatly appreciated by all. Your execution of all our special tunes is exceptional. Your voice is the soul of our service. On behalf of our Congregation, I offer you our deepest gratitude and good wishes for the New Year. Good health, long life and happiness to you and your dear wife Naomi. *Chazak u'Baruch!*

Thank you to David Laniado for your bigheartedness in assisting our beloved Cantor, Yair Yonati.

I must give a shout out to a man I have known almost all my life. Thank you to Honorary Life Trustee and Past President, Alex Cohen. I thank you on behalf of this Congregation, for your many years of outstanding leadership, service, and dedication to the well-being of this Temple. Your continued active participation is cherished by all. Alex, this Temple and I value your advice and encouragement. Your involvement in all Board Meetings as well as being a member of the Religious Committee is greatly appreciated. You always bring the dialogue to the highest level. You know just when to bring us to a productive conclusion. You are a valued positive influence.

A huge thank you to the Executive Committee which consists of: Alex Cohen, Steve Chernoff, Victor Hazan, Martin I. Elias, Stanley Camhi, Herman Goldsmith, Howard Franco, Marvin Rosen, Russ Posner, Jerry Hattem, and Justin Chernoff. These gentlemen are my extraordinary advisors. They contribute their time and energy toward most of our Temple's operating needs. Their concern, intellect and insight provide this Congregation with the very best in leadership qualities. I thank you, gentlemen, on behalf of the Congregation the Sephardic Temple of

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Cedarhurst. A whole-hearted appreciation on my part goes out to all the members serving on the Board of Directors. *Muchas gracias.*

Thanks to Sisterhood President Susan Bahaloul and Treasurer Tina Erbes. Thanks to Men's Club President Marc J. Tenzer, Secretary Russ Posner and Treasurer Jerry Hattem for all the work you do on behalf of our Temple. Thank you to all the ladies of the Sisterhood and the gentlemen of the Men's Club.

This year, through efforts of Rabbi Golden, the Sisterhood and Men's Club created beautiful baskets of sweets which were delivered to members who were not able to attend our High Holy Day services.

Speaking of services, Rabbi Golden has been able to host a daily minyan for those interested in praying remotely. If you wish to join the minyan Zoom group, please email Rabbi Golden for details. His email address is accessible on our website.

Before the onset of the pandemic, our Temple was able to host a successful Shabbat Across America on February 28, 2020 which was a meaningful event that helped enrich the value of our Temple to its members and the community.

This year due to COVID-19, our Sisterhood and Men's Club were unable to have their annual Sisterhood Card Party and Men's Club Barbecue.

We hope to resume our film screenings relating to Jewish traditions and topics on our new special digital projection system, as well reschedule the AMIT Fundraising Luncheon and the Sephardic Temple Anniversary Reconsecration Service when it is safe to do so. We are, however, continuing to publish the 57<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Testimonial Journal honoring Karen and Russ Posner. The Testimonial Journal responsibilities are led by Journal Chairman Sam Azus and Program Chairman Jerry Hattem who continue to lend their support to this project. The Congregation and the Board of Directors appreciate and value all your efforts. We wish you and your families good health and happiness for the New Year. Thank you!

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Our thanks to Gabbaim Howard Franco, Jeff Beja, Fred Abraham, and Nathan Grama. Gentlemen, you do an excellent job in guiding the service and keeping our minhag alive.

Thank you to our entire Temple staff. A very special thanks to our Executive Director Lloyd Denenberg for your diligent help with overseeing the functioning of our Temple and the workings of the office which has been most supportive to my position as President. Thank you to office staff Ashley Rothbart, Dee Soll and Robin Cohen.

I want to point out that we now have a working website dedicated to Sephardic Temple life. Our website is: [www.sephardictemplecedarhurst.org](http://www.sephardictemplecedarhurst.org). This website would not be possible without the tireless work from Ashley Rothbart. Thanks, Ashley!

Thank you to Superintendent Angel De Leon, Helpers Juan Muñoz, Walter Acosta, Danny Rabanales, Jose Hercules, Portia McCoy, and Evelyn Burgos. Thank you for all that you do to maintain the functioning of the Temple.

One of my obligations as President of this Temple is to give a report on Kal Nidre night on the status of our Temple. I have recently met with past President Steven Chernoff, Board Members Victor Hazan, Marvin Rosen, Martin I. Elias, and Justin Chernoff. They assure me that the overall condition of the Congregation is good. Our membership remains consistent with previous years. Our Congregation consists of 270 families. We are always connected to our extended membership who are scattered throughout the United States and the world. These families call on the Sephardic Temple to celebrate, confer, or console on life's events. Regardless of distance, many of our members and their families continue to celebrate their simchas here. The Sephardic Temple is part of who they are. Their spiritual lives are anchored here in Cedarhurst.

In addition, I am glad to report that the Temple's financial condition is good. This financial status is the result of the generosity of our members and of the Board's control of expenses. Our financial condition is strong enough that I can announce that, for the eighth year, we will have no need for a special assessment or raising of dues.

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I wish to thank our members for their consistent and ever-increasing contributions through the silent Kal Nidre pledges and prompt payment of dues. Your generous responses have enabled us to plan and maintain control of our assets even though we have had increased operating expenses. Thank you, all.

We have balanced the budget this year, while at the same time were able to support undertakings such as: general building maintenance; maintaining the new landscaping additions; special structural maintenance; and most notably, the opening of the Memorial Corridor where commemorative plaques from the Sephardic Home for the Aged and the Sephardic Jewish Center of Canarsie are housed. The project confirms and personifies what the Sephardic Temple of Cedarhurst represents to our community: tradition, linkage to our ancestry, respect for our past, and securing and communicating our values and traditions to the generations that are following us. The Meldado memorial plaques that represent the departed are displayed in our Memorial Corridor and will be lit at the appropriate times. Thank you, Jeff Beja, for all your efforts ensuring the successful completion of this project.

An additional expense this year has been and continues to be our security budget. Our security initiative is considered most necessary, as a result of COVID-19 and worldwide events. We have a comprehensive security camera system and we have increased the budget for plain clothes police security during services. I want to personally thank our security staff who are present during our services. These gentlemen are: Bob Gally, Detective Nassau County Police Department; Frank Picciullo, Detective New York Police Department; and Police Officer Jerry Lester. Gentlemen, I appreciate your service, both to this Congregation, and to the general community. The entire Board wishes you and your families the very best of health, and happiness for the New Year.

At this time, I am extending an invitation to all who have participated in services and those watching this presentation that are not yet members to consider joining our Temple. I am certain you will find that membership at the Sephardic Temple will give you much pleasure and joy. The beauty of our services, the fellowship of our congregants, and the Temple's support of all special

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family events enhance the joys of life. Please call our Temple office for membership arrangements. We will make special financial accommodations for new memberships.

In closing, as President, I commit, on behalf of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors to continue our transition into a “new normal” with an awareness to safeguard the growth and long life of this Temple.

I pray that Hashem blesses our Temple building, its members, and their families, with good health, happiness and long life.

*G-d bless America, G-d bless Israel, thank you!*

Isaac Mayo

Sephardic Temple President