

THE ALTNEU

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*Kol Nidrei Message from our President, Alexander Tsigutkin
Yom Kippur 5783*

Dear friends, dear community members,

It is an honor for me to address you tonight. It is a first time for me to address this vibrant congregation as a president.

For me this is a special journey since I started observing Yom Kippur when I was 18 years old.

This community is built with very clear goals — to elevate our Jewish spirituality, inspire the younger generation to commit to Torah values, help Jews find their shidduch, and create a community that is truly intergenerational, all ages sitting side by side in the continuation of our rich Jewish heritage.

In just a few short months, I am happy to report that we have grown into a community of approximately 200 member families.

While it is not easy to be a shul on wheels — the collective effort of our dedicated team has done a great job in operating smoothly.

In person and online classes, Shabbat services, Friday night dinners, young professional events, weekday minyan, and so much more have sprung up and succeeded. With the help and generosity of a few board members and donors, we were able to purchase our first real estate in the neighborhood that is undergoing construction and hopefully will be ready towards the next summer for use.

We are looking for a more permanent home, and with Hashem's blessing our growth has been so rapid that it is not easy to find spaces that could accommodate our growing community. We are looking to improve our programs, and expand our children's program, and we would love to receive your feedback as we do so.

I would like to share the story from the Talmud in Kesubos 67b: Mar Ukva made a practice of giving 400 zuz every erev Yom Kippur to a certain poor man who lived nearby. One year he sent the money with his son. His son came back and returned the money, saying: "Father, he has no need for charity." Mar Ukva asked

him: “What did you see?” The boy answered: “I saw that they were pouring vintage wine for him.” Mar Ukva responded: “I didn’t know that he was used to such delicacies!” He then doubled the amount and send 800 ZUZ. This is a powerful example of the sensitivity required in giving, of the anticipation of needs.

As you have seen, we have formed a proper board of directors that is taking fiscal responsibility in a transparent manner and helping guide the community forward. We are planning on giving a report this coming spring.

As Rabbi Goldschmidt mentioned, we are making all efforts to make sure that the shul experience is not overwhelmed by requests for funds. But, as tradition calls, on Kol Nidre we would love to have everyone participate in this great mitzvah of building a true makom Torah on the Upper East Side. One of the age-old traditions is to do kaporos taking a rooster and circling it around our heads with the intention of understanding that our lives are on the line. I assume most of us here did not do kaporos on chickens — but instead we could do kaporos on charity.

We are a young community, and we would love for everyone to play a role in its development.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please do not feel obligated to fold the card.

I want to wish you all a gemar chatima tova and looking forward to our amazing future together.