

Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation

B"H



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Dear Hazzan Azose,

I write this letter in tribute and appreciation on behalf of the members of Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation. We owe you a debt of gratitude. You are one of a small handful of individuals who have preserved and maintained our Sephardic community. Your prayer books for daily and Shabbat services as well as all the holidays and fast days have created a permanent legacy and our liturgy will never be forgotten.

You are beloved in our community both from your roots at Sephardic Bikur Holim and your adopted home at Ezra Bessaroeth. We love you and we are amazed by you. Your energy, your passion and your love for our Sephardic liturgy knows no parallel. Over your decades of service, you have taught and inspired junior hazanikos who in turn became Hazzanim. You have lay leaders who know different makams and all the te'amim for the different occasions because of your dedication.

I visited Seattle on the first Shabbat of March, 2013, as I was interviewing to become the Rabbi. It was Parashat Ki Tisa and Parashat Parah. You had a meldado that Shabbat, so you prayed at Sephardic Bikur Holim. You outbid me and purchased the reading of the haftarah (it was my Bar Mitzvah anniversary) but I did not miss out. Your reading of the Haftarah was beautiful. You read the words precisely and sang the ta'amim effortlessly. After services I complimented you and you invited me to stop at your home before I left Seattle.

I entered your study and was overwhelmed by the piles of books and draft manuscripts. You had more projects on the go than I thought humanly possible. There in your study is where all the magic happens, where you create and record and painstakingly reproduce all of our liturgy for future generations. You presented me with a CD of your hazzanut and gave me the latest Zechut Yosef Siddur.

I took that CD home to Melbourne, and began playing it in my car on the way to work. It would be a few months before we would be moving to Seattle. Every day I would drive Cohava and Gabi to school and we would listen and sing along to your CD. We memorized the Seattle Sephardic Birkat Hamazon. Whenever I think of Birkat Hamazon I think of your voice on that CD playing on our drives to school.

As we celebrate your 90th birthday I wish you continued salud i buena and that you continue to inspire and be a role model to all of us on the power of dedication and commitment. I know one thing; our liturgy will never be forgotten and that is because of you! Tizku LeShanim Rabbot!

Munchos i buenos con salud i beraha,

Rabbi Benjamin Hassan