

Kol Nidre Appeal 2003

One Rosh Hashanah morning, the Rabbi noticed little Adam was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the synagogue. It was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side of it. The seven-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the Rabbi walked up, stood beside the boy, and said quietly, "Good morning, Adam."

"Good morning, Rabbi," replied the young man, still focused on the plaque. "Rabbi Resnick, what is this?" Adam asked.

"Well, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Adam's voice was barely audible when he asked: "Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur?"

Seriously though... I doubt that any of the children at NHS would be confused in the way Adam was. Our services are spiritually uplifting and inspiring. Our congregants worship as participants, not spectators...

At NHS our children **count**. Rebecca, Rabbi Barnard, our religious school teachers, our junior congregation leaders, reach out to our children, involve them, include them, and as a result they actively participate in our services, in our youth groups, and in the life of our congregation.

At NHS every member counts. We are small enough for each of us to get involved, to feel welcome and connected. Our high holiday services are a perfect example... from assigning the honors, to moving back the walls and setting out chairs and prayer books, to leading the services and readings, inviting members for holiday meals, leading children services and providing refreshments for the kids. To preparing a break-the-fast, preparing the high holiday greeting and Yizkor book, to contributing food for Operation Isaiah and volunteering for Gimilut Hasadim...and, of course, our wonderful choir... At NHS -- you count, you create our NHS-CBA community.

We are small enough for you to get involved, yet we are large enough to provide award winning programming. You know, at the time of our congregational vote to relocate we had won 2 Solomon Schechter awards for programming. Some members expressed concern that in planning a move ... we would lose our focus, and our programming would suffer. Nothing could be farther from the truth... in fact, we've won 11 more Schechter awards since then.

In our last bulletin, you received this year's programming booklet...which clearly reflects another core value: doing everything we can to meet our members needs.

Our theme for this year is: Transitions... past, present, and future. We've decided to use several surveys during this transition. First, we sent out a survey to members who live closer to Fleming Road to determine the needs of that group. Right now we're following up with phone calls to those who didn't respond. We must know who will need transportation to our new facility on Fields Ertel Road and, who would like to have a regularly scheduled minyan on this side of town. Once we can get all those result in, we'll be able to plan. A second survey got some of you confused. The Oral History Committee sent out a survey to collect information that they will use in creating an Oral History of the members of Northern Hills Synagogue. What a wonderful project that will be as we reflect on the past and build to the future. And, shortly after we make our move, we'll be sending out a third survey to get your input as we chart our course for the future

This is truly a time of transition. Last year at this time we had just dedicated our property on Fields-Ertel. Today, our building is going up before our eyes – see the photos in the lobby, if you haven't looked at them yet! And... we have good news. We have two parties interested in purchasing this facility.

Long ago, our sages said, "Do not rely on miracles." More recently, Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first president said, "Miracles sometimes occur but one has to work terribly hard for them."

Through our involving, consensus-building approach, and hard work NHS-CBA is creating our own miracles.

During these holidays, Rabbi Barnard has reflected on this theme of transitions, , and on our congregational statement of Core Values. These Core Values are our foundation, and have guided us from the past, through the present, and will carry us into the future. One of our core values is "We will not turn away any members because they cannot afford dues. We will strive to keep dues as low as possible by encouraging voluntary contributions, such as through a High Holiday Appeal."

As you know, our dues structure is not based on a percentage of ones income. We welcome members even when they cannot afford dues. In fact, over a quarter of our membership is on reduced dues. The Kol Nidre Appeal, as distinct from fixed dues, is the opportunity for each of us to contribute to our synagogue community in a flexible manner, in line with our individual ability to give.

In making this appeal, my predecessors – going back over 40 years – spent time telling you about expenses: utilities, maintenance, salaries, supplies, postage, and all the other costs. Tonight, I won't .You already know we have costs and we do our best to contain and control them. You know that last year in order to contain costs, we cut back on the hours of our employees, and with great fiscal oversight on the part of Phyliss Shubs, we were able to substantially cut maintenance and supply costs

Instead...my theme is income – making sure we have enough income to cover our day-

to-day costs. What I am speaking about is the income we need for our operating budget, which are distinctly separate from funds used in our relocation effort.

This year, our goal is not only to remain in the black, but to actually bank a cushion to take us through this critical transition time.

To this end, we have planned several major fundraising events so that we can hit our budgeted fundraising goal of \$23,000. The synagogue has just signed a contract to become an agent of Power Net Global, a long distance and data transmission company which has really low rates for both domestic and international long distance calls. For every synagogue member who switches to Power Net Global for your private or business long distance needs, NHS, as the agent, will receive 10% of the revenue monthly from your use. That means if 20 people sign up with an average long distance phone bill of \$50 per month, the synagogue will receive \$100 each month, or \$1200 a year. When businesses sign up, we will realize greater income, since their monthly bills will be greater. In addition, Power Net Global just donated about \$8000 worth of phones for our new building.

This year, our biggest fundraisers, tie in with our theme of transitions. On November 22 we will have our big Farewell to Fleming Road Party and in March, we'll have our Grand Dedication event for our new synagogue facility on Fields Ertel Road, continuing with dedication activities during the next month.

Fundraising is essential, and we definitely need your help with it. But fundraising doesn't take the place of or negate the importance of this Kol Nidre appeal.

Let me give you some perspective. Our High Holiday appeal makes up 47% of our operating budget.

Tonight's appeal is obviously critical.

Last year, 35% of our pledges were for \$1000 or more. To raise that to 40%, we need just 7 members, to increase to the \$1000 level.

60% of our members pledged \$500 or more. To raise that to 66% of our membership, we need eight of you who were close to \$500 to increase to at least that amount.

Those of you who were close... please go up to the \$500 level.

Last year I said that if we had full participation from our youth at the \$18 chai level, we would raise \$1000. We came VERY close to that goal. I challenge our post bar/bat mitzvah youth to contribute in excess of \$1000 this year!

I'd like to welcome all our guests and thank you for joining us at our services. Last year our guests contributed a total of \$1000.

We invite all of you to participate again to the extent you are able.

Professor Abraham Heschel has written “Do as much as you can and then just a little more than you can.” This is vital—a little more than you can.

Look at your card – see what the next level over last year’s pledge is. Can you paper clip that level this year/ Can you increase by two levels? If you want to pledge halfway between two levels, put the paper clip between the two amounts, or put it on “call me.”

I’m not being shy about asking for at least a one level increase. Please don’t you be shy about responding generously. . I assure you that all pledges are strictly confidential.

Please turn in every card. If you are unable to make a pledge, put the paper clip loose in the envelope and turn in the card in the envelope to the ushers
Please give generously. For our synagogue community, I say a sincere, thank you.

The ushers will now take a few minutes to collect all the cards.

If you did not receive your card as you came in, raise your hand and an usher will bring it to you from the lobby.

Thank you. G’mar hatima tova

Sonia Milrod
Cincinnati, Ohio

Yom Kippur Appeal 2003

Hillel said:

If I am not for me, who will be?

If I am for myself alone, what am I?

If not now, when?

These words from Avot are inscribed on our beautiful stained glass windows. This year we are studying Pirke Avot as a congregation. I believe these words apply to us as a congregation as well as to each of us as individuals.

If I am not for me, who will be? ... at NHS, we do and must take care of ourselves first. Our Core Values reflect this belief in the importance of strengthening our own synagogue community:

- We are committed to doing everything we can to meet our members' needs.
- We value congregational unity, work proactively to achieve it, and treat our fellow members and staff with respect.
- The congregation values full inclusion, and encourages the participation of all its members in all aspects of congregational life including decision making.

At NHS each of our members count... We are small enough for each of us, including our children, to get involved, to feel welcome and connected, yet we are large enough to provide award winning programming. Some members expressed concern that in planning our relocation ... we would lose our focus, that our programming and service to members would suffer. Our programming book, Transitions: Past, Present and Future shows that nothing could be farther from the truth... And, in fact, we've won 11 more Schechter awards since we began our building project.

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This is truly a time of transition. Last year at this time we had just dedicated our property on Fields-Ertel. Today, our building is going up before our eyes – if you haven't looked at them yet, see the photos in the lobby that Henry Fenichel took... And... we have good

news... we have two parties interested in purchasing this facility.

If I am not for me, who will be?

Unlike some other congregations, we do not use the High Holy Days for appeals for Israeli bonds, JNF or other important Jewish communal funds. Instead, on Rosh Hashannah, we have a Gimulut Hasadim appeal to assure we have. And on Yom Kippur, we conduct our annual appeal that currently funds 47% of our operating budget.

If I am for myself alone, what am I?

This statement also epitomizes the core values of NHS. Our congregation and professional staff actively support Israel, the Jewish community of Cincinnati, and the Jewish community worldwide. NHS members have developed a reputation for high-levels of participation in Jewish Community fundraisers and events. And, our support of Israel in word and deed is enormous. We are committed to social action. Our Gemilut-Hasadim/social action committee has doubled our involvement with the Over-the-Rhine Soup kitchen, for example.

If not now, when?

Long ago, our sages said, "Do not rely on miracles." More recently, Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first president said, "Miracles sometimes occur but one has to work terribly hard for them."

As you know, our dues structure is not based on a percentage of ones income. We welcome members even when they cannot afford dues. In fact, over a quarter of our membership is on reduced dues. Our Yom Kippur Appeal, as distinct from fixed dues, is the opportunity for each of us to contribute to our synagogue community in a flexible manner, in line with our individual ability to give.

I am not going to itemize expenses. You already know we have costs and we do our best to contain and control them. You know that last year, in order to contain costs, we cut back on the hours of our employees, and with great fiscal oversight on the part of Phyllis Shubs, we were able to substantially cut maintenance and supply costs

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Thank you. G'mar hatima tova

Sonia Milrod
Cincinnati, Ohio

A young woman went to her mother and told her that her life was too hard.

She was tired of struggling to overcome one obstacle after another.

She did not know how she was going to make it.

She wanted to give up.

Her mother took her to the kitchen.

She filled three pots with water.

In the first, she placed carrots,

in the second she placed eggs

and the last she placed ground coffee beans.

They sat quietly and watched them boil.

After twenty minutes she turned off the burners.

She fished out the carrot and placed them in a bowl.

She pulled out the eggs and placed them in a bowl.

Then she ladled out the coffee and placed it in a bowl.

Turning to her daughter, she asked,

"Tell me: what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied.

Her mother asked her to feel the carrots.

She did and noticed they were soft.

The mother then asked her to take an egg and break it.

After cracking through the shell, she observed that it was hard-boiled.

Finally her mother asked her to sip the coffee.

She did, taking in its warmth and richness.

“Okay mom, what's the point?”

Her mother explained that each had faced the same adversity—

boiling water—

but each reacted differently.

The carrot went in strong and hard but after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its delicate interior. But, after experiencing boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. While they too sat in boiling water, **they changed the water.**

"Which are **you**?" she asked her daughter.

"When adversity knocks on your door, how do **you** respond?

Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Ask yourself this: Which am I?

Am I the carrot that seems strong until I face pain or adversity, when I lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a fluid spirit, a malleable heart, and becomes hardened and tough on the inside as external pressures change me forever?

Or am I like the coffee bean? In spite of its situation, the bean improves the hot water.

If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you.

This hasn't been an easy year. For some, family and personal issues have been challenging, for many the Massachusetts economy has forced us to reevaluate priorities. Vicious attacks have wounded our national pride and as a nation we struggle with the costly pursuit of our right to live free from terror.

In addition, as Jews, we face growing anti-Semitism, fundamentalist extremism, and continuing—I'm afraid to say escalating— and devastating violence in Israel.

So what are we? Carrots? Do we sit back and let it happen? Stew in our own juice? Are we eggs? Do we become hardened even as world tensions flare and hatred boils over in the world which for better or worse is entrusted in our hands?

Or are we coffee beans? Working to change the very forces that threaten our right to be free and to be Jews.

We have a right to be free and to be Jews.

How do we change the situation around us? It's simple really. We learn what to do and then we do it.

At Temple Israel, we're changing the water.

How? Learning and doing goes on here every single day.

We are blessed to be learning from the very best teachers. Our Clergy are committed to living, loving and learning Torah, and they continue to teach and inspire us to do the same.

Rabbi Starr brings his depth of knowledge and understanding to the community by teaching many of our most successful classes. He brings his depth of kindness and unwavering commitment to Jewish ideals by serving on the Sharon Youth Coalition, The District Attorney Council of Teen Issues, Sharon Clergy Association, Mass Board of Rabbis, where he has the enviable title of Immediate Past President.

Rabbi Creditor has become an integral part of the fabric of this community-weaving his passion and compassion with his ability to make good and beautiful things happen in many Jewish and communal settings that reach far beyond Boston.

Cantor Dress is president of the Regional Cantor's Assembly, as well as the president of operation mazal tov-a program that helps disabled Israeli children become b'nai mitzvah. He's also been invited to accompany a group of Ethiopian olim as they begin a new life in Israel.

Our Hebrew School has been honored with an award for a superior curriculum and our Nursery School was selected to be the model nursery school for a movie produced by the Bureau of Jewish Education.

Our inspired Youth Director created a model "Youth Community" that will become the often-imitated paradigm of Youth education and involvement in the future.

Temple Israel **will** continue to make a difference—

Temple Israel **must** continue to make a difference—

The Administration and the Board will work to continue to do what we do that makes us a respected leader in Jewish life and learning not just here in Boston but in the American Conservative movement.

Look around. This is not an accident, and we shouldn't take it for granted. We are special, and can only continue to be special if we are prepared to **face our challenges**. As an institution, our biggest challenge next year, and in the long term, is going to be

meeting our financial obligations. Simply put, we face escalating costs, but have no escalating sources of revenue.

We are addressing this issue long-term by the creation of the Rabbi's Circle, a group of visionaries who will put Temple Israel in his or her estate plan. The goal is to have other sources of revenue besides dues and High Holy Day appeal income to offset all of our expenses.

We're looking for future thinking individuals to add their names to the temporary piece hung in the Lang Galleria.

We believe that this endowment program will help ensure that we can meet our financial obligations in the years to come.

As far as meeting our financial obligations this year, we have **dues** and we **have this annual appeal**.

To those of you who have pledged already—and let me say that there are a record number of you this year—thank you sincerely.

To those who are turning the tabs on the appeal card in front of you now, thank you very much.

And to those of you who don't think you can make a difference: Just as we recognize T'shuvah, literally a return, as the crux of our high holy day liturgy, know that by returning this card to an usher with a tab turned, you've made the connection—learning and doing—helping to make this world a better place.

If you **still** think I'm not talking to you, I'll close with a story:

In a great winemaking town in medieval Europe came word that the grand rebbe was coming the following year. They decided to collect the best of each vintner's production every week before the Sabbath. They fashioned a great vat and a sturdy set of steps leading to the top of the vat. Each week every vintner would pour a goatskin flask—full of his wine into the vat.

One guy, whose name is not important and whose wine wasn't the best nor the worst, decided that he could fill his skin with water—and no one would know. So each week he would take his bow, and at the end of a year, the grand rebbe came.

He ascended the steps and with a crystal goblet created for this occasion, he scooped the goblet into the vat and held the glass high over his head for all to see. And there gleaming in the sun was a crystal clear glass of water.

Every contribution matters.

We have a goal we need to reach today. We want to fill our vat with wine, but we're not there yet.

We can look at this a few different ways:

Our fixed expenses are funded by our dues, and every program that involves our community—learning and doing— is funded by this campaign revenue.

Or, you could see it as dues covering 341 days of the year and revenue from this campaign covering the remaining 24.

Or you could say that 1½ hours of every day are funded today.

Can you say which hours or days we're not going to need?

More than helping us to reach our goal, understand that your contribution says that you still believe you can turn the world into a place that knows justice and works for peace.

On the pledge card there are two sets of tabs:

The first set is dollar tabs—including “other” which you may use for any amount not listed or if you'd like us to call you about adding your name to the Rabbi's Circle. If you can give at a named level, please do. If you can help with a pledge of \$18, know that that is a sustaining gift that will make a difference.

The second set of tabs is the action and learning tabs. **We're all in the same pot together.** The more we each know and do the more we change the water. Please turn your tabs and pass them to the aisles.

Ose shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom alenu v'al kol yisrael,
He who brings peace to his universe will bring peace to us and to all the people Israel.

From my husband Don, our boys Scott and Brian and from me, gmar hatima tova. May we all be inscribed and sealed for a year filled with love light and peace.

Karen Silberman
Temple Israel
Sharon, Massachusetts

President's Message-Kol Nidre 2003

Friends, I'd like to start my message tonight with a little story that I received on the United Synagogue President's listserv. One night the rabbi, chazzan and president of a shul were having a meeting in the shul. A thief entered the building and came upon the three of them. He said to them that since they had seen him and could now identify him, he was going to have to kill them but he would give each of them one last wish. The rabbi said that last year he had given the most wonderful sermon on Yom Kippur, a full hour and a half and he wanted to give it one last time. The chazzan said that last year he had chanted the most beautiful Kol Nidre, it also took an hour and a half; he wanted the chance to do it one more time. The thief looked at the President and asked what her last wish was. She said, kill me first!!

I share this story with you and you all laughed not because it represents what we are used to here at Kol Shalom. I would guess that there are many congregations throughout the country where people would laugh at this joke because it hits a little too close to home. But for us, it is the direct antithesis of what we are used to and all about. It points out a little of what makes us unique.

We have come a long way in less than two years and we are very unique. In two years we have grown from a few families to over 175 membership units and we continue to receive new membership applications on an ongoing basis.

I am very proud that our accomplishments in the areas of Social Action and Ritual and Worship will be acknowledged at the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism Biennial Convention at the end of this month when we will receive gold Solomon Schechter Awards in both of these areas. I don't think there is any other congregation our age that has been recognized in this manner.

Our Shabbat and chagim services just get better and better and more of you have become regulars. Congregations much larger than we are envious of the wonderful participation, the ruach and attendance we get at our services.

Our USYers continue to win awards and come up with creative programming. That will only get better this year with our super new advisor, Anna Robinowitz. We are pleased that we also have a fantastic new Kadima advisor, Liz Rutzick, who has already planned some wonderful activities for our 6th through 8th graders. Please, if you have children in that age range, encourage them to participate.

We have also expanded our Talmud Torah so we now offer classes for kindergarteners through 12th graders. There is no doubt in my mind that we are building a school of excellence, one that we not only can be proud of but one that will instill a love of Judaism into our children.

I am also pleased that last year we had the highest percentage of our members join MERCAZ, the Zionist arm of the Conservative Movement, of any congregation in the country. We have fifteen new members this year. If you did not join or renew when you sent in your dues, it is still not too late to do so. There are forms on the table as well as in the United Synagogue Review that you received at your home.

With all of these accomplishments we also have some very big challenges. Our Founders Fund has enabled us to hire an outstanding professional staff, again something that a congregation our size cannot normally do. Since we have carefully watched our expenses, our Founders Fund will last longer than anticipated. However, we need to start replacing those funds with other fundraising. That is why we started the Annual Appeal this year. It is not too late for you to contribute to the Annual Appeal. If you have not done so yet I urge you to do so right after the holiday.

Over the summer the Boards of Directors and Trustees met to start trying to redefine a vision for Kol Shalom. This was just the start of an ongoing process and one which will involve all of you. We visualized the perfect synagogue and tried to define those characteristics that make it perfect. It won't come as much of a surprise that we felt that one of our core principles was that we are a caring community. We all agreed that one of our challenges will be to maintain this caring community as we grow. As a congregation

we take the concept of caring community and apply it to the wider community with our large number of social action projects.

We also saw ourselves as a learning community. The adults in our community set a wonderful example for our children taking on the challenge of learning how to read torah, chant a haftorah, give divrei torah, or learn special holiday nusach to lead shacharit or psukei d'zimra on the High Holidays. I am thrilled at the number of adults who have decided to join the rabbi's adult bar/bat mitzvah class. It is not too late to join if you have not already done so. In many ways our image of the perfect synagogue fit what we have at Kol Shalom. One part of the vision though was that of a beautiful facility.

Creating that part of our vision is going to be our biggest challenge. We are fortunate to be able to use the JCC and have the luxury of time to carefully find the right location and plan our future. As we grow though, we will begin to find that the JCC does not meet our needs. We are also constrained in some of the programming that we would like to do while we are at the JCC. Our own building would give us more flexibility. Further, our school would also benefit from having its own location. The Board of Directors appointed a Building Committee under the able leadership of Dan Simpkins. In order to gather data to determine what our options are they have been looking at churches, schools, other types of buildings, and land in the Bethesda area. What they have found is that there is not very much available and what is available is very expensive. The process of finding a permanent location is not going to be an easy one. At the same time they are looking at options for interim solutions, perhaps a place that we could rent that would be ours. Again, there are not a lot of options and what is available is expensive. At this point, we have no idea how long it will take us to find either a suitable interim option or a permanent location. What is clear is that this is not going to be easy or inexpensive.

In an effort to give the committee the ability to act if a miracle occurred and something perfect presented itself, we notified you of an October 21st congregational meeting. We were overly optimistic in what we could accomplish. I must ask forgiveness from the people who would have had to make presentations at that meeting. I did not clear the

date with all of them and we now find that date is not a good one. In addition, we underestimated how much time it would take to gather all the data we need to give you a thorough presentation. We want to be able to tell you what we think land will cost, what it will cost to build a building, and what the impact will be on our budget if we have a building to run and maintain. We also need to develop similar data for an interim facility. We then need to develop a plan of how we are going to pay for whatever we buy or rent. In order to develop the information that will be presented, we will not have a meeting on October 21st. The meeting is being rescheduled to November 25th. That meeting will be an informational meeting. It will be followed up with a survey to give you the opportunity to voice your opinions in a non-public forum. There will then be another meeting in January at which time there will be items the congregation will vote upon.

Two Sundays ago Tom Friedman in his column in the Times said that he was an optimist, that he was told that the reason he is an optimist is because he is short and only sees that part of the glass that is half full. Well Tom, I am even shorter than you are so I guess I can also qualify as an optimist. When I look at what we have accomplished in a brief time, I know that the glass is more than half full, that we will continue to grow and thrive and eventually will have a place to call our own.

But, as Pirkei Avot states in chapter 2, verse 21, "lo alecha hamlacha ligmor v'lo atah ben chorine leebatel meemenah - You are not obliged to finish the task, neither are you free to neglect it". That means all of you. In order for us to succeed we need all of you to contribute your time, energy, and money. G'mar Chatimah Tova. May you all be inscribed and sealed for a good year.

Marilyn Wind
Kol Shalom
North Bethesda, MD

Kol Nidre Address

Mah Nishtanah HaLailah HaZeh, MiCol Ha Laylot?"

Yes, I know. The question comes straight from our Haggadah. And it is generally associated, of course, with Pesach, with Passover.

And yet, as I thought about my comments tonight, I couldn't escape coming back to that question.

"Why is this night different from all other nights?"

Just what is it about Kol Nidre?

-What causes the air of excitement, and awe, and anticipation to descend upon us as we eat our final meal before the fast, racing the clock as the hour of Kol Nidre approaches?

-And what is it that propels Jews all over the world to the synagogue on this night, coming in droves as on no other night of the year?

Is it the Kol Nidre prayer itself, I thought? Well..to be candid, it is actually a bit arcane..this legal declaration about dissolution of vows. And there are so many other prayers in our High Holiday Liturgy that seem to touch us more directly-

-Unetaneh Tokef, for example, with its sobering description, literal or otherwise, of judgments pending - who shall live and who shall not.

-Or Adam YeSodo, reflecting on how we are like passing shadows, a brief dream in God's eternal universe.

Then I thought, well, if not the words, then maybe Kol Nidre calls to us in a special way because of the melody...that haunting and plaintive tune that has captured the attention of recording artists ranging from the great Cantor Moishe Kossivitsky to Perry Como. And yet, here again, there are so many tunes in our High Holiday Liturgy that are also beautiful and beguiling...like the Yontif Aleinu, Hinneni, Avinu Malkenu, and others.

So- what is it about Kol Nidre ?

Stymied, I decided to turn to that ancient and comprehensive repository of Jewish commentary- the Internet!

And there, tucked away online, I stumbled across a nugget ... a gem. A gem in the form of an essay by one Rachel Gurwitz, entitled, "The Impact of Judaism on My Life" written in September 1998 (which, by the way, is ancient by Internet standards!).

Now Rachel Gurwitz is no one that you or I would or should know. I have since learned that in 1998, when Rachel presented this essay as part of a Yom Kippur symposium, she was President of the Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El, a 1250 member Reform synagogue in San Antonio, Texas.

I want to read to you two paragraphs, where Rachel discusses the impact of Judaism on her. She writes,

“ I tried to pinpoint my very earliest Jewish memory. The oldest one I can remember was as a small child of three or four years old. My grandfather had helped to create a Conservative congregation in the tiny town of Manchester, Vermont, and every year for the High Holidays, he served as Cantor. We would all trek to Vermont from New York. I recall getting restless during the long service...so I wandered up to the *bimah* and started crawling around under my grandfather’s feet. He was singing “*Kol Nidre*” at the time and certainly could not stop to usher me back down to my parents.

I also remember sitting on the floor playing with the fringe of his *tallis*, mesmerized by his beautiful voice. I do not truly know how long I was there. However long it might have been, I am sure that I had never sat still so long. To this day I am extremely moved by the singing of “*Kol Nidre*” and I have no doubt that my love for the melody and music in general has its roots in that day. I have kept (my grandfather’s) *tallis* for the memories it holds and the scent of him which still clings to it.”

Dear friends...I believe that my Internet correspondent, Rachel Gurwitz, hit the proverbial nail on the head.

Kol Nidre is special because it evokes in us the memories of places and times past. It brings back recollections of loved ones, both near and departed. It transports us to our roots and where we come from. You know, the singer/songwriter John Denver once sang “Country roads take me home.” Well, for us...Kol Nidre takes *us* home.

Like Rachel Gurwitz, we all have different roots.

My home was not Vermont or San Antonio, but Brooklyn, New York- the Seaview Jewish Center. And there, on Yom Kippur, I remember that my father would always cry when we came to the line in the Shema Koleinu prayer:



“Dear God- Cast us not away when we are old, when our strength is gone do not abandon us.”

“Why are you crying, Dad...you’re not old?” I asked him. And he said he was crying because this was when his father, *Zichrono L’Vracha*, may his memory be for a blessing...when his father would cry.

I know that for many of you sitting here tonight, for you or your families home was Newark, New Jersey....so many made that particular pilgrimage from Europe to Newark to suburbia. For Elaine and Sam Halper, for example, home was the Mercer Street Shul, and the Chevra Tillim on Prince Street. Elaine recalls that the door of the Mercer Street

Shul was always kept open for Kol Nidre, so that all who passed by and heard the *davening*, the praying, could enter. Yes- there once was a time with no synagogue tickets, and we all used to live in a pre-September 11th world, didn't we- a world with far fewer security concerns.

Some of us, of course, come from, well, further afield. For the Nejat and Nazarian families, home was the country of Iran. Lili Nejat told me that in the synagogue of her childhood in Tehran, the evening services after Kol Nidre would sometimes commence as late as 11:00 PM...because after Kol Nidre, there would first be an auctioning of the Aliyot for the following day, thus delaying the start of evening services. She also recalls that as the Torahs were marched around the sanctuary, women would drape them with scarves and linens- thought to be a way to bring blessings and good luck.

Friends...no matter where we are from, Kol Nidre takes us home. And home for all of us now is Temple Beth Shalom.

For make no mistake- a Temple, a shul- is truly a home.

In fact, it is said that a complete synagogue is three things- a Beit Kneset, a house of gathering, a Beit Midrash, a house of education, and of course, a Beit Tefillah- a house of prayer. These are three very distinct components, and yet they all begin with the same word- Beit- a house, a home.

And what a home we have here at Temple Beth Shalom...and a busy home, at that!

Our Adult Education Program has undergone a metamorphosis, and is now known as the The Temple Beth Shalom Learning Institute. This ongoing program throughout the year, with its theme of "Living Jewishly" is refocusing how we learn, what we learn, and when we learn- bringing us together as one Temple Family- on Shabbat, on the Yom Tovim, and on Sunday mornings. We just completed a wonderful series of High Holiday classes, for example, conducted by Rabbi Fellner and Cantor Koransky classes which lead us up to and put us in the proper frame of mind for these Days of Awe.

On Saturday night, November 1st, we will be presenting our major guest lecturer of the year- hearing from former US Ambassador to Israel, Ambassador Martin Indyk. Throughout the year there will be kosher cooking classes, Yoga exercise following services on Shabbat, scholars-in-residence, a new Temple Beth Shalom Book Club, the Rabbi's Film Festival and much, much more. Why not become a benefactor, and learn and grow with us?

Our newly reinvigorated Havurah program was launched on September 14th- introducing the haimishness of our Temple Family to our newest and some not-so-new members- allowing all of us to experience the informal and intimate groups that so many of you "Vatikim"- our respected veterans- have enjoyed for so many years. Join a Havurah group- make friends for life.

And of course, we look forward to the day soon, God-willing, when we get to dedicate

our new building- The Carol and Paul Miller Education Center. What a *Z'Chut*- what a privilege it will be to see our nursery school, Hebrew school, pre-teens and teenagers enjoying the benefits of this magnificent, state-of-the art edifice. Sign up your children and grandchildren for our programs, so that they too can experience their home within a home.

My friends, of course, it takes a lot to keep all of this going. After all, all homes, no matter where, need maintenance and upkeep and repair and TLC.

I have sent to all of you a Kol Nidre Appeal letter along with a response card. If you want to have programs like the Learning Institute, if you want us to continue to offer what we have always been able to offer...if you want your children and grandchildren to one day be able to say- "I remember Kol Nidre at Temple Beth Shalom in Livingston New Jersey"- the same way *we* remember our Brooklyns and Newarks and Lower East Sides and Zichron Yaakovs and Teherans and wherever we are from- if you want them to have those kind of warm and rich memories... then please, oh please, return those cards. Bring them to the receptacle available right here at the Temple or return them by mail. And please remember- the Kol Nidre Appeal Cards this year offer you the option to either make a traditional monetary donation, or to donate your time and services. WE NEED BOTH. We need financial support and we need volunteers.

You know, making an appeal and asking for donations is, to quote Tevye the Milkman, a tradition. And it's a Biblical one, at that.

Don't believe it? Well, as Casey Stengel, Zichrono L'Vracha, of blessed memory, used to say "you could look it up." (and I am sure that is the first time the words Casey Stengel and Zichrono L'Vracha have ever been used in the same sentence).

In this case, you could look it up right in the Torah. When Moses had to build the Mishkan, the Holy Tabernacle, in the desert, he made a direct appeal to the Children of Israel to contribute their jewelry and precious metal and riches to build it. *His* appeal was so successful, and the people responded with so many goods and services, that Moses had to eventually say, in Exodus, Chapter 36 verse 6:



Hey people, Stop- don't give any more, we have enough.

Chevrai- my friends- the Executive Committee of Temple Beth Shalom has standing instructions to invoke the Insanity Clause of the Temple Constitution and remove me from office if they *ever* hear me utter the phrase "Stop- don't give any more, we have enough."

I wish there was enough, but unfortunately there isn't- not enough time, not enough manpower, not enough money, if we are to continue to grow and expand and do. Please give generously, return your pledge cards and answer the calls when we follow up with

our telephone canvassing.

Two months ago, Senator Joseph Lieberman took his Presidential campaign to Westhampton out on Long Island. As he always does on the road, he went to Shabbat services with his family, in this case to the Hampton Synagogue. After services, while standing with the Synagogue President at the Kiddush, he was asked if maybe he had to be “eppes a bissel Meshugah”- just a little bit crazy- to run for President. Senator Lieberman responded- “You don’t have to be crazy to run for President of the United States, but you *absolutely* have to be crazy to be a Shul President.”

With all due respect, Senator Lieberman, I disagree.

You don’t have to be crazy to be a shul president, not when we have members like Debbie and Dave Weinstein, who six times a year, six times, organize our Soup Kitchen drive at the St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, where we help feed the needy. I guess you might say they organize everything – well, from “soup-to-nuts”- they get the volunteers, they collect the food, they orchestrate the transportation. Yasher Koach, Debbie and Dave.

You don’t have to be crazy to be a shul president, not when we have young teenage members like two of our USY officers Jessica Siskind and Danny Palestine...who on their own decided to organize, arrange, and lead this year’s Yom Kippur services for our pre-teens and teenagers. Kol HaVod to you both.

You don’t to be crazy, not with members like Kerry Goldflam, who has spent and continues to spend countless hours posting and updating our Website so that we can get information to all of you at the speed of the Internet (that’s www.templebethshalomlivingston.org, by the way). Thank you Kerry.

And how about people like Kay and Reggie Gilbert, members since 1961, who simply week in and week out grace our services on Shabbat with their singing, participation, and presence.

Chevrai- my friends...you don’t have to be crazy to be the head of such a wonderful household in such a wonderful home, not when you have such warm and caring and *haimisha* family members like all of you.

And so, to each of you, I end by wishing you not only ***Gamar Chatemah Tovah*** - a wish that we all be Inscribed and Sealed for a Good Year- This year I close by saying to all of you-

Baruchim HaBa'im L'Veitchem
Welcome Home

Stephen Montag
Temple Beth Shalom
Livingston, NJ

KOL NIDRE 5764
OCTOBER 6, 2003

In thinking about what I wanted to say tonight on this very special Kol Nidre evening, I turned to our Siddur Sim Shalom for inspiration. I turned to the opening morning prayers—Modeh Ani—a prayer I say each morning thanking God for the gift of another day—a gift I continue to consider a daily miracle. Then looking down the page I found exactly the right words

Ma tovu ohalecha Ya'akov, Mish'k'no'techa Yisrael.

How goodly are your tents, Oh Jacob, your dwellings, Oh Israel—words from Bamidbar.

These are the words I have been taught to say by Rabbi Havivi each time I enter our chapel or our sanctuary. And this year our sanctuary and, in fact, the entire complex have been completely renovated by a generous gift of money, time, and imagination. Our TENT is indeed splendid! So, again I thank every one of you who made this a reality. Many years ago I read a book that left a lasting impression with me. It is a somewhat romanticized account of life in an eastern European Jewish Village during the 19th century—life in the Shtetl, a world that exists only in memory today. The title of the book—Life is With People---tells its basic story. Being Jewish at that time and place was very different from being Jewish today—but some things do not change—and one constant is the centrality of the synagogue. The synagogue is the place where we reaffirm our identity as Jews. Our synagogue functions in many different ways to do this. It is a Beit Tefillah, a house of prayer; it is a Beit Midrash, a house of study; it is a Beit Knesset, a place of assembly, and finally it is a Beit Hamishpachah, a gathering place for family and friends. Our Synagogue is all of that. It is the place where loving couples make their vows, where babies are named, often where the boy babies are circumcised under the watchful eye of Elijah, where our children become bar/bat mitzvah, where we pray and learn and at times where we remember and grieve the loss of a loved one. Beth David is not only splendid to look at, but it is THE place we turn to in happy times and sad times, the place to be with others because LIFE REALLY IS WITH PEOPLE. It is the safe place where we go to be with others, to mark momentous occasions in our lives—for this we look to the synagogue. The motto on our doors say---**All Who Enter Are Welcome**—That motto does not distinguish between those of us who come once a year to say kaddish, or three times a year for these High Holidays or every Shabbat or every day. ALL are welcome! (I would be remiss however if I did not encourage everyone on the ladder of participation to rise to the next rung.) All are welcome to pursue their interests in prayer, and study, and gathering and with family. Beth David Synagogue is central to our Jewish life.

At Beth David we have a deeply committed Rabbi who directs our ritual life, we have a thriving Religious School led by Rabbi Pont, Adult Education, Hazak and Vatikim, special interest groups such as Talmud study, and Hebrew language, to name but a few of the learning opportunities available to us; we have regular Shabbat services Friday night and Saturday morning, special services for all of the holidays during the year, minchah/maariv services every day and a morning minyan on Thursday, Within the framework of Conservative Judaism, and to paraphrase from The Chosen, we invite

members of our congregation to come as far as they can and Beth David will come the rest of the way. We want to be here for you.

This year something very special is happening at Beth David. Every member of our congregation has been given the opportunity to fulfill the last mentioned mitzvah in the Torah, mitzvah 613. It is the commandment that every Jew must write a Torah Scroll. Writing a single letter can fulfill the commandment, because the absence of even one letter makes a scroll not kosher. This is our Matan Torah project---it is a unique learning opportunity and a fundraiser that may never happen again in our lifetime. On November 8 and 9 the project reaches a climax when our Beth David scroll will be completed. I ask, I urge every member of this congregation to participate—you can give any amount \$1, \$10, \$100, any amount is welcome. What is important now is not to let this opportunity pass by. I hope that like the Board of Trustees, which supported the Matan Torah Project at 100% that you too will participate at 100%.

I want to end tonight by letting you know what my goals are—what I hope to accomplish during the next two years—with the support of the Board and with your support.

First I hope to put in place programs that will secure the financial future of our synagogue. I have already spoken to a few of our members who have agreed to help. I want to build an endowment, which will generate sufficient funds so that a substantial part of our operating expenses will be covered. **I need your help!**

Second I want to build membership, not only to increase the total number of families, but to encourage membership participation in the Men's Club, in the Sisterhood, and in the study opportunities. I want to see and greet you at services. Emil Fackenheim, a teacher, philosopher and theologian who died last month said that after the holocaust, every Jew now has **NOT** 613 commandments, but 614. It is the commandment to be actively Jewish! **I need your help!**

Finally, I want to do whatever I can to support our wonderful Rabbi in seeking ways to bring the meaning of being Jewish through ritual and study to every member of the congregation. This is an exciting time to be a member of this congregation. **We need your help!**

Please join the Board and our Rabbis as we strive to climb to the next rung of the ladder of Jewish life!

Ma tovu ohalecha Ya'akov, Mish'k'no'techa Yisrael.

Our tent is indeed splendid and it is full of wonderful people!

Robert Miller, President
Beth David Synagogue
October 6, 2003

Kol Nidre Speech – 2003

Gut Yuntif.

Thank you, Rabbi, [for your kind remarks].

We all know that without your financial support, TRZ cannot survive. But before I ask you for that support, I want us to think together about why we're here – why the Jewish people continue to survive, and why some of them are here at synagogue tonight with their community.

I'm sure you recall Rabbi Tucker telling us on Rosh Hashanah about the man who visited the TRZ booth at the Jewish Festival, and when greeted, said he didn't really need any information. He knew everything he needed to know from driving past our building every morning. That really happened, because I was standing there when he came by.

I listened to that story, and started to think about all of us now sitting here at High Holiday services. As the Rabbi said, none of us just drove by; rather we actually got out of our cars and came inside. Why did we make that choice? Why are we all here tonight?

As I thought about it, I saw the large letters that are in front of me on our Holocaust memorial wall – Zachor – Remember. This is one of the major themes of the High Holidays. I realized that we come to synagogue because of our memories. We enter these doors, and we remember the pride in our parents' eyes when we were Bar or Bat Mitzvah-ed. We remember the sweetness of our aufrufs and weddings. We remember the faces of our children at their baby-namings. And we also remember the tears that we cried as we said kaddish for those who are gone.

The Jewish people are a nation that remembers. Honoring the greatness of Abraham and Moses, cursing the names of our enemies; this tradition goes back to the times of the Torah. We are told to remember what the Amalikes did to us when they attacked the defenseless women and children at the rear of the Israelite column. We remember that Haman planned to murder the entire Jewish community, so we curse his name on Purim.

We are fond of saying that many throughout history have tried to destroy us, and yet we are still here, and they are not. By acknowledging this, we are not portraying ourselves as victims. Rather, our story of survival is a mantra of strength. As we look to our past, we must remember the oppression as well as the glory. But I have to ask: How well do we really remember? Fewer than 50 people attended this year's Yom Hashoah memorial service.

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, we heard Rabbi Diamond mention the ironic and troubling fact that Spain and Poland, countries that were willing participants in the worst persecutions and murders of our people, are now two of the United States' closest allies. Why should that worry us? 15th century Spain is in the distant past, and even the

Holocaust happened 60 years ago. But, what we need to remember is that the world does not love us—not in the least.

The Rabbi's comment about Poland struck very close to home for me. My father was born in Hrubieszow, a small town in Poland that had 7,000 Jews before the war. By 1943, the vast majority of the Jewish population has been sent to be gassed at the Sobibor death camp. The ones who were left were in hiding – mostly women and children. They were systematically pulled out of their hiding places, not by the SS or Gestapo, but by the Polish civilian population, and then shot by the Germans. The last Jews of Hrubieszow were the hundred or so that had been used as forced laborers to clean out the Jewish homes. Toward the end of that year, they (and my father was one of them), were sent off to work as slave laborers in a series of concentration camps.

Why am I telling you this now? Because a couple of years ago, as part of researching my family history, I asked someone visiting Poland to go to this town, look up some records, and videotape some buildings. So now, I have this heart wrenching tape that shows an empty field where there was once a multi-acre Jewish cemetery and the marks still on the door posts of house after house where the mezuzot once were. But the worst thing on the tape is a scene where the camera pans down a street and we see graffiti spray-painted on a wall. The graffiti is a drawing of a person hanging on a gallows. And the person has a Star of David on their chest. This is in a town that has not had a Jewish resident, and very few Jewish visitors, for 60 years. The world does not love us....

But we needn't look that far into the past. We all know what is going on in Israel, and what the Palestinians and other Arabs would like to do to the Jews in Israel, if not worldwide. It is sometimes easy to ignore the issue here in the US, as we only hear when a major bombing happens, as it did this weekend. But I get emails from some of the United Synagogue discussion lists urging congregations to remember all of the Israeli victims of terror in their weekly services, and listing the names and circumstances of their deaths. And these emails come in all too often, sometimes several a week. I want to read you a very recent one:

“On Friday evening in Israel, a Palestinian gunman (for whose actions Islamic Jihad later claimed responsibility) knocked on the door of a home where Jews had gathered for a holiday meal, then shot and killed Eyal Yiberbaum, 27 as he opened the door. The gunman then shot and killed a seven-month old baby. Please remember these victims in your services this Shabbat”.

These are some of the things that I remember when I enter this room. This is what motivates me to stay active in the TRZ community. The memories that bring *you* here may be different, but I know we all have much in common....

We are here because we need to know that Judaism will be around for our great grandchildren, that another Holocaust or another war will not destroy us. Some of us may not believe in God, some may not believe in prayer, but we all remember that in the face of all of this history—and all of this hostility—this synagogue is the place where we

teach our children what it means to be Jewish. This synagogue is where we mark the most joyful and the most painful moments in our lives. This synagogue is also where we turn when Israel is in danger. And every year, we stand to hear the blast of the shofar, and we pray aloud that we will be back next year to hear its jolting tone one more time.

I am sure that many of you are thinking:

“I’m a member of TRZ, but I hardly come at all. I either don’t have kids in the schools, or if I do, I just drop them off and go on my way. I didn’t even have to join, but I did because I want to support the shul. I come on the High Holidays, and maybe also once or twice a year to say Kaddish. Look, I pay my dues, what more do you expect of me?”

First, I say thank you, because you didn’t just drive by, you chose to become and remain a member, and we could not function without you.

Second, I ask that you please consider all that we have to offer to you, and you to us. Read the Shofar, look at our Adult Education flyer, and see what interests you. Please take the volunteer card in front of you, and fold down the tabs for areas in which you can help – even if you only have a little time available. Increasing your involvement with TRZ will be an incredibly enriching experience for you.

Third, think again about why you are here; what personal memory makes you come back. I think you are here because you are seeking to associate yourself with something special, to instill some holiness in your life through association with this synagogue – something that you can get in very few other ways.

The world does not love us – we need to recognize that. And because of that—in spite of that—we need to be here for each other. We must devote ourselves to strengthening this community in every way we know how—for our children, for our grandchildren, and for ourselves—because everyone needs a place to celebrate; everyone needs a place to mourn; everyone needs a place to grow. TRZ is that place for you.

I would like to leave you with the same quote by Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel that I mentioned last year “Do as much as you can and then just a little more than you can. This is vital – a little more than you can”.

Attached to the seat in front of you is the Kol Nidre appeal card with tabs that you can fold down to indicate the level of your pledge. Please complete the cards, and pass them, along with the committee volunteer cards, to the ushers for collection. Our financial need is very real, and I ask you to help protect the future of TRZ by making the most generous donation that you can.

Thank you, and on behalf of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of Temple Ramat Zion, as well as myself and my family, L’Shana Tovah Tikateivu – May you be inscribed in the book of life for a good year.

Amen.

Barry Megdal
Temple Ramat Zion
Northridge, CA

ROSH HASHANAH – 2003

The great Jewish sage, Jerry Seinfeld, once noted that public speaking is people's number one fear – even more than the fear of dying. That means that most people who attend a funeral would actually rather be *in* the casket than delivering the eulogy! Not that I'm suggesting that TBS is anything but alive and vibrant, but it does bring to mind the subject of Rosh Hashanah speeches.

You see, it's not that I fear so much delivering this speech; it's the gestation process that I found troubling. In essence, it left me standing exactly where every one of my predecessors has stood: 1) telling you what a remarkable synagogue we have in TBS, 2) providing you with a preview of the upcoming exciting year that has already been planned, and, finally, 3) urging your increased commitment to making 5764 at TBS a year of fulfillment, learning, and fun.

To begin, let's take a look at how fortunate we are at TBS. I offer as evidence two examples, but believe me, there are *many* others. Consider first the morning and evening minyan. There is a dedicated group of knowledgeable men and women that attends these daily services regularly. Whether it's because they believe that a Conservative synagogue *must* conduct these services and, therefore, they feel they have to support them; or, whether they consider it a personal obligation to attend services as often as possible; or, whether they want to help those wishing to say Kaddish by providing a minyan – doesn't matter. The bottom line is that these congregants have been offering a comfortable, welcoming davening environment – often at times when we need it most – for decades. To them, I say Thank You and Yasher Koach.

My second point of TBS pride is the wonderful growth – socially and, more importantly, Jewishly – that we nurture in our Confirmation Classes. I had the immense pleasure of attending this past year's Confirmation Class graduation at Shavuot services and I was in awe of the maturity, knowledge, and commitment to Judaism that these young men and women exhibited. Allow me to read to you, with permission, excerpts from just one of the many excellent personal essays I heard then.

There's a scene in the movie Exodus when all of the members on the ship resolve to go on a hunger strike until they are allowed to pass through to Palestine... Maybe it was the music in the background, maybe it was that I was cold, or maybe it was because Paul Newman was in the scene. But what I want to believe is that I got chills from the passion in those people's eyes, and from the way they believed so strongly and reverently that they were willing to die for it... I felt an overwhelming appreciation for those people on the ship. Actually, they were not people, they were heroes. They risked their lives for a belief and their sacrifice renews my belief that Judaism is worth fighting for. And that's why I chose, yes, chose to become confirmed. And that's why I'm choosing to go on to Midrashah. And hopefully sometime to Israel. So today I confirm more than just my faith; being a part of a people, its past and future, that is what I confirm.

By the way, the author of that extraordinary paper is Toby Steinberg. Yasher Koach to you, Toby, and your entire class. Folks, this kind of thinking does not happen randomly. It requires parents who lead by example and an award-winning Religious School – and, yes, we’ve recently won another Solomon Schechter award, this time a Gold Award for Excellence in Synagogue Programming in the category of Special Education. Our dedicated and hard-working faculty deserves our heartfelt thanks – Todah Rabbah to them.

Let’s continue now with a preview of some exciting things already planned for the upcoming months. I’m delighted to report that TBS will once again be partnering with the Festival of Arts, Books, and Culture to host a wonderful event: Mandy Patinkin will perform his “Mamaloshen Show” at TBS on Sunday evening, November 9 to open the Festival. If you’ve never seen him in concert, you’re in for a treat.

We have many exciting programs of our own in the works, including a Family Shabbat Retreat in October, Breakfast with the Rabbis on November 2nd, the Pre-School Registration Event – previously featuring Clifford, Bob the Builder, and Dora the Explorer – where over *600 people* will enjoy crafts, games, and food while meeting this year’s guest character, and, starting on November 1st, a continuation of Family Shabbat Services and Luncheons comprising interactive learning, family participation, and skits.

As always, Sisterhood and Men’s Club will have full calendars, including fascinating speakers at Breakfasts and evening Events. Of particular note will be a fabulous raffle run by the Men’s Club, offering a limo ride to club box seats at the Linc to see the Eagles, and a new and intriguing Sisterhood Event – Esther’s Night Out – a true “Ladies Night Out”, consisting of motivating and stimulating sessions focused on the mind, body, and spirit.

With 45 teachers and 550 students, you can expect that this year will be non-stop activity in our Religious School. We now offer an Enrichment Program for students who desire additional in-depth material and a special track for Israeli children who have moved to our community. Furthermore, Special Programs will be added at each Elementary grade level, including craft projects, cooking, and field trips. In the High School, we’ll be creating new, informal educational experiences designed to foster friendships and build relationships – for example, each grade will be enjoying a Breakfast Program with Rabbi Levenson on Sunday mornings throughout the year. And, after a three-year absence, we’re taking the Confirmation class to Israel this December. Meanwhile, the upcoming year looks great for the Pre-School. We’ve added new equipment to the Brown Pre-School Play Area, and will continue to do so, our Mommy/Daddy and Me classes and Parent Seminars are now held in the Green Center for Jewish Learning, and we have a full slate of supplemental programs including music, gym, and – new this year – an on-staff computer teacher. Lastly, our Camp Keshet had a wonderful summer and was a great success.

Speaking of the Green Center, it continues to provide a first-class environment in which to learn and build community. In particular, the Computer Lab is now fully operational and is being used by everyone, from pre-school through adults.

And speaking of successes, Mitzvah day was a wonderful event this year once again. We had *750 people* participating in Social Action projects throughout the synagogue and at off-site locales such as the New Visions Community Center in Camden and the Voorhees Pediatric Facility. Todah Rabbah to Sam Gidding, a relatively new member, who initiated and nurtured Mitzvah day and again so ably chaired the event. Mark your calendars: our third annual Mitzvah day is May 2, 2004.

One of my goals this year will be to increase the congregation's awareness of our TBS website, www.tbsonline.org, so that it becomes the first place you go to for information concerning the synagogue. Accordingly, we are introducing a new look to our website to make it your vehicle for knowing what is going on at TBS, as well as around the Jewish community and Israel.

At TBS we also look far beyond next year and a perfect example of that is our Endowment Committee. It has been very active developing and managing our Endowment Funds: providing for new programming, awarding scholarships to our BEST graduates, and supporting our wonderful choir. Your suggestions for new programs are always welcome. The growth of a permanent Endowment Fund is essential to the creation of a strong foundation for the future of TBS.

Others at TBS are helping to shape our future, too. We have a new Fund at TBS, the Stanley Ravitz Act of Kindness Fund. Set up by Doris Ravitz, it's a meaningful living memorial that reflects the personal touch that Stanley employed, helping people in need, quietly and privately. This Fund has already begun to do its work and we are all very thankful.

And, finally, the really big news: I am proud, and very excited, to announce that on Sunday evening, March 28, 2004 TBS will be hosting the twice-elected former Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres. The winner of the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize, Mr. Peres has dedicated his entire adult life to the formation of his country and the realization of peace between Israel and her neighbors. In his speeches, Mr. Peres offers the historic story of the birth of Israel and the dramatic events that have comprised its first fifty-five years. He shares with a statesmen's confidence and experience the burdens he faced as Prime Minister and predicts the future for his country and the Middle East. Mr. Peres' appearance marks the beginning of an exciting new Speakers Series at TBS, bringing you influential, seminal thinkers that help shape our world.

My third and final major topic today deals with you and your relationship to the synagogue. In the past, whenever I argued that you would derive far more from your participation at TBS than you put in, I made the assumption that, if you first volunteered, one of the by-products of your efforts would be the creation of a sense of community for you and your family. Recently, however, it has occurred to me that there is a completely

different way to look at this dynamic: if you *first* feel a sense of community at TBS, you will naturally want to become involved so as to perpetuate and enhance a tradition that has become important to you. Therefore, at least in this speech, I am NOT urging you to volunteer for anything! Instead, in the coming year, take advantage of the many opportunities that TBS affords you and your family to join a caring, generous, and welcoming community – really an extended family – and I believe – and perhaps I shouldn't tell you this – you will eventually demand a role in the synagogue's operation.

As you know, a family is always there for you, in good times and bad. If possible, my children's B'nai Mitzvot were made even more exhilarating because it was important for us to share these milestone events with our TBS family. On the other hand, after losing parents and, this year, a dear friend, we've experienced difficult times. The support we've received from our TBS mispoche, however, has helped greatly in dealing with the pain. We will be there for each one of you, as well – in happy times and in sad. That's what families do.

As a member of TBS' family, I have been blessed with several personal, goose bump-creating experiences, including the following: watching the Confirmation Class leave for Israel and then welcoming them back at Friday night services; my children's B'nai Mitzvot; seeing Rabbi Lewis dance with Rabbi Yank Rosenberg at a luncheon during the latter's Scholar-in-Residency; attending services when 9 and 10 year-olds read Torah; hearing "That" sermon on missed opportunities once and, *incredibly*, brought back by popular demand, a second time; participating in Mitzvah Day at New Visions; and, of course, the Torah March into our beautiful new synagogue in January, 1989. I'm certain that you have your own unique, favorite TBS memories. I encourage you to become a goose bump-creating member of TBS: join or form a Chavurah; start a Shabbat dinner group; go to a Men's Club Breakfast or a Sisterhood event; take an Adult Education course; attend Shabbat services; join the choir; golf; play softball; attend Morning Minyan. We'll be waiting for you.

In conclusion, I would like to briefly quote from a story called the "Magic of Kol Nidre" by Cantor Bruce Siegel. In it a grandfather explains to his grandson why he thinks Kol Nidre is sung three times. "The first time it is sung very softly for our ancestors, for our fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers, all those who have come before us and whom we have loved. For those we hold in our memories, a soft Kol Nidre will do. The second time it is sung a little louder. This time it is for you and me. Not too softly, because some of us don't hear as well as others, but not too loudly either, for those whose hearing is sharp. The final time, the cantor sings Kol Nidre as loudly as he can so that your children and your grandchildren and all the children yet to be born can hear it. That is the magic of Kol Nidre." And *that* is the beauty of Judaism and the hope of this synagogue. L'dor v'dor. From generation to generation.

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors of TBS, Janet, Julie, Jeff and I wish you a Shabbat Shalom and Shanah Tovah – may you enjoy a healthy, fulfilling, and productive year and may all of us be inscribed and sealed in the book of life. Amen.

Art Simons
Temple Beth Sholom
Cherry Hill, NJ

Yom Kippur 2003

Our lives, it's been said, are a series of making choices. Most, when we analyze them, are easy; some are not.

As Jews, we know that we are to choose Life over Death; Hope over Despair; and, despite those who may foolishly or naively disagree, and especially in view of the tragic events in Israel this past Saturday, we always choose Peace over War.

But, even these "prescribed choices" are not always so simple as they may seem. For instance, doesn't life consist more of simply drawing breath? Do we not have to consider the quality of life? Do we not also want to thrive, to prosper? To reach our full potential?

Now, today, we will choose, if we haven't done so already, to make a commitment to Agudath Israel –Etz Ahayem. That much is simple? Do any of us really need help or guidance in either making that decision or the extent of that commitment?

I, for one, certainly hope so. It is my job to stand up here, as it has been the job of my predecessors, to help you, to convince you, to thoroughly re-examine what is certainly a most serious obligation to your *schul*.

It is common on Yom Kippur for the President to relate to you, why it is that your synagogue needs you. Today, however, I'd like to spend a little time discussing just one reason that you need Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem.

Sure, you need the schul for life-cycle events. That much is obvious and requires no elaboration. But, perhaps, just perhaps, there's another reason, which we don't often consider.

Hopefully, I can make my point by telling y'all a story – a TRUE story – which involves one of our young adults; and exemplifies, to me, why Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem must continue to thrive.

This... KID, really... is known to many of you, having 'come up' in our Sunday and Hebrew schools, and having celebrated some of the aforementioned life-cycle events right here in this building. But, the episode I'm about to describe did not occur on these premises. Rather the lessons learned from you were transported and implemented out there, 'in the REAL WORLD!'

At the time, this child was enrolled in a private school -- not exactly the wellspring of diversity and tolerance, thereof. During, or prior to, class instruction, while several students were engaged in shooting spitballs or tossing crumpled up pieces of paper at one another, one boy was hit in the back of the head with one of these harmless missiles. Well, this young man turned around and verbally attacked the young lady he thought guilty, with a particularly loathsome racist remark -- referring to the color of her skin and a certain anatomical feature. Needless to say, the horseplay came to an abrupt end.

I suppose that it would natural – normal, really – to simply allow the matter to pass -- Youthful impulsiveness, you know. Not so, for our Agudath-Etz child. This was not about to slide – to be swept under the rug, as it were.

Later that evening, the young man guilty of the racist remark, received a phone call from our student and another gutsy friend. In no uncertain terms, it was made clear that that kind of bullshit was not going to happen at their school – not on their watch!!

If the story were to end now, I believe it would be instructive, a lesson learned right here – from you – is implemented and the world is a little better place. But it does not end here.

You see, the Jewish teenager never told her or his parents – never. Not a word about the incident was ever spoken between parent and child. Well, I can say with a reasonable degree of certainty to this young person that TODAY, your parents are proud of you, as, I believe, is the entire congregation. Your secret is out – I’ve outed you.

The phone call – the courage it took to make that phone call – was not made for show; was not made for some self-righteous, ‘holier-than-thou’ objective. It was not made to proclaim anything or pay homage to the power, the might and the glory of G-d. Rather, in the ultimate – in the most sincere – meaning of *mitzvah*,

IT WAS SIMPLY THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

A perceived wrong needed to be corrected, and it was.

So, ladies and gentlemen, that, in my humble opinion, is why you need to commit today to the continued strength, vibrancy and vitality of Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem synagogue.

I need Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem, you need Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem, the whole damn world needs Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem. We need to ensure that more kids like the one about whom I have spoken today continue to be instructed, continue to learn the REALLY important lessons in life.

Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem has served us well for a combined 190+ years. We have been here – YOU have been here – for Tillie Finklestein and Dr. Morris Capouya, two of our most senior members. And we WILL be here for William Paul Handmacher, our youngest member. That much is certain.

WE AIN'T GOING NOWHERE !!!

So, I implore you today to examine, or re-examine, your commitment to Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem.

My friends, just as we MUST choose: LIFE and

HOPE and

PEACE

So, too, must we choose

Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem

GOOD YONTIF

I suppose it's time to pass your envelopes to the aisles.

Pat Lavin

Agudath Israel – Etz Ahayem

Montgomery, AL

My dear friends, the members and guests of Kol Ami-

Good yom tov.

If you thumb through our High Holiday prayer book, you will find just two places where some of the words are in all capital letters. They are at the sounding of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah and at a prayer called the *Unatana Tokef*, which we read during the afternoon of both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This prayer delivers a central theme of the High Holidays. It begins by saying that God inscribes on Rosh Hashanah and seals on Yom Kippur our fate for the coming year: "Who shall live and who shall die... Who shall perish by fire and who by water... Who shall be at ease and who oppressed....." Then the prayer goes on in the highlighted letters "But teshuvah (repentance), tefilah (prayer) and tzedakah avert God's severe decree, (or in the words of Rabbi Hoffman take the sting out of God's severe decree.)" Again, "but, repentance, prayer and tzedakah take the sting out of God's severe decree." Throughout these services we have had many opportunities to repent. Throughout these services we have had many opportunities to pray. Now is the time for tzedakah.

But what is tzedakah? Many translate it incompletely as charity. But, the rabbis teach us that the nature of tzedakah is different from the idea of charity. The word "charity" comes from the Latin word for heart, "caritas." Charity is a voluntary act motivated by feeling another's pain and finding the desire to help. The word "tzedakah" comes from the Hebrew root "zadek" meaning righteousness, justice or fairness. In Judaism, giving to charity is not viewed as a generous, magnanimous act; it is simply an act of justice and righteousness, the performance of a duty.

Because of the call for tzedakah it is traditional at most congregations for the president of the Congregation to make a Yom Kippur appeal for the synagogue, Israel, or another worthy cause. This year our members generously responded to appeals to purchase an ambulance for Israel, to Adopt-a-family in Israel and to support the Lighthouse Shelter for the homeless here in Annapolis. And we will continue to look to support Israel and other causes in the months ahead.

Today the appeal for tzedakah is focused on the needs of Congregation Kol Ami. As I wrote in my letter that most of you received this past week, except for when we reconstructed this building, we have never had a greater need for funds than we have today.

When we took on the expense of our first full-time rabbi five years ago, we were fortunate enough to receive a major, multi-year donation and a spurt of new members that combined to produce balanced budgets.

But, in our last fiscal year, which ended in May, we did not have the benefit of that donation, economic hardship forced a number of members to go on reduced dues, our fundraising events produced less revenue than projected, and we failed to meet our

membership targets. As a result we encountered our first substantial deficit and ended up spending approximately \$13,000 more than we took in.

The current fiscal year could be just as bad, if not worse. In addition to everything else, our building is now showing signs of aging. It needs a new paint job, new tiling, refurbishing of classrooms, and will soon need a new roof, among many other things. We expect to have to spend \$30,000 - \$40,000 on the building over the next five years, if not sooner.

Our current fiscal year is the first one in which the Congregation approved a deficit budget. Even this budget includes the expectation of \$32,500 of donation income. Thus, even our deficit budget calls for a contribution of an average of \$325 from our 100 member families. To both meet this expectation and plug the deficit we would need total donations or other fundraising of \$43,500 or \$435 per member family.

I recognize that not everyone is in a position to give the average needed. As a result of the poor economy some of us are already on reduced dues or are straining just to pay our dues. That is why the fair share for those of us who can afford it is more than the average. That is why the members of the Kol Ami Board of Governors have already pledged more than \$10,000. But even \$10,000 is far short of the \$43,500 gap that we need to make up by donations and additional fundraising.

That is why we each need to give the most that we possibly can, including those of us who are on reduced dues and those of us who are well off. Keep in mind that the traditional Jew is duty-bound to give 10% of his or her income for tzedakah.

For those of us who cannot afford to make a large financial contribution, as well for those of us who are doing so, there are additional ways to contribute to the Kol Ami.

- One way is to assist in increasing our membership. Please encourage your friends to join us in Kol Ami activities and work with Larry Snyder, our membership chairman, in recruiting them as members.
- Another way to help Kol Ami is by volunteering your time. That time can be used for what you feel to be most important, whether it is helping with the building, working in the office, helping with the school, sponsoring an oneg, organizing a social or cultural event, directing the parking of cars, you name it. Hopefully, it can involve working with others in the Congregation in a social setting, making it an enjoyable mitzvah. Note that on the pledge cards given to at the door, you have the opportunity to contribute 18 hours of volunteer time. Eighteen hours amounts to only 3 minutes per day or 90 minutes per month.
- What we can use most is Congregants who will step forward and agree to help to coordinate a fundraising event. In the past our successful events have included goods and services auctions, art auctions, gift wrapping. Perhaps you have an idea for a successful fundraising event. We need to do more events of this nature and we need volunteers to help coordinate them.

Each of you should have received a card with your name on it. Since we cannot write today, each card has two sticky arrows. Please take out your cards and point one arrow to the dollar amount on top that you would like to contribute and the other toward the manner in which you would like to volunteer shown on the bottom. Keep in mind that those making donations of \$1,000 or more are entitled to have their name engraved on a plaque on the board in the hallway, just like those who donated funds to the reconstruction of this building. In a few minutes ushers will come to pick up your pledge cards. If you need more time to consider the amount of your pledge, you may drop off your card on the table in the foyer on the way out.

Just as 13 years ago our then much Congregation met the financial need to reconstruct our building, a need that was nearly ten times as large, I am confident that we can meet the need before us today. Please be generous in meeting your duty to give tzedakah.

"L'shanah tovah tikkateyvu v'tichatemu. May you be written and sealed for a good year."

\$36	\$72	\$180	"Our Share" \$325	\$500	\$1,000	Other Amount, Contact Us
HERE IS OUR YOM KIPPUR CONTRIBUTION TO CONGREGATION KOL AMI			Name:			
Help Coordinate a Fundraising Event		Volunteer 18 Hours to Kol Ami	Help Coordinate a Fundraising Event & Volunteer 18 Hours		Other Activity, Contact Us	
\$36	\$72	\$180	"Our Share" \$325	\$500	\$1,000	Other Amount, Contact Us

Nate Betnun
 Congregation Kol Ami
 Annapolis, MD

Yom Kippur 5764

Symbols. Images.

Tonight is a night of images. It is a night of symbolism. A night to contemplate the images of our world as it is today; images that bombard our senses daily. A night for us to remember and hold on to the past. A night for us to imagine the future. Where will we be? What paths will lead us there? What was it that led us to where we are today?

Take a second now to let your mind wander to your past. What symbols that made you who you are, do you see? For me, it is my “hometown”. It is Brooklyn. The New York borough that has become the symbol of my past. The crowded streets. The noises. The smells. Growing up with my parents and brother in a one-bedroom apartment that never felt cramped. Growing up in a building teeming with other families and children. Yes, growing up in a “building”— a concept my children (when they were younger) could never quite grasp (to them, people grew up in houses; offices are in buildings). I can remember taking the train to my Bube’s apartment in Brighton Beach. Spending the entire afternoon at her kitchen table breaking green beans while listening to her stories about Lotz in Poland. It was there I learned about her mother, my namesake, Grana, who rebelled against her parents by running away to another village with the boy she loved, rather than to marry the man her parents had arranged for her to wed. Symbols. I took my Bube’s stories in. They stayed within the core of my body, my soul. My Jewish name, Grana, became a symbol of who I would become.

I see my family gathered at my Nana’s home. Mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins. A noisy crowd. My Nana’s delicious chicken soup boiling on the stove. The

aroma wafting through the house. She *did* make the best matzo balls I have ever eaten. My mother and aunts --busy talking or cooking in the kitchen. My father and uncles--dozing on the couches. While the rest of my cousins flipped baseball cards or wove stories of their neighborhood heroics, I sat with my Papa in the living room. I remember how he loved to watch “the fights”, boxing, on TV. As he watched, he told me stories. Stories of the shtetl near Kiev that was his home. Stories of the boys’ school he went to and the teachers that hit him with a stick when he misbehaved. While the rest of my family cooked, slept, or played games, I went with my Papa to Temple on the holidays. I remember marching with the other children there, carrying an Israeli flag and toy Torah on Simchat Torah. I remember being given an apple as I left Rosh Hashana services. Me and Papa. Symbols.

Tonight we recite the KI HINEY KA-CHOMER as adapted by Morris Silverman. This is a psalm filled with images.

“As clay in the hand of the potter,
Who thickens or thins it at will...

As glass in the hand of the blower,
Who shapes or melts it at will.....

As cloth in the hand of the draper,
Who drapes or twists it at will.....”

And, Silverman gives us even more.

Images. Symbols of shaping who we are....and who we can become. I've been think a lot about symbols lately. Tonight I have another symbol I would like to talk about. During this time of year we see many circles. We eat round, juicy apples dipped in honey as symbols for a sweet new year. Our challah is rounded, and sometimes filled with raisins. The roundness here symbolizing the never ending pattern of life. One year running right into the next. The circle of time.

Imagine, if you will, another round symbol....a wheel or tire. In the center is the hub. Coming out from the hub are many spokes, all heading out in contrapuntal, but opposing directions. And, then there is the actual wheel, or tire, holding all the varying spokes together.

Now, think of this image as our Temple...the Highland Park Conservative Temple and Center. The hub of our shul, the center of it all, is our Jewishness. Look around. We are all here tonight because of something very deep in each of our souls. No matter where we are-- no matter what we've done--no matter what we do every other day of the year-- tonight we share a common core. Our Judaism. Our Jewishness.

Now... what that means to each of us can be very different. And, those differences can be symbolized by the spokes of the wheel that emanate from the hub. For some of us, being Jewish may mean strict observance of Shabbat, kashrut and rituals. For some of us, being Jewish may mean buying Judaic artwork, visiting the Jewish museums, or attending a Jewish film festival. For some of us, it may mean performing acts of kindness for others. For some, it may mean eating the foods of our childhood, like kasha

vanishkes, stuffed derma, or, dare I say, tongue. For some, it means weekly attendance at Shabbat services. For some it means attending services once a year. For some it may be all, or none, of the above. Whatever our differences, they all come from the same center—or hub—our Jewishness.

All of these differences, these spokes, are held together by one thing...our wheel or tire...our Temple. It is here, at the Highland Park Conservative Temple and Center, that we can come together as one people...Klal Yisroel...together with all our differences, as one....a symbol of who we are.

Last week Rabbi Malomet spoke so movingly about the importance of a loving, beautiful home...a place to come home to. This is our home. It is up to us to bring that love and beauty here into our home. I believe that it is the many different “spokes” we each bring to the “wheel” of our Temple that makes us beautiful. And, it is the “hub” of our Jewishness that gives us the ability to love and accept all our differences.

Tonight, we think of many images and symbols. This year, come home to our “wheel”...our Temple. Bring your very own reasons for coming. Be one of our “spokes”. You share a common center...a common “hub” with the rest of us. You are a part of us. Find your own way to play a more active part of our “home”. Whether you volunteer by joining a committee, or chose to make a donation for our future, or both, you, and everything that symbolizes who you are, have a place with us. Help us create the symbols and images that will be our future.

Symbols. Images.

May G-d grant us all another year. A year of love, life, and peace. A year free of terror and violence. A year to create new images.

Gayle Brill Miller
Highland Park Conservative Temple
Highland Park, NJ

Yom Kippur Speech Oct.5, 2003

Rabbi Graber, Cantor Kepecs, Reverend Blitz, Rabbi Pappert, and Cantor Abromowitz
(where appropriate) and members of My Temple Hillel Family.

G'mar Chatimah Tova:

As we seek atonement for our sins to man and to G-d and as the book of life closes on another year, we are presented with a very special gift. Gary Rosenblatt in his weekly column in the Jewish Week said "I no longer see Yom Kippur as a burden but as an opportunity" He further stated that as he turned to the heavens he came to understand more and to appreciate the world and the people around him. That message was brought home to me a little more than a week ago, Erev Rosh Hashanah, when the cycle almost co-existed, when on the morning of Sept. 25th my Aunt Lil Stecklow, known by some of you in the synagogue as Diamond Lil passed away at almost the same hour that my granddaughter Meirav Baracha was born into this world. The sanctity and beginnings of a new life and the inevitability of death. Diamond Lil was a founder of this Temple and a lady who gave much to this and other Jewish communities and was fortunate to live a productive life for much of her more than 87 years.

I was an 11 year old kid from East New York Brooklyn when my aunt and uncle dedicated the first corner stone you see when you walk into Temple hillel; the first Nir Talmid, Eternal Light was dedicated to the memory of my maternal grandfather. I thought Valley Stream with real grass and beautiful backyards and this new Temple and community was the best thing that could happen to anyone. Little did I know or did my family expect that more than 40 years later I would become President of this Temple.

Because of what this Temple has meant to me and to my family over these many years I have become one of its most passionate advocates –especially acknowledging the virtues of this edifice. I stand for something and that is the continued success of this wonderful place.

Permit me to share with you what I have learned about the elements of a proper Temple to see how Temple Hillel measures up to the model.

A Temple is three separate entities:

1)- First the Temple is a Bet Ha-Tefilot – a house of Prayer – From 6:45AM every weekday morning to Shabbot Temple Hillel is a warm and haimish place of communal prayer where those seeking solice for a loss and those seeking companionship and friendships can daven amidst the sanctity and the solemnity of our sanctuary or Minyan Chapel. With Rabbi Graber our Cantor Kepecs and Shamos the Reverand Blitz, , we have a team in place to bring music to your ears and words to motivate and inspire your hearts and souls. We daven and talk a lot at Temple Hillel but I know that everyone is only discussing the current parsha of the week. This is not only for the High Holidays, this is available to you 24/7/365 days a year.

On this day of Atonement what better place to be then with family and congregational friends as we put all worldly issues aside and concentrate on improving our relationship with G-d and our fellow man.

For being a house of Prayer, Temple Hillel gets high grades in my book.

2) Secondly, The Temple is also a Bet ha Midrash- A house of Study...

Whether it's the Nursery School, the Tot Shabbot, the Geshaer program, Junior Congregation our award winning Hebrew School, whether its an adult Education class or our Hebrew high School we at Temple hillel place a premium on learning and studying. Come in on a given Sunday morning and you may find parents and children on a treasure hunt to identify the major artifacts of the Temple, or are attending a program run by the Hebrew School. One of the hallmarks of this Beit Ha –Midrash has for me and my family been the Hebrew high School of the 5 Towns housed for many years here at Temple hillel – committing our support for higher education. When the Hebrew hs of the 5 Towns had no place to go Rabbi Friedman didn't hesitate to bring it to Temple hillel. This year that all has changed from the school being a communal Hebrew high School as we had for so many years to one this year where each of the conservative Temples creating independent programs. I asked Rabbi Graber before he got his feet on the ground to organize a Hebrew high School Program for our shul. I didn't have to ask him twice.

For the sake of our post Bar and Bat Mitzvah teens we need to provide the opportunity of a continuum of Jewish education prior to their going off to the American college campus scene if we want to give them the best chance of remaining in the fold. The hour or two you give up for such a school is not going to be available to you later on. To that end Rabbi Graber and I are equally passionate and committed to launching a program for any number of students – be it large or small. We will work with the program to ensure its success. I urge those of you who have missed our meeting of last week to get in touch

with me or the Rabbi and to remember that your investment is small and the payoff potentially very great. And finally,

3- The Temple is a Bet ha Kneset a House of Gathering and Assembly –This place 1000 Rosedale Road is the focal point of a caring Jewish community for North Wodmere, Milbrook and the surrounding communities. Our family is welcoming about 20 new families into this House of Assembly and are looking ahead to welcoming others to join us. Ladies and gentlemen, nothing brings that home and is more satisfying to me as President then being able to help a family truly in need to maintain their membership, send their kids to our Hebrew School, or to help one of our Seniors Facing unbelievable medical burdens to maintain his or her membership.

Whether its thru our sisterhood run Food Bank, Dress for Success, or UJA –FEGS- the expanded “partners in Caring Program” we will offer many wonderful programs throughout the year including ‘Beyond the Empty Nest, First 101 Course for College Bound students, Prostate Cancer Awareness , and bereavement support groups and groups for caregivers just to name a few,

Our Mens Club through its year long support and many functions with the Lawrence House or the recent cleanup at the Bayside Cemetery in Queens where Mens Club and sisterhood and Minyanaires all jointly performed the Mitzvah of cleaning up gravesites and restoring the respect and sanctity owed to those fellow Jews resting eternally at that site shows that we are truly an assembly and a community even beyond this building.

This year has been devastating to many people in the work force and as we did many years ago we are going to run a job bank through our bulletin in which individuals can post their resumes anonymously and a potential employer member or otherwise can contact these people through our office with the member's permission, of course.

Read our Bulletin and see the many activities of our PTA and School Board, our USY and Kadema groups our wonderful membership committee that has brought us approximately 18 new families this year.

Join our Ruach Readers Club or our Book Circle and read and enjoy a discussion of a choice book of topical Jewish each month.

Come to our Men's Club breakfast next month to participate in a community effort to support the Friends of the Israel Defense Force.

As a Beit ha Knesset, ladies and gentlemen, as a place of gathering and assembly, this building is hopping with meetings and more new faces young and old involved in committees than I have seen in a long time. Temple Hillel is truly a place of Assembly and gathering. I know how hard many of our committees and subcommittees worked including but not limited to the Rabbi Selection Committee where people sometimes spent more time with us than with their own families.

In all the three aspects of the model Temple, I think Temple Hillel does well. But we can always and should always strive to be better.

On this day of Atonement, make a commitment to join us for a Shabbat as often as possible. Commit yourself to becoming one of the ten or more that are needed for each

morning or evening minyan. Make a commitment to join us on one of our many committees and arms that mean so much to the existence of our shul. We published the committees in our September bulletin – if you need another copy of the list of committee, contact any board member.

Your dues only pay a percentage of the annual costs of running this Temple. Last year we ran a major deficit in excess of \$100,000 and our finance committee projects the same deficit for this year ending in 2004. In order to meet the needs of a diverse synagogue population, Hebrew School etc, and an aging building. We can't continue indefinitely to go to our capital funds – the well, since the well will run dry. We need new and successful fund raising efforts to meet those costs.

To that end you can help yourself and your temple by joining with the over 30 new and additional patrons who joined us from the prior two years by pledging an annual monetary support; Joining our Bazaar and Chai Night Committees to create successful fund raisers, and donate goods and merchandise as you are able. Watch for the ads every week in the Shabbot Shalom and in our monthly bulletins. One can help the Temple easily by purchasing scrip which is accepted in many of our community shops and stores. Make a commitment to help the shul financially as much as you are able, all of the services and activities we sponsor, our education programs are run with large deficits. We constantly seek to identify areas for cost savings, such as our energy saving program which we worked through LIPA to replace lighting fixtures throughout the building with more energy efficient replacements, or have identified cost savings in the purchase of food and supplies for our Temple just to name a few. This summer after cutting through much bureaucratic red tape we finally received the proceeds of a \$10,000 grant we had

applied for the previous summer to defray the costs of the Temple Nursery School playground.

Our aging building and its equally aging infrastructure of systems requires larger outlays of funds each year to maintain the premises as is. Post 911 security and security alerts issued to Temples and other houses of Worship both by our Nassau County Police and Jewish organizations such as the JCC and the ADL required larger investments in security personnel as you have seen outside during these High Holidays.

Finally, as we are here to seek hashem's forgiveness, it is traditional to also seek forgiveness from one another. Realizing that sometimes my passion and zeal for this shul get the better of me, I ask forgiveness from each of you if I have done anything in any way to hurt you in this past year. as I reflect internally on my life this last year, including some disappointments, I have much to give thanks for. A baby girl that has brightened my life more than words can say, my pride in my kids, my wife who has been my best friend and sounding board and has given me the strength to take on the awesome responsibility of a job I could not imagine when I first set eyes on Temple hillel at age 11. May Hashem grant us and the people of Israel health and peace and happiness this coming year. And may we join together next year to celebrate the reaching of our goals as individuals and as participants in the life of Temple Hillel.

Steven Kline
Temple Hillel
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