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Rabbi Moshe Edelman

From: <Segalloevey@aol.com>

To: <edelman@uscj.org>

Cc: <rosen@llscj.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 07, 2003 2:23

Attach: YK2003Talk,dDC

Subject: Kol Nidrel Appeal Dear Rabbi Edelman,

I hope your holidays were as lovely as they were at Congregation Rodfei Zedek in Hyde Park. I appreciate the materials that you sent me last month and am responding to your request that in return, we send you copies of our talks.

I attach a copy of my talk to the congregation on Yom Kippur. Rabbi Gertel, very graciously, has given me prime time on the Bimah: after the Torah Service, and before his sermon and Yizkor. Yesterday's talk was very well received.

We changed the process of our appeal last year. We sent our one-page Kol Nidrei Appeal letter out on Erev Rosh Hashanah, and instituted a phonathon two nights after Rosh Hashanah. This has been successful, as you will read in my talk.

As president, I mentioned the upcoming phonathon in a few brief extemporaneous sentences during the Bimah Announcements at the end of both the first and second day of Rosh Hashanah. Then I give a talk on life at the shul on Yom Kippur which includes, at the end, a mention of the Kol Nidrei appeal. We do not do individual solicitations from the Bimah, and have not done so for the last 55 years.

Thank you again for all that is available to synagogues. We hope to make more use of the USCJ educational materials in the future.

B'shalom,

Sara Segal Loevy, President Congregation Rodfei Zedek (240) Chicago, IL 60615

10/8/03

Yom Kippur 2003

1. I want to begin by telling you two about two recent experiences here on the bimah, one as a Torah gabbai and one as a Torah reader.

First, the Torah Gabbai experience. At the beginning of September, LB read the Haftarah for Shabbat Ki Tatze. She did so on a challenge from one of her recently Bar Mitzva'd grandsons and she certainly rose to that challenge. LB, her son J. and I were standing on the bimah during the last moments of tidying up after the Torah reading and she said to J, "What if I forget a word?" J responded by saying, "Don't worry, G-d has heard these words many times before," And I said, "Don't worry. This parshah is being chanted in thousands of synagogues around the world this morning. Someone, somewhere is saying the word for you," And I was filled with the power of this universality, of knowing that what we were hearing here at Rodfei Zedek was synchronized with thousands of Jews in hundreds of synagogues around the world.

My other experience was as personal as was the first one was universal. A week after L's chanting of the Haftara, I had the honor of reading a portion from Ki Tavo... that horrifying chapter of blessings and curses and things forbidden. I had read this portion once before, so 8S I was relearning the portion, I had more time to contemplate the meaning of what I was reading. Two lines - two forbidden activities - have been the cause of much thought on my part since then, First, *arur masig g'vul ra'ahu*. Cursed be he who moves his neighbor's markers, meaning literally moving his neighbor's lot lines, and more figuratively to interfere with his livelihood and the boundaries that mark his or her general well-being. The second, *Arur masgeh b'derek*: Cursed be he who puts a stumbling block in the path of the blind. And again, more figuratively, cursed be he who makes life difficult for those in need, or with less experience, let alone those with disabilities. These two lines have been with me constantly during this

period leading up to the High Holidays, this period of contemplation and soul-searching. I have used them to guide my actions whenever possible. I have thought about them in my relations with family and friends, in my business life, and in my conduct as president of the congregation.

I have used these two experiences to consider the nature of the Torah reading experience, aided by some material sent by a friend, and the two Torah readings that followed the ones I have just discussed.

Two weeks ago, on the Shabbat when we read the Torah portions Nitzavim and Vayelech, we read the both the penultimate and ultimate mitzvot - the final proper acts of being a Jew - in the Torah. First we read that the high priests shall read the Torah to the Israelites, in its entirety, once every seven years, at the feast of Tabernacles. The high priests are to: *Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your G-d, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, who have not known, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your G-d...*

Historically, this meant that every seventh year, the Torah was to be read out loud, indicating that the public reading of the Torah predates congregational prayer. Although public Scripture reading began with Moses, for a long time there was no universally established order. Around the Maccabean period, more than two thousand years ago, the rule of consecutive annual reading became the universal practice. This means that public reading must begin where it left off the previous Sabbath morning and that the entire five books of Moses are read within the year. In addition, we believe, as Jews, that our sacred books belong to the entire community, not just a privileged few. Although our sages were responsible for its interpretation, there is no monopoly on

the study of Torah. In fact, universal religious education is one of the precepts of traditional Judaism. Historically, then, Torah reading has been an essential component of Judaism.

Then a few verses later, we read:

Write this song for yourself; teach it to the Children of Israel; put it in their mouths.

The rabbis ultimately interpreted this to mean that each Israelite write himself or herself a copy of the Torah. Dr. Ismar Schorsch, the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, reinterprets this, believing that the modern equivalent to writing a copy of the Torah is learning to chant the Torah in the synagogue according to the cantillation or trop. He reminds us that in Judaism, sacred texts are chanted rather than read aloud. Chanting is a mark of holiness, an integral part of the liturgy. Chanting slows us down; it makes us learn by memorizing and singing which is more active, less passive than merely reading. And for the congregation, the chanting slows down what we hear, with the cantillation itself providing emphasis and interpretation.

2 What does this mean for Rodfei Zedek?

It speaks to the centrality of the Torah reading to our worship at CRZ. We do a full Torah reading every week at Rodfei Zedek. We have a cadre of 20-30 lay Torah readers. We do not rely on one Torah reader, nor do we rely on a paid, professional Torah reader. We do, as do all groups, depend on one very organized and skilled Torah reader, to organize us, assign our parts, and pinch hit for us if one of us falls sick. And that talented and dedicated person is JPB.

What does that cadre of Torah Readers look like? We are women, and we are men. We are young—just post B'nai Mitzvah—we are middle-aged, and we are older. Some of us have been reading Torah since our B'nai Mitzvah many years ago, and some adults have been reading only within the last few years. And part of the Torah service includes chanting the Haftarah, and for that we also have a

substantial group of people who chant the Haftarat from their B'nai Mitzvah and other Haftarat to which they are partial.

And out of this, something particularly beautiful has happened. At many B'nai Mitzvot, parents are beginning to share the Torah reading with the child celebrating the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. And in families where an adult member is reading for the first time, children and spouses and friends share in the parshot, the readings. And individuals, and families, come back year after year to celebrate the anniversaries of B'nai Mitzvah.

In my less than long memory of the history of Rofei Zedek, an early occurrence of this was when AS and DS allowed their father, MS, to share the Torah reading for Shabbat Shirah, the song of Miriam at the crossing of the Red Sea. And they have continued to read on Shabbat Shirah, now joined by their younger sister, J, who also chose that parshah for her bat mitzvah. At LH's Bat Mitzvah, both of her parents—her mother a recent Bat Mitzvah—and L's brother read Torah with her. At DG's adult Bat Mitzvah, she asked several friends to read Torah.

This speaks to the larger issue of being inclusive, of being welcoming, of being flexible and capable of change. In a study of urban congregations of all denominations that we heard about one Shabbat, we learned that one of the characteristics of urban congregations that survive is, in fact, diversity. A diversity that welcomes and encourages a range of thought and belief within the congregation, a diversity that is capable of change and accommodation.

How does this change, this opening up, happen? It happens for two reasons. First, because we want it to happen, we will it, we choose it. Second, because we create the infrastructure to support it. How did we make this choice? Through study and debate, under the guidance of Rabbi Gertel, we

chose to become an egalitarian synagogue. We chose to open up the activity on the bimah to women as well as to men. And the women responded to this opportunity, and the men welcomed them. We willed it and it happened.

We also made three important infrastructure changes to support this decision.

First, our cantor at the time, Cantor Portner, gave a trope class for adults in which several of the current readers learned to read Torah. This is where I learned to read Torah as an adult, in gratitude to the congregation for making the decision to become an egalitarian congregation.

Second, we began to offer a wonderful Hebrew class for adults on Sunday morning, taught by RK. We began with a beginners class and the beginners became intermediates and we offered a new beginners class. And then the intermediates became advanced, and we offered more beginner and intermediate classes. With encouragement from R, many of the women students used their new knowledge of Hebrew to have adult B'nai Mitzvah. They learned trope, and they were called to the Torah and read from the Torah and read Haftarat.

And third, we changed our work with the Hoffman Religious school children. As an officer, when I began to sit on the bimah, I began to watch the children chanting from the Torah for the first time at their BM. It occurred to me that the experience might be more meaningful and less nerve wracking if they had experience reading Torah before BM. I spoke to TC, our ED and the director of the Hoffman religious school about this and we agreed that it made good sense to introduce a congregational value and a mitzvah - Torah reading - into the school. So, beginning at an early grade, our children learn Trope and begin to read a few verses at a time Junior Congregation. When they have read six times, they are given a yad, a Torah pointer. When they have read 12 times, they are given a Shofar, and at 18 times, they pick a charity to which CRZ makes a contribution in their honor. And these children, poised

and confident with this skill, read more Torah, and read with ease and understanding when they read at their own BM.

And then, one Shabbat about two years ago, an articulate eleven-year old member of the congregation who goes to Akiba Schechter, said to me, "I have a friend at Akiba Schechter who is a very good Torah reader and I bet he would like to read at Junior Congregation." And we realized we needed to extend the invitation to read Torah to our children who are educated at Akiba Schechter, and then to our children at Moadon Kol Chadash. One of our Hoffman School parents, SC, agreed to coordinate the Torah reading. So we have coordinators for the readings in both the Simon Sanctuary and Junior Congregation in the Glick Chapel. And several of our own high school and college age Hoffman School graduates coach the students.

And so we carry out these two mitzvot, placing them at the center of our service. We hear. We learn. And, hopefully, base our daily conduct on what we have learned.

3. All of these wonderful changes come with a price tag however. And you have been a generous group in support of our efforts. Last year, we focused all of our fund raising efforts for general operating support on the Kol Nidrei appeal. About 80% of the congregation participated and we raised \$70,000. This year our goal is to raise \$100,000 and to have every single congregant participate. The phonathon began in earnest last Tuesday night - in the middle of the first game of the Cubs playoffs, alas - and it is still underway. To those of you who have already given, I say thank you on behalf of the entire congregation. To those of you who have increased your gifts, a double thank you. To those of you who are thinking it over or who have yet to be called, I ask you to join your fellow congregants in responding generously to the Kol Nidrei appeal.

More than fifteen years ago, this congregation willed the change and now we ask you to support the infrastructure. Because you supported the infrastructure, people like me, who saw the inside of a Torah for the first time at our son Nathaniel's Bar Mitzvah almost fifteen years ago, have learned to read Torah. Adults have learned, our children have learned. Because you have willed the change, because you support the infrastructure, Torah happens. Please give so that Torah continues to happen here at Rodfei Zedek, extending beyond this building into the far-reaching corners of our homes and our lives.

Sara Segal Loevy, President
Congregation Rodfei Zedek
5200 S. Hyde Park Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60615
Yom Kippur 5764

An American Tourist in Tel Aviv was about to enter the impressive Mann auditorium to take in a concert by the Israeli Philharmonic. He was admiring the unique architecture, the sweeping lines of the atrium, and the modern decor throughout the building. He turned to his escort and said, "This is a beautiful building. Was it named for Thomas Mann the world famous author?" No, said his friend, it is named for Isaac Mann, from NY. Really, I never heard of him. What did he write? His friend boldly answered, "THE CHECK!"

Yom Kippur is a day of Awe and Anxiety

Throughout the High Holidays we recite the U-n'sah-neh To'kef prayer.

We envision Hashem sitting on his throne of mercy, taking the measure of each of us as we pass in judgment one by one.

As the Machzor states,

"As a Shepard Musters his sheep and causes them to pass beneath his staff, so dost Thou pass and record, count and visit, every living soul, appointing the measure of every living creatures life and decreeing its destiny. He, Hashem, determines the destiny of every creature, every one of us.

We chant on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

B'Rosh Hashanah Yi-cor-say-voon U-B' Yom Tom Kippur Ya-hor-say-moon
On Rosh Hashanah the decree is Inscribed On Yom Kippur it Is sealed,
How many shall be born, Who shall live, who shall die, who shall attain the
measure of mans day and who shall not, who

shall perish by fire, who by water, who by sword who by beast, who by hunger, who by thirst, who by earthquake, who by plague, who by strangling who by stoning, who shall have rest and who shall go wandering Who shall be poor and who shall wax rich, who shall be brought low and who shall be exalted

But Repentance, Prayer and Righteousness avert the severe decree.

U'Teshuvah U'Tefillah U'TZEDAKAH ma-ah-vee-reen ess ro'ah hagizayror

A major component of Righteousness is the performance of acts of TZEDAKAH!

Tzedakah what is it? What does it mean?
What place does it have in our lives?
What does it mean to Jews and Judaism.

Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein, Executive VP of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism relates to us,

"For the Jew, sharing ones personal wealth is not merely a praiseworthy act- it is an obligation. Tzedakah is a Mitzvah, a commandment given by God."

One of the many Mitzvot I spoke of on Rosh Hashanah.

"Many of us learned the tradition, the mitzvah of Tzedakah from our Parents and Grandparents." For many of us our first experience with Tzedakah is putting coins in blue & white pushkas.

It is also our responsibility to set the example and teach the Mitzvah of Tzedakah to our children and grandchildren.

On this Kol Nidre Eve we have a lot to be thankful for.

We are fortunate to have a Hamisha Rabbi, Rabbi Simckas who is devoted to Temple Israel, permits our children to be involved in services, teaches them their Bar Mitzvah lesson, knows each of them and establishes a relationship with each of them. He often gets them to perform beyond their own and their family's expectations. He is an excellent Torah reader and explains the meaning of Torah as he reads it each Shabbat service.

We have a strong Hebrew School under the direction of Charles Litman and our School Board led by Bruce Miller.

Our Sisterhood, led by Co Presidents Arlene Miller and Fern Kravitz and Men's club, led by President Kenny Leif, are planning exciting programs for this year.

Temple Israel is a warm caring Synagogue that meets the needs of its Temple Israel family our congregants with many different types of services, activities, programs and events.

Many, many people work hard for Temple Israel! Too numerous to mention.

Our vision of Temple Israel is for it to be an Elite Synagogue ..

The Kol Nidre appeal is our basic fundraiser. It is our request for Tzedakah - from every, -- every Temple Israel family whether you give thousands of dollars or Chai.

It is important for you to give. Each and every family! The Temple depends on your donations to make it function, provide services and maintain the building.

We just spent a small amount of money ... A lot of money for us to refurbish the building. We thank Rowena Melman and her decorating committee for all their efforts and expertise to accomplish this task on a minimal budget ..

Our building was built in 1963. It requires the normal maintenance and capital improvement -- just like our homes. I was just told before Rosh Hashanah that our Air Conditioners probably will need to be replaced. A huge cost for us. And so it goes.

Bingo is our largest fundraiser and does so without financially tapping our membership.

Kol Nidre is the basic fundraiser from our congregation.

Practice the Mitzvah of Tzedakah,
As we pass one by one before the Lord let the Mitzvah of Tzedakah be counted for each and every one of us. It is important for you to give and important for you to set the example for your children to give!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

It is said, "Cast your bread upon the water and it will return many fold."

Remember acts of:

U'Teshuvah U'Tefila U.ZEDAKAH

Avert the severe decree

Please fold down the flap on your pledge card with a generous donation, place the card in the envelope and then pass it to the usher.

May you and your family be inscribed and sealed in the book for a Healthy f Happy, and Prosperous New Year.

Lester Kowalsky
Temple Israel
S. Merrick, NY

Rabbi Moshe Edelman
From; "Mark Picus"
To: [<edelman@uscj.crg:>](mailto:edelman@uscj.crg:)
Sent: Tuesday, October 07, 2003 8:57 PM
Attach: Kol Nidre 2003.doc

Subject: Appeal
Rabbi Edelman,

As you requested when you sent out the booklet of Kol Nidre appeal ideas, I am attaching mine. There are a few words in Hebrew type face. Depending on what you've got on your computer, I'm not sure how they will appear when you open the document.

Mark Picus, pres.
Congregation Or Ami
Houston, TX

Times are bad. Children no longer obey their parents and everyone is writing a book.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

A few years ago, when I was about 5, my family moved to Los Angeles, and we became members of a small Conservative synagogue in the west San Fernando Valley. We met in rented space and held High Holy Day services in local churches. Although I did know it at that time, this synagogue maintained a variety of irregular practices, one being that every year, two men would be nominated for president, and the members would vote on who they wanted to lead the congregation. When I was maybe 8 or 9 years old, my father was one of the presidential nominees. I was beside myself with excitement that my father would be synagogue president. From now on, my Hebrew School teachers couldn't touch me. Imagine my distress when the other guy won.

The evening of this election debacle, after my father returned home, he sat my brother and me down (this being so far in the past that no one had yet realized that a woman could be president of a synagogue, so my sister was excused) and said to us. "Boys. Don't ever be president of your synagogue."

I was always a rebellious child. And now I find myself in a church, as a leader of my congregation, about to make the Yom Kippur appeal. I feel comfortably at home. However, one thing they don't teach you in Hebrew School, even if you *do* pay attention, is how to make a Yom Kippur appeal. So one day in services, I closed my eyes, opened the siddur, and pointed, vowing that whatever I was pointing at would be the basis of my talk tonight. Lucky for me, I opened the siddur to Pirke Avot, Ch. 4:1, where it says: *רַחַת וְזַיִת רַחֵם וְנֹזֵעַ* "Ben Zoma asked, who is rich?" Perfect I thought. You all know why I'm here, and you all know what I'm going to ask you to do in just a moment. How nice to be able to find Talmudic support for my task. I assumed that Ben Zoma was referring to spiritual richness and social prosperity and the wealth that comes from sharing in a community that's devoted to bringing out the best in all of us, no matter our age, no matter our education, no matter our wallet. The richness that comes from kindling the light of Congregation Or Ami and making it shine all over Houston, and far beyond. I thought that what Ben Zoma was talking about was the type of richness demonstrated to me by the lovely woman who for many years owned the Le Moulin Bakery on Beechnut. She knew what it meant to be rich.

My wife, Nancy, received a gift certificate from the bakery for Hanukkah one year, and she sent me off to get some fabulous dessert for Shabbat dinner one day. I took my two sons along, who were probably about 3 and 5 at the time. We walked into the bakery, and I said to them, "OK boys, what should we get?" They immediately ascended to some level of toddler heaven that is inaccessible to anybody who cares about the nutrition labels on food packages. They pressed their noses to the glass cases and quickly picked out about \$3,000 worth of baked goods that they planned to devour on the ride home. The owner of the shop was enjoying the sight, so she asked me their ages and names and then said, "You're a rich man." She was right, of course. I was rolling in it, and I still am, and I wanted her to know exactly what a gazillionaire I was, so I said to her, "And I've got a daughter at home, too!"

I think this is exactly how Congregation Or Ami is rich: rich with people. We have a very experienced rabbi who is looked upon as a leader by many segments of the religious and

secular community in Houston. We have members of our congregation, many of them young people who have recently become bar or bat mitzvah, who regularly lead our services and chant Torah. We have a school staffed by dedicated teachers who go above and beyond any reasonable call of duty and week after week help our children learn about their inheritance as Jews, and they do this in a corner of the sanctuary or at a table in the social hall because we are outgrowing the facility we're renting. We have a youth group with about 30 members who enjoy each other's company and work to plan fun, worthwhile and educational activities for the youth of our synagogue and their counterparts at other Conservative synagogues throughout the city. We have a very open and welcoming system of governance in which anyone who wants to contribute to the shul can serve on a committee, address the board, start a new study or social group and make their opinions heard. I know from personal experience that we're real rich in congregants who like to express opinions.

But it's not only what we have right now; it's what we are planning for the future that makes us so rich. Next week, on Oct. 17, we will close on a beautiful piece of land in this neighborhood on which we can build our own home. We have added about 20 new families to our membership list during this High Holy Day season, and that means that in the future, we will have more children in our school, more people working on committees, more members suggesting ideas for study and social groups, more congregants leading services and chanting Torah, and—I am sure of it—more members expressing their opinions to the president. But we can be even richer than that. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were the only synagogue in the city, in the country, in the whole world, where every member above the age of bar or bat mitzvah could chant Torah? Think of the lights that would kindle; think of the wealth that would represent. I know you're thinking that's an impossible idea, but I don't think so at all. I read two aliyot on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, not because I have a beautiful voice, because I don't. Not because I'm the president and I can pick and assign honors, because I can't. But because there is nothing I do, NOTHING, that gives me greater joy, greater peace, and greater awareness of who I am and where I belong in this world than when I chant words of Torah.

You may be thinking to yourself, "Easy for him to say. He learned how to do it as a kid," but you'd be wrong. The first time I ever read from a Torah scroll was at my daughter's bat mitzvah just four and a half years ago. It never seemed to occur to anyone at that synagogue in the Valley that having a 13 year old actually read from the Torah scroll might be an effective way to bring children closer to their religion and make it meaningful in a very tangible way. But after I read my first aliyah, I thought to myself, "I am so rich!"

Or you might be thinking, "I don't have the ability to chant Torah, or to study a Jewish text, or to learn to read Hebrew or cook traditional Jewish foods or to pray with kavannah regularly at services." As it says in D'varim 30:12 תוֹמַח־תֵּק "It is not in the heavens." The Torah, and indeed, all of Judaism is right here on earth, in this synagogue, just waiting for you to start learning. I am reminded of what one of the great Jewish thinkers of modern times, Abigail Van Buren, once said. A reader wrote to her and said, "I'm 42, recently divorced with no children, a nice house and time on my hands. I've always dreamed about going to medical school. But first I'll need to go back to college to finish my degree, then apply and go to medical school, do an internship and residency. It will be about 12 years before I can start my own practice, and by then I'll be 54 years old." Dear Abby responded this way: "So how old will you be in 12 years if you don't go to medical school?"

The Torah is right here, and next Yom Kippur, we're all going to be a year older. Why not be a year richer too? And this is where I was planning to end my appeal, but then I read the rest of Ben Zoma's quote: אֵיךְ צִי נֹאֵר אֶת עַשְׂרֵה "Who is rich? One who is content with their lot." I was amazed. Ben Zoma was talking about material wealth. How mundane. How ordinary. How common, and yet how appropriate for a Yom Kippur appeal by a synagogue president. As I said before, you know why I'm up here. I'm asking for money. Tzedakah, yes, but it's still money. We have employees, highly competent ones, and they need to be paid. We consume electricity, books, paper, and food, and they don't come free. We have to carry insurance. There's a lot of mundane, ordinary, common things that it takes to run a synagogue. They just have to be done. If they're not done, then we can't kindle the lights of learning, and spiritual growth, and compassion that make us a congregation. It's not the facility we are currently renting, or the piece of land we will soon own, or the beautiful building we will build on that piece of land that make us a congregation. It's all of the people who are sitting here now that make us a congregation, and who, through their continual acts of tzedakah, keep this congregation alive and vibrant and moving forward.

I truly hope that this congregation makes you feel as rich as it does me. I'd like to conclude with a story about a woman, a modern Jewish thinker of no renown whatsoever, but one who really does now what it means to be rich. My mother. About 19 years ago, when Nancy and I had been married for less than a year, I was talking on the phone with my mother, and she told me that she had the opportunity to buy two tickets to the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games to be held in Los Angeles later that year. I asked how much they would cost, and she said, "\$200 each." I reacted just as Rebecca did in Breishit 24:634 when she first laid eyes on Isaac. כָּנַדְּ כִגְנֵן קָפָה "She fell off her camel." I was stunned. I was flabbergasted. I didn't even gross \$400 a week back then, and my mother was thinking of spending that much to see a bunch of people fun and dance around a stadium? "You're not going to go, are you," I said, and it wasn't a question. "This is the way I look at it," she answered. "When I die, how will I be richer? With \$400 more in my bank account, or having attended the opening ceremonies of the Summer Olympics?"

I'd like you now to take the card that the usher handed you when you arrived today and look at the tabs along the top. Choose which one or ones you wish to represent the tzedakah you are contributing today to your synagogue, but *don't* turn it down. Turn down the next tab to the right. All these years ago, I didn't listen to my father. Tonight, listen to my mother. You—all of us—will be richer for it.

G'mar chatimah tovah. May you—may we all—be sealed in the Book of Life for a year of Torah,
of spiritual growth, and of compassion for one another.

MARK PICUS
Cong Or Ami
Houston TX

Rabbi Moshe Edelman

From: "Jon Miller" jon@miller4.org
To: [<edelman@uscj.org>](mailto:edelman@uscj.org)

Here is a copy of the remarks that I made at this year's Kol Nidre services for your database as I promised you in exchange for the materials you sent me. My comments preceded the Kol Nidre Appeal that is always made in our shul by the chairmen of that committee.

Thank you for sending me the materials on other presidential commentaries, I did find it inspiring as I was writing my remarks.

Gemar Hatima Tova,
Jon.

Jonathan Miller (Sulam 20)
President
Temple Israel of Natick (470)
Natick, Massachusetts
jon@miller4.org

My friends;

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel taught: "Reverence for God is shown in our reverence for man. The fear you must feel of offending or hurting a human being must be as ultimate as your fear of God ... To be arrogant toward man is to be blasphemous toward God."

On this evening of the Day of Atonement, and in the spirit of Heschel's teaching, I humbly stand before you, this congregation. If there is anything that I personally have done that you found offensive or arrogant, I ask for your forgiveness. If any member of our board, its officers or any member of our staff or fellow volunteers has said or done anything that has caused you to feel wronged, alienated or otherwise hurt, I again ask your forgiveness.

When I assumed the presidency of this congregation six months ago, I set forth a charge to the board at its installation of officers. I set a goal of raising the bar for board accessibility to our members and staff through open, honest communication. I asked our officers and board of trustees to work diligently to mentor and develop the next generation of leadership. Committee leaders as chairmen, have the obligation to draw participants into their committees and build a chain of succession. I reminded the board that they are emissaries of good will, the public voice of our membership and should speak proudly of what our community has to offer and bring in their friends, neighbors and the as yet unaffiliated to participate in what we have to offer

at Temple Israel. I hope that you have seen and will continue to see the responses to these challenges from both our lay and professional leadership.

Temple Israel has always been a community that tries to vest in its members a "can do" spirit. How many other synagogues have a group of dedicated people that builds the holy objects that surround us and are used in our services? How many other synagogues have a volunteer cadre of over 150 Torah readers who chant the full Parsha every Shabbat, Weekday and Chag? We have lay led Minyanim twice a day that provide a supportive environment to those mourning loved ones. Our members have generously reached out to victims of Palestinian terror by adopting and providing financial support to two Israeli families who lost loved ones or who were injured by acts of terror. Temple Israel of Natick continues to have the largest contingent of the Me'ah Adult Learning program of any of the neighboring participating synagogues. Our USY chapter has so many interested kids that we started a new group to bring 3rd and 4th graders together to enrich their Jewish experience. Within our Hebrew School, the Gesher kids encourage one another to continue on to the Prozdor Hebrew High School program. Adult Education at Temple Israel nurtures a more literate and knowledgeable community with a strong commitment to Jewish observance and practice. This year, Temple Israel of Natick will be honored with a Solomon Schechter Gold award for its exemplary work in Adult Education from the United Synagogues of America at its biennial convention this month in Dallas. I wish to thank Paula Jacobs and her dedicated team who put so

much of their time and effort into this purpose. Temple Israel has something for everyone. Come and "check it out" at our constantly updated website at www.tiofnatick.org!

With all of these great programs going on, what could we possibly do better? We need to seek ways to reach out to our members and provide them a supportive institution as we each travel on our own Jewish journey. A participatory community is one that draws upon the strength of the individual participants coming together to make something that is greater than the sum of its parts. This year I would especially like to reach out to those who feel that they have lost their connection to the Temple and help them find a way to reconnect. Member retention is equally as important to our future as is attracting new members.

I want to assure you that I take all of our members seriously. On occasion I hear that some temple members feel the Temple no longer resonates in their lives. Temple Israel must be a place where people can come through all stages of life, both happy and sad, and know that somebody here truly cares about them. There are so many institutions\$ that don't take us seriously. They exploit our innocence; answer our mail with a form letter and our calls with a recording. The High Holidays can be a time for renewal, for trying new ways to add a spiritual, educational or social dimension to our family's lives.

With the completion of Phase I of the building project, the fruits of our labor are all around us. Last year at this time we were all in the Natick High School auditorium as this building was a "work in progress". The results of the M'Dor L'Dor campaign are the culmination of a consistent "roll up our sleeves" attitude at Temple Israel. The project, led by Dr. David Gordon, Larry Ziegler and Bonnie Rosenthal brought us to where we are today.

We are grateful to these readers and the committees that worked with them for their unwavering personal drive that saw this project to completion through a myriad of challenges along the way. The campaign raised funds 60% above the most optimistic forecast of a professional fundraiser engaged early in the project.

As I look upon the M'Dor L'Dor donor list in our lobby, I am reminded of a sermon that Rabbi Liben gave on a recent Shabbat morning. He spoke of how we leave our fingerprints on everything we touch and are remembered by the ways in which we leave those marks. We *can* leave marks that endear us to future generations. The honor roll that you see in the lobby represents the fingerprints of air of the financial contributors, regardless of amount. Your support enabled us to renew and remodel our aging facility. We are all the ones who made this first step of transformation a reality. Our fingerprints are all over this project and that indeed should make everyone feel connected.

As this first phase of the M'Dor L'Dor campaign closes let us thank the campaign leaders, committees, and all of us who gave either their hard earned money or the most irreplaceable commodities of all, their time and energy.

The next goal involves enriching the content within our newly beautified walls. We start this next step with the "*Create the Legacy of Torah*" program. As we heard last week, we each have the opportunity to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime, year-and-a-half-long experience of writing a Sefer Torah. There will be numerous opportunities to learn the subtle nuances of the text and watch and even hold the hand of the Sofer as he writes our Sefer Torah. This project will afford us with many opportunities to study and learn from one another as we celebrate the giving of Torah to the next generation.

This spring, we will celebrate with Rabbi Liben as he completes his 13th year of service to our vibrant community. The word "Rabbi" means "Teacher." As it is our rabbis who spread God's sacred message from the Torah and the accumulated knowledge of our ancestors, how appropriate it is that we celebrate the teacher of the Torah in our midst as we are in the process of writing our own Torah. As he enters his "Bar-Mitzvah year" we will come together as a community to honor Rabbi Liben on Sunday evening, March 28.

The culmination of the journey of learning and writing Torah will also mark the beginning of Temple Israel of Natick's celebration of 60 years of service to the Metro-West community. From the vision of a few people on North Avenue

in the waning year of WW2, to this bustling place on Hartford Street, we have come a long way. We're not just getting older, we're getting better!

I wish to give reassurance to those who have not been involved or feel that their limited Jewish education or background precludes their involvement. Hillel reminds us in Perkei Avot ~ "do not separate from the community and do not say when I have free time I will learn, lest you not have free time." We are all stretched to the limit with commitments to family, businesses and ever shrinking free time. Tonight, I ask you to consider making Temple Israel of Natick an even more important part of your lives. If you are interested in being involved, I'd love to hear from you. Please contact me at president@tiofnatick.org and I will personally see to it that someone responds to you.

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Trustees of Temple Israel, my wife, Ellen and my boys, Adam and Benzi, I wish you all a year of peace and prosperity, of good health, sustenance, a and blessing. Amen.

Cynthia S. Bercowetz
Beth Hillel
Bloomfield, Connecticut
October 5, 2003
Kol Nidre Appeal

Good Yontiff.

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to give the Kol Nidre appeal address this evening. In May of this year, we all received a letter from President Steve about being involved in various activities and committees. I filled out the line that said "other." I also filled out committees I wanted to work on. But most importantly to me. I said that I would like to give the Kol Nidre address. Then, I completely forgot about until it I received a call from President Steve on Labor Day in the midst of a tent tag sale. "Are you still interested in giving the address?"

"Of course," I replied without hesitation. I knew that it would be a learning experience for both the congregation and me. My family and my husband's family, Rhoda and Izzy Rosenthal, Jan and Alan Rosenthal, Belle and Morris Cutler have belonged to the Beth Hillel Synagogue for many years. My brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Irving and Millie Bercowetz have been members since its inception. Irving was a Judaic scholar in his own right. If he were alive today, I know that he would offer to assist me in my address and probably correct it too.

Yom Kippur is a most sacred day on our religious calendar. The evening service ushering in this holy day—the Kol Nidre—finds our synagogue filled to capacity with worshippers.

We have utilized the occasion of Yom Kippur for appealing to our membership to support our synagogue both with a dedicated commitment and financially. This has been especially true about the Kol Nidre service. Why is it so important to work for our synagogue? There is a charming story I read in my research of a leaf on a tree, which looks out with envy at the world about. The leaf is particularly jealous of the birds, which fly around, settling on this branch and that, flying high and enjoying unrestricted freedom. "Oh, if I could be like the birds" dreamed the leaf. "If only I could fly high and be as free as they." Suddenly, a stiff wind blew and the wind and the leaf were free! It was lifted about the houses and above the tree branch, which was home. It frolicked in the breeze as the wind carried it high and higher. When the wind died down, the leaf found itself in a free fall descent to the pavement below. On the sidewalk it came to rest and soon was stepped upon by passersby. Quickly, the leaf withered, crumbled and disappeared. The leaf did not understand a message: "Not good when detached."

A rabbi once said: "A Jewish person in his or her relationship to the synagogue may be likened to a branch growing on a tree. As long as the branch is attached to the tree there is hope for growth. But, once the branch falls away, it is NOT nourished and all is lost.

We have to be connected and attached to succeed. If we all are connected to one cause—helping our synagogue with a personal commitment, we will have a better chance to succeed.

Why support our synagogue? What does our "shul" offer us as members?

- We have an excellent religious school and staff.

- An excellent nursery school, which is non-denominational. Have you visited our nursery school? Or, even inquire to be a guest at the nursery school? I did. It was very enjoyable. I read to the children and brought my own books. It was a most inspiring experience.
- Many social and learning activities for our members. Have you been to "Lunch 'N Learn" at the Hartford downtown offices of Rabbi Lazowski? "Lunch 'N Learn" may be held at our synagogue this fall while Rabbi Lazowski is undergoing surgery for his knees.
- There are plans for interesting topics for younger members and seniors. Classes may be held during the day by our own members on many exciting topics.
- Did you notice how warm and friendly our Sisterhood dinner and dance was? Everyone was "freidlich" and so happy to see each other after a long summer. More social activities will be planned this year.
- Our beloved rabbi is actively involved in the Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition For Equity & Justice. On Thursday, Oct. 30, there will be a public meeting at Bloomfield Cathedral. We and coalition partners (now some 35 congregations in Greater Hartford) will be presenting ideas to public officials regarding tax reform, improved education and universal health care in our state. Our synagogue wants to be represented as a voice in the religious community standing up for what we need in our area. If you are able to attend, notify the rabbi or Joel Neuwirth. Be there. I know we will be there.
- One of the most exciting plans for members will be a one-an-one interview by a trained interviewer. Our La'Atid Committee will be launching an "inreach program" involving one-to-one interviews with congregants selected at random. The 45-minute

interviews are aimed at getting to know the members better, their interests, concerns and talents. These interviews will create ideas about the best direction the congregation should pursue in the coming years. Please respond positively if you are called to participate in this project. We need your input.

What Can You Do To Be Involved

Our rabbi would like everyone to be involved. He would like those who have not been involved for a long time to step forward. We need you. Some of you have been members for a long time. Please get active again.

My beloved mother told me a story that she went to see her home where her eight brothers and sisters were born in Pittsfield, MA. The home no longer was there. She stared out in the distance until a stranger walked by. "Can I help you, a kindly man said to her?" Are you looking for anyone in particular?" "No, she replied, " I am looking for yesterday."

We cannot bring back "yesterday" but we can keep the memories forever. We have had many beautiful yesterdays here at the synagogue since its beginning in the 1950's. We have a beautiful heritage of members throughout the years.

- We have so many talented members. Get active in our Purim production in March.
- Have you attended our Shabbat dinners? Invite a friend to the dinner. It would be nice if this friend or friends would like to join our synagogue. The dinners are delicious and it is a great way to spend Shabbat. I have invited non-Jewish friends who have enjoyed our Shabbat dinners and were delighted to learn about our religion.

•Get involved with our annual rummage sale. It is hard work but very gratifying. The committee has reported a record 40 per cent increase over last year. It cannot be done without your support. In fact, if not enough volunteers come forward next year, it will not be possible to have this very worthwhile fund-raiser. There is camaraderie among the volunteers where women and men members work together. You also will get to meet members you did not know before.

The rabbi informs me that the Scholar-in-Residence program will be continuing this year.

Dr. Steven Sager, Rabbi of Beth El Synagogue in Durham, N.C., professor at Duke University and very handsome will be here on Friday, November 21 through Sunday, November 23.

Share the Enthusiasm

Be active. Our synagogue is the place where we celebrate our "simchas" in good time, and where we can come to find comfort in sad times.

If you have been in retirement, c'mon over to the synagogue and participate. Attend a minyan in the a.m. or p.m. The gourmet chefs prepare a sumptuous breakfast on Fridays that even the Waldorf Astoria chefs can't compete. Join in the Bible class following breakfast and ask questions.

• Bring in a new member.

Our synagogue needs your personal commitment to be involved. It also needs your financial commitment. If you haven't pledged before, please consider doing it now. If you have pledged before, won't you please consider increasing your last year's pledge?

One of the greatest pleasures I have had is that during the High Holy Days I have been able to greet each of you personally at the synagogue as an usher.

Our synagogue's doors are open to everyone. When we open the door to our synagogue, we want to have many members on the other side of the door.

My cousin, the doctor, was married six times. He once said to me that it is very lonely when you open a door, and there is no one there on the other side. We want to open the synagogue doors and find many members on the other side. Our synagogue wants to increase its membership. We can make it happen.

Now I have a different role. In addition to being an usher, I am addressing you from the bima. Your financial support is vital to the success and future of our synagogue.

As you may have been told in the past and I repeat, your Kol Nidre pledge is not only a commitment to Beth Hillel, it is a commitment to our children who will need more Jewish education, than ever before, in order to preserve their Jewish identity. If not for us tonight, where will our children learn about Judaism, the lessons of the Holocaust and our beloved country—Israel?

As you consider your Kol Nidre pledge, I urge you to remember that sense of belonging that first drew you to Beth Hillel Synagogue and which keeps you coming back. Reflect for a moment on Tikun O what the synagogue has meant to you, has done for you. And then remember, its future belongs to you.

What does the synagogue mean to me? As I sat in the silent chapel after a meeting with the rabbi, I thought of what the synagogue meant to me. The Beth Hillel Synagogue has given me strength, emotional support, and comradeship with my fellow congregants. What would I do without my synagogue where I can pray, attend social activities and learn about Jewish history. I would be lost without my synagogue. It is the center of my life.

I was Bat Mitzvahed at Beth Hillel in November 1997 and had an anniversary two years later. Where else could you be accepted warmly when you cannot carry a tune? But I made it happen. You and you can make it happen so that when the doors are open there will be many members behind that door.

I always thought of the New Year when it comes around, as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable pleasant time, It is a time when congregation members open their hearts.

Our synagogue needs your support. We can make it happen. But we need all of us to work at it as a team. Whatever you can do to increase last year's pledge is a mitzvah.

I am asking you to please help our synagogue plan for the future by taking out your pledge cards. Please pass your card to the end of the aisle so that ushers can collect them. I don't know if my fellow ushers need me now for my other volunteer job. "Do you need me guys?"

Thank you. I wish all of you L'Shanah Tovah and a happy and sweet year, Shanah Tovah uMetukah. Tikun Olam. Let us not forget our beloved synagogue. We wish our cantor who is leaving for Jerusalem Monday night after Yom Kippur a safe trip. Peace in Israel!

L'Shannah Tovah

A special Y'yasher kochachah to our Cantor Emeritus Dan Chick for reciting N'eilah, Rabbi Dan. Your presence on the bimah enhances our t'fillah, and we wish you good health and strength to lead us for many, many more years to come.

To all of you -Thank you - yes thanks for being members at Ohav, for participating in our family and for your support

Thank you for allowing me to be your president. **Really!** I have truly enjoyed this past year and look forward to the next.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are times for telling stories. Jewish people love to tell stories, not just at this time but throughout the year. To tell stories is not just a Jewish pastime, it's a full-fledged mitzvah. Of course the purpose of a story is not just to entertain, although a good story must indeed do that, but it should also have a moral, make you think about something, or maybe make you think about something in a different way.

So in that great Jewish tradition I hope to engage you this yuntiff with some short stories.

Murray went into the synagogue and began to pray. *"Lord," he said, "Please. Let me win the lottery. I've never asked for much. I've been a hardworking man all my life, and I need some money to pay the medical bills. Please, let me win the lottery. Thank you."*

He left the temple with hope in his heart, but nothing changed.

The next week he returned. *"Please, Lord. I have been a faithful servant to you all these years. My wife is ill and the insurance company that I have been paying premiums to for thirty years will not pay for her treatment. Please. I am not asking for frivolous reasons. Lord, let me win the lottery."*

Again, Murray left, only to have his hopes dashed at lottery time.

Increasingly desperate, Murray returned to the synagogue a third time. *"God! I'm down on my knees - **even though I know we don't do that** - please. Please. I don't know what to do! I love my wife so much; she is such a good woman. I will work all the rest of my life to give back to the community, if only I can save her. Please, please, let me win the lottery."*

Just then, a blinding shaft of light poured into the chamber. The skies opened up and a thunderous and terrifying voice rang out-

"So, buy a ticket already."

The moral of the story is that you have to be in it to win it—or in other words you can't get something back if you don't put something in!

I feel like what I have been putting into Ohav I am getting back more than equals winning the lottery.

Let me tell you what being before you means to me. My father's yarzeit was last Monday and if he were alive I know I would see him beaming with such pride seeing me up here now. He taught me so much, (although I didn't realize it at the time) not only with what he said, but by his actions. As a CPA he was treasurer *for as long as I can remember* of our synagogue, the JCH of Laurelton (That's in Queens). My parents lessons are clear to me now, in that he and he and my mother taught me to be involved, to volunteer, to be a mensch, and to give tzadakah.

When a Jewish baby is born, there is a traditional prayer that the child will grow into a life that includes **Torah, huppah** and **ma'asim tovim**.

Torah stands for learning, especially Jewish learning.

Huppah, the wedding canopy, symbolizes love, commitment, and family.

Ma'asim tovim means good deeds, because for Jews the doing of good is what defines a mensch. Of course, no one is expected to do it all by him or herself.

The Jewish community as a whole is considered responsible for the performance of good deeds, and is obligated to organize on behalf of the poor and the needy. **Giving** is one of the things we as Jews feel most committed to do and it is also one of the things we do **BEST!**

How about another story? For this next story (poem) I need you to envision that you are hearing this from your child or grandchild.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking I heard you say a prayer, and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people in our community and I learned that we all must share—for those of us who have something—should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, "Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking."

I hope that I have taught my children Becca and Jon when I thought they weren't looking, what my father taught me. I hope by my role as president of Ohav I have shown my children by example one way to give back to my community, and that is truly my reward.

I am sure that most of you **do not want to be** a synagogue president. I'm also pretty sure that you feel, like I do, that giving back is a basic attribute of being Jewish, and you all give back in your own way, with your own types of involvement.

One of the things that makes Ohav special is our wonderful Family Education Program which stresses learning by doing as a family, and offers all kinds of ideas about how we can give back.

Let's take a page from their book for the Tzedakah projects that you do with your families:

- it's an ideal time for the family to decide where to give some donations for the New Year. OR
- It's become a growing custom in the American Jewish community for people to take the money that would have been spent on food on Yom Kippur and to donate it to Mazon or another organization that feeds the hungry.

This is I think what we are all about as Jews, and as a synagogue community.

Ohav is your/our shul and we need to sustain it. This is the place where we mark our lives' most important events.

Even the least participatory of our members comes here for baby namings, bar and bat mitzvahs, aufrufs and weddings, and to say kaddish for those who have left us.

This is the place where we come, every year, to listen to the blast of the shofar and to pray aloud that we hope to come back this very same place next year, to hear it one more time.

This is where we bring our children and our grandchildren, to learn our traditions, and this where we as adults also come to learn.

This congregation is a "kehilla kedosha"- a holy community of friends and families who support one another through adversity and who celebrate and share each others' joys through all your simchas.

We need temple life to sustain us as Jews. In words taken from our congregants, the temple serves us as a spiritual center; it is a place to learn, pray, participate in tikkun olam, and socialize with other Jews; it is a safe haven in a non-Jewish world; it is a place to grow Jewishly, both as individuals and as a community.

This is why we exist, and because we serve these needs well at Ohav Shalom, this is why we are always attracting new members—22 new families in August and September. To all of our new members - welcome to the family.

I received this Thank You card (Hold it up) from two congregants this week. Let me quote "Being a part of the Ohav Community has meant so much to us. Mostly because it is made up of people like you. We definitely feel part of the family."

How do we do it? Ohav is blessed with exceptional staff and a fantastic board of trustees and officers - We all work together as a team for you - David Weinstein and Cindy Laks work diligently as Vice Presidents and Scott Spiro is now your Treasurer and Al Kaplan is Secretary.

I would love to tell you about the many talents and contributions of each one of the officers and board and our synagogue staff, but time doesn't allow me to do them justice. Thank you to all of our board members and staff for making Ohav Shalom such a welcoming place.

Our board members come from all generations, all income levels, lots of different professions, and at least one-third of them have nursery or school age children. I want to

take this opportunity to invite you to become a member of the board or get involved on a committee or volunteer in the office. Just let anyone of us know what interests you.

Even if you don't call *US* over the next year, one of our Board members will call *you*—each and every family, to ask if you have input, want changes, or offer suggestions for improvement.

which reminds me of the story about telephone calls:

**A Jewish man called his mother in Florida.
He said to his mother, "How are you doing?"
She said, "Not too good. I've been very weak."
The son asked, "Why are you so weak?"
"Because I haven't eaten in 38 days."
"Why you haven't eaten in 38 days?"
She said, "Because I didn't want my mouth to be filled with food when you called."**

So *CALL US!!* We will do our best to be responsive.

Step Down

Many of you are aware that this year we contracted with a consulting group to do a **feasibility study** for a capital campaign. The consultants will complete the last of their meetings in a few weeks. I stress here that they are doing a **feasibility study** and we remain in the earliest of stages.

We can take solace in the fact that raising money for the synagogue is not a new phenomenon. Our Torah parsha this week ends the book of Leviticus. It ends the way it began, by reminding the Children of Israel that the Tabernacle needs to be maintained annually. It is a sad but true state of affairs that there has never been a time when a synagogue was self-sustaining. In Eastern Europe, one auctioned off aliyot to keep the synagogue going. It was seen by most Jews as part of their obligation to the temple, a predicted and predictable necessity. Today, we have dues and Yom Kippur appeals.

A capital campaign is very different - it is funding long term efforts to capture what we have always wanted from Ohav. We do not go into this lightly - we have been working on it for more than two years already and we will NOT begin the campaign until we are all ready.

But Let me tell you what the consultants told the Executive Committee in an interim report: "They were extremely impressed that our congregation universally expressed the feeling that this is your synagogue—a warm, caring, involved, family place." The consultants realized what we all know - that there is a warmth at Ohav, a feeling you just

don't get elsewhere, especially when those elsewhere make you into spectators and at Ohav you become a participant and partner.

When the consultants complete their meetings we will make sure those who are interested to discuss this in more detail will get every opportunity to do so. I did want all of you to be aware of where we are at in the process.

But let's concentrate on the here and now! So, here is my invitation to you. There's no need to RSVP. Your actions will serve as your response.

From the standpoint of personal involvement, make this year the one in which you strive to do something extra. Volunteer for something new. Don't feel you must be a chairperson or person in charge. Just participate with others to make everyone's experience more worthwhile.

From the standpoint of financial involvement, I'm going to make a suggestion. Each of us has been in a situation where a special occasion has called for a contribution to the temple. Today, let us celebrate the success of the past year and our enthusiasm for the year to come by honoring the High Holidays with a contribution to Congregation Ohav Shalom. I'm suggesting each member give more as a response to this High Holiday Appeal.

Savor the moment. Help the Ohav Shalom family, of which you are a valued part. Give extra charity *tzedaka*. Giving charity shows that we care about others especially since it's not always easy to part with our money.

You will feel better for it. Make this a family event because the creation of new traditions begins with you.

In the lobby there are pledge cards. Consider giving now to your synagogue just like the 200 families did last year or consider joining the -- 38 families who are Nechemiah members each year.

We do Mitzvot not because it feels good, or seems right, but because we are **commanded** to. But...when we do mitzvot, it feels good and it seems right.

One last story:

A Jewish couple is sitting together on an airplane flying to the Far East.

Over the public address system, the Captain announces: "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am afraid I have some very bad news. Our engines have ceased functioning, and this plane will be going down momentarily. Luckily, I see an island below us that should be able to accommodate our landing. This island appears to be uncharted as I am unable to find it on our maps. So the odds are that we will never be rescued and will have to live on the island for a very long time, if not for the rest of our lives."

A few minutes later the plane lands safely on the island, whereupon Hy turns to his wife and asks, "Esther, did we pay our pledge to the Daughters of Sarah yet?"

"No, Hy" she responded.

Hy smiles, then asks, "Esther, did we pay our Federation pledge?"

"Oy no, I haven't sent the check!"

Now Hy laughs. "One last thing, Esther. Did you remember to send the dues and the Nehemiah pledge to Ohav this month?"

"Oy Hy I haven't sent that one, either!"

Now Hy is practically choking with laughter.

Esther looks at Hy----"So what are you smiling and laughing about?"

Hy responds, "They'll find us."

To each of you in the congregation, thank you for your support, for your commitment, for your generosity, for calling when you had a question or suggestion, for your interest, and for being a part of the temple family. I ask you to give not until it hurts, but until it feels good.

May each of you be inscribed in the Book of Life.

Shanah Tovah.

Alan Dorn

Ohav Shalom

Albany, NY

November 9, 2003

Rabbi Moshe Edelman
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
151 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10010

Dear Rabbi Edelman:

I want to thank you so much for making available copies of other President's High Holiday fundraising speeches. I have found that the materials available from United Synagogue are absolutely invaluable. As a way of showing my appreciation, I am sending you a copy of the H1gh Holiday appeal that I delivered at Temple Aliyah on the first day of Rosh Hashanah.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesli Reich". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Lesli Reich
President
Temple Aliyah
Needham, MA

Rosh Hashanah
1 Tishrei 5764
President's Appeal

Shabbat Shalom, Shana Tovah.

This morning I have the deepest honor of standing before you as President of Temple Aliyah. One of the traditional obligations of this honorable office IS the delivery of this address - the annual appeal for funds for our Temple. I'm supposed to ask you for money today. Let me tell you – I have never been so nervous in my life. I am not a professional fundraiser and standing here today asking you to contribute to the Temple is not an easy thing to do.

The story is told of a Jewish man who lived in a large European city who grew so tired of being asked for money by the Jewish solicitors that he decided to pretend to not be Jewish at all. When the solicitors would come to his door, he would claim that he was not Jewish, nor were his parents. One year soon after his father had passed away, a new Rabbi came to the door. "I was sure you were Jewish" said the rabbi. "No," protested the man, "my mother was not Jewish, and my father, *alav ha shalom*, was not Jewish either. Well, I won't beg you so strenuously today that any of you would want to deny your heritage.

On the other hand, the President's High Holiday appeal is a well-intended enterprise and the beneficiaries, all of us, and our children and grandchildren, are well deserving of a truly great Temple. So allow me to start with the easy part - I want to talk for a few minutes about our wonderful shul.

Do you remember 10 years ago? 1993? Believe it or not, the renovation and addition to our shul was completed 10 years ago and today marks the 11th time we have gathered for the high holidays in our "new" sanctuary. Can you believe that this High Holiday season marks for our Rabbi his 13th high holidays with Temple Aliyah? Of course, it is trite to say, but my how time flies! But if we can look back and reminisce for a moment, I think we will all appreciate a bit of context. When we built our new building 10 years ago, we had 270 member families. Our Hebrew school had 125 students. We did not have a full time educational director and there were 6 teachers in our religious school. We did not have a family educator, a ritual assistant or a bookkeeper. The Temple's billing system and general ledger was not computerized, Just 10 years ago the temple's annual operating budget was \$350,000. Today, we have 425 member families, 220 students in our religious school, a full time educational director and 12 teachers. We have a ¾ time Family Educator, a part time ritual assistant, a part time bookkeeper and 3 people who are involved with our youth and teen activities. The annual operating budget for our fiscal "03/04" year is \$1.3 million dollars. We've come a long way in 10 years! While we have grown tremendously in terms of membership, staff, facility and our budget, there is more.

Our program offerings are tremendous, as evidenced by the mailing that you should have recently received entitled "Synagogue Program Booklet" which was put together by Terri Swartz Russell, our Family Educator. Inside the booklet, there are 35 pages describing the various programs and activities offered here at Temple Aliyah. If you have not already done so, please take a look at this wonderful resource. I would like to encourage you to get involved in something new. I invite you to actively participate and help yourselves of all that our synagogue has to offer to you and to your families.

But let me be frank. In order to have the superb professional staff, educational opportunities, programming for all ages and our beautiful facility, it all costs money. As I mentioned a moment ago, our operating budget is \$1.3 million dollars. For those of you who were unable to attend the Temple's annual meeting this past May, let me briefly explain the major sources of revenue and expenses under which we operate. I'll start with the expenses first in order to explain to you how it could possibly cost so much to run a shul. There are 6 areas that comprise the expense side of the budget, the 3 largest of which are "Ritual," "School" and "House" and together these costs represent "**2/3**" of our operating expenses. The remaining "**1/3**" relates to: (1) administrative operations including the cost of providing health insurance to our full time employees, the cost of maintaining equipment and the computer network, (2) family education, (3) youth and (4) the Temple's contribution to the Passport to Israel Program.

Ok, so I've told you about what the major costs are to run our shul. Now I will tell you how we try to pay for everything. If we relied simply on our dues and fees to operate the shul, we would have to drastically reduce the activities, programs, services and quality of our professional staff. Our dues and fees account for 70% of what is needed to run our synagogue. Dues alone do not support all the endeavors of our synagogue. Twenty percent of our revenue comes from sources including regular donations", rentals, High Holiday tickets, grants from the Combined Jewish Philanthropies and pledged income from both Sisterhood and Men's Club. Therefore, the balance of our budget relies on voluntary contributions beyond the regular dues structure. Major fundraising, primarily, the annual High Holiday appeal, is what we use to balance the budget. This High Holiday appeal should be a cushion that would enable us to fund programs or services that currently do not exist such as a special needs program in our religious school. If we had a cushion, we could provide scholarships to our teens to encourage them to participate in teen programming in Israel. Ten years ago the goal of the President's High Holiday appeal was \$ 30,000. The goal for this year is \$130,000.

While budgetary and financial concerns are of critical importance, they are not the end or the purpose of our synagogue. On the contrary, the budget is driven by the services and programs that we provide, and that, in turn, is driven by our mission and goals. Our commitment is to meet the needs of our membership, by providing the tools, resources and environment needed to inspire and encourage individual Jewish growth. As a nonprofit organization, our bottom line is the level of services and programs that we provide. The measure of our success is ultimately, the vibrancy and quality of Jewish life that is supported here at Temple Aliyah.

Our synagogue is after all, much more than a building. It is a place that is filled with the sounds of prayer, the words of Torah the cycles of our lives. This is the place where

babies are named and welcomed into the covenant of our people; this is the place where our children grow to adulthood and are married; a place where lives are touched and where people connect, with one another and with Judaism. Temple Aliyah is a place where we come for comfort and support; this is where we help those in need, support those in sickness and grieve with those in mourning. It is a place where community is created and built. Temple Aliyah is a place where we can express and celebrate our Judaism. It is a place where we can learn and grow as individuals. Most importantly, this is a place where we can create memories and meaningful family experiences through which we instill in our children, a sense of comfort with their Judaism, a sense of pride in their rich past and a sense of commitment to our shared future. "Teach your children diligently" says the Torah. Temple Aliyah is a place where we teach our children how we, as a people, have endured throughout our history. Our synagogue is a place that I, for one, feel proud, and blessed, to be a part of.

One of the things that we Jews learn at a very young age is the concept of Tzedakah. Tzedakah is one of the cornerstones of Judaism. In his book *Embracing Judaism*, Rabbi Perkins says:

"Tzedakah means more than charity; it means justice. Charity is something given by someone to another who has less. Tzedakah is more than a gift; it is an act of justice. Helping others is fulfilling one's duty, not simply an act of kindness... In Talmudic times, everyone had to contribute to a common fund that was used to maintain a free soup kitchen, provide lodging for travelers and help the unfortunate. Taking care of the needy has always thus been understood to be a sacred obligation".

Tzedakah means that Jews must take care of other Jews and Jewish institutions. This is how our institutions were built and how they continue to exist. In our world today, participation in Jewish life is voluntary, rather than an obligation. Tzedakah is a prime concern of affiliated Jews.

Earlier this month, I sent each of you a letter. In that letter I asked you to consider, in advance, your pledge for this appeal. It was my hope, that by asking you to consider the appeal in advance, that you will respond today by increasing your contribution over the previous year. For many people, the past couple of years have been difficult, financially. Some of our members are now finding it hard to make contributions, or to pay their dues completely. In fact, 20% of our Temple families receive some form of dues abatement. The recession has taken a much larger toll on our receipts than we anticipated.

On Rosh Hashanah we reflect on the past year and renew our spiritual attachment. We also renew our commitments to our families, friends, community and our synagogue. Now is the time to renew our commitment to Temple Aliyah.

At this time, please take out the appeal card that you picked up prior to services. To make a pledge, simply fold down the tab for the donation amount that you would like to make. If the amount that you want to pledge is not on the card, please use the "other" category and I will personally call you to follow up. But, before you fold down the tab,

think about how you can make this High Holiday appeal successful. It is so important to the well being of our shul. I ask you to search your heart in giving as much as you can so that we can get through the year on a sound financial basis. Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, "do as much as you can and then just a little more than you can. This is vital--a little more than you can". I ask each of you to make a gift that is significant to your individual ability. Think of the person to the right and to the left of you—it is not their responsibility. It is my responsibility, it is your responsibility, it is our responsibility. It is our responsibility to insure that we continue to have a beautiful building in which to meet and to pray, to have exceptional programs and a superb and talented professional staff. No matter how difficult, we have no choice but to make an individual commitment to do better than last year's pledge. Whatever you can do to help our shul will be greatly appreciated.

I am counting on your support.

On behalf of the officers and board of trustees of Temple Aliyah, my family and myself, I would like to express our wish, to all of our members, that you be inscribed for a year of health, happiness and prosperity, and that it be a year of peace and security in Israel and the world over.

Shana Tovah

A "Howard Huges" cartoon began with the father sitting on the bed putting the little boy to sleep. The boy said, "How good a story can this be if it's supposed to put me to sleep?"

The Talmud states, "When a beggar stands at your door, the Holy One, blessed be He, stands at his right hand."

When my daughter entered high school, writing papers became an almost weekly event. She sought my help as a proofreader and I was only too happy to oblige. After all how many teenage daughters ask for their father's advice? Even more surprising is this continued all the way through high school. And yes, she graduated in spite of my help. Now as a college sophomore the requests have slowed significantly. But, this past week I got an e-mail with part of a paper with which she was having some trouble. The best part of helping with her college papers is I actually learn something.

This paper was a discussion of writings of Ibn Khaldun. He lived in the late 1300s and was a historian of Greek works and society. "Khaldun gives solely to man the ability to think and use science, the necessity for a governing authority, concern for making a living, and the ideal of living in cooperation and fellowship with other men that yields civilization." It is the final one that Allison found most interesting. That men desire group cooperation in order to form societies. She asked, "How can the group come before the society? Is Khaldun suggesting that society shapes man, or that man shapes society?" She continues, "... fellowships form social groups, and the "group feeling" of the majority is the deciding factor in cases on ruling power, for example. Khaldun states, "Leadership exists only through superiority, and superiority only through group feelings". Without majority group feeling (or agreement), no leader may hold his position. ... However, once this society is securely in place, and after many generations have passed, Khaldun says that the people forget all about "group feeling" and the creation of their civilization.

This stuff really got me thinking. Especially with the closing of Veterans' Stadium. Did you notice that virtually every person interviewed and virtually every person who spoke up about their memories was over the age of 40? I think it's because the 40 plus crowd is what Khaldun would call the first generation. They have the "group feeling" for the collective memories of The Vet. They made the collective memories of The Vet.

In the early part of 1971 security issues were much less a concern than they are now. Or, at least that's the way it was at the Veterans' Stadium construction site. Following an afternoon Flyers' game we walked across Paterson Ave and right into the not quite completed Vet. We walked around the concourse of the 300 level. Then right up to the last row of the "yellow" seats. I'm not sure if Phil and Phillis were installed, but the massive electronic scoreboard was. It took up most of the right field. I was awed by this state of the art multi-purpose facility. What a far cry from Connie Mack Stadium. Now we had what every other city had or was getting. "What a great place this will be to watch a baseball game!" I thought. What a **feeling** there will be with a **group**. It was

what I grew up with. It was what made me comfortable. It became good enough. How did it become not good enough? Why was it not good enough?

The beginnings of Temple Sinai were very humble. It started because a group of Jews living among the society of the Tri-borough wanted to have the group feeling of Judaism. Moreover, they wanted to provide this group feeling for the next generation, their children. So, once the land was purchased construction began. But, as you can easily see when you tour our synagogue, it was built in three very separate sections. And, the first part to be built? The *Beit Midrash*, the house of study. The overriding group feeling was a concern for the education of their children. This cooperative group knew the importance of passing on the group feeling to the next generation. *L'dor Vador* - from generation to generation. If this sounds familiar it should. It's the theme of our Mission Statement, printed only too recently in the October Bulletin. This statement was developed from the collective memories of many of Temple Sinai's founders. Their children and new members supported the information as well.

Judaism defies the message of Khaldun. It defies the message of the closing of the Vet. For more than 3500 years each generation has had the responsibility to make sure the "group feeling" was not lost on the next generation. Three times each and everyday during prayer we are reminded to "teach them thoroughly to your children and speak of them while you sit in your home, while you walk on the way, when you retire and when you arise." It doesn't say young children. It doesn't say while they are in school. It doesn't say at holidays. You see, there is no such thing as a **Three-day-a-year Jew**. We are Jewish all day everyday regardless of when you show up here. So, what makes you show up here? What makes you want to be a member here? You could have gone anywhere. You could have gone nowhere. But, you chose Temple Sinai!

The survey recently released by the National Jewish Population Survey of 2000-2001 made a very singular point. The synagogue is the central institution for maintaining Jewish life outside of Israel. It is the sustaining and historic institution of the Jewish community. Unless one makes *Aliyah* to Israel or lives in an Orthodox community, the synagogue remains the major institution to continue our heritage and legacy to the next generation.

But, you knew that. And, you know it's important to maintain the Jewish presence in this area. It's why you have family dinners at holiday times. It's why you send and send your children to our religious school. It's why you help our congregation support programs like The Gift of Israel so our children have an opportunity to visit Israel. It is why you help our congregation support programs like *Panim El Panim* so our children have an opportunity to see how Jewish thoughts and beliefs affect the USA and the world. It is why you help our congregation support subsidies to youngsters to attend Jewish camp experiences. Why are you here today? Because you know the message of Judaism is the oldest and the newest. And, you know it must be kept that way.

About seventy years ago, there was a wealthy Jew in Lodz (an industrial city in central Poland) who owned many properties and apartment buildings. In one of these buildings lived an impoverished family who were chronically behind in their rent payments. After repeated warnings, the landlord became fed up with their failure to pay the rent in a timely manner, and evicted them from his building, together with their measly belongings.

His despicable deed became known throughout the Jewish community, and others were quick to criticize him for his lack of compassion. In response, he countered that there were many other wealthy Jews in Lodz who were perfectly capable of donating the money to cover their rent. His canceling of their debt was in itself an act of charity. "I've been carrying the burden of this charity on my shoulders for long enough", he said, "let someone else take a turn, and pay me my rent, and I will gladly give them back their apartment!"

Some time later, the landlord happened to visit the *Imrei Emet*, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai. Having heard of the man's callous deed, the Rebbe chastised him for his insensitivity and lack of compassion. The landlord repeated his claim that he was no more obligated than others to cover their rent payments, and that the mitzvah of charity is incumbent on the entire community. The landlord exclaimed, "Why should I bear more responsibility for their homelessness than anyone else?"

The Rebbe disagreed. He cited a *Mishnah* that requires, that when an act of charity falls into one's lap, so to speak, we do not allow him to absolve himself from the mitzvah and throw it on others, but rather the Torah requires the one to whom the mitzvah has presented itself to go ahead and do it himself, regardless of the ability of others to contribute as much as him! This poor family lived in your property, and therefore you have the mitzvah of supporting them. You can't shirk that responsibility and throw it on to others. Now go and take them back in."

This story tells us we are obligated to perform, alone if necessary, the *Mitzvot* that come our way. Do as much as you can and then just a little more than you can. Doing as much as you can is good enough. But, remember The Vet. There was a time when it was good enough.

The rabbi recently received a letter from a congregant. The letter said, "Dear Rabbi, enclosed is a check for \$1000 for my High Holiday Pledge. I'm sending this because I can't sleep at night. If I still can't sleep, I'll send you the rest of what I owe!" My hope is that my story was not like the Howard Huges cartoon. But, rather one that kept you awake and will continue to keep you awake.

As you take out your pledge cards remember that Temple Sinai needs your commitment of time as well as money. When you're finished please pass the envelopes to the aisle where an usher will collect them. Do as much as you can and then just a little more than you can

David Caplin
Temple Sinai
Cinnaminson, NJ

Good Yuntif.

When we look back on the year that has passed, we quickly realize the events and activities of our lives have been diverse and plentiful. We have been challenged to fit everything into our preciously limited time.

So, how does Temple Beth Shalom maintain its existence in the face of competition? Competition not from other synagogues and religions, but from sports, computers and homework, which take so much of our children's time? And from work, innumerable charities, religious and otherwise, and doing the things necessary to run and maintain a home, to which we adults devote the vast majority of our time?

Several years ago, your Board of Directors addressed that question and the clear response was: Programming. We must offer things of interest to as many members and potential members as possible, keeping in mind some come to Temple to worship, some come to Temple to learn, some come to Temple for community or to be with extended family, and some come for each of these reasons. Some of those who come to our Temple are young, some are old, some are young who "think" old and some are old, who "think" young. Most of us are somewhere "in between."

Our challenge is to diversify our programming so that our youth are willing to give up their computers for a few hours and our adults are willing to leave our chores and work responsibilities for a few hours and come to schul.

Notwithstanding the fact that our resources are limited, we are a full service Temple and we have every intention to remain so. But, we do not intend simply to maintain the status quo. Our goal must be to enhance our current programming and make it more attractive to our members, to our potential members and to our Jewish community.

As for the diversity of our programming, I want to briefly address several examples:

First: For youth, we implemented a modified Torah School Program, whereby without minimizing content, we decreased the number of compulsory school days par week from three to two, giving children with other activities, more flexibility. However, we also maintained an optional third day for those children and their parents who desire a greater religious agenda.

Second: for Jewish teens, even those affiliated with other temples and those who are unaffiliated, Rabbi Grinblat created and participates in a Teen Education Program, which meets monthly to discuss topics of interest.

Third: For adults, our Rabbi has conducted multi-week education courses based on coherent and timely themes, in which many of our congregants have participated.

Fourth: For those who consider themselves religious and for those not-so-religious, we have diversified our services, especially on Friday nights. Special services have been created and maintained. We now have the following services regularly: family-friendly, a book of the month, Shabbat Under the Stars and musical services, which are even now being enhanced. Look and listen for announcements regarding our special Simha Torah service, as our Temple has formed a musical ensemble. Also, we have made our services more meaningful. We are proud of our clergy, of their leadership and of the spirituality they bring to us.

Fifth: For those interested in or concerned about political issues and their consequences upon Jews, we recently had Dr. David Weinberg speak to us about Jews in France and our Congresswoman, Juanita Millender-McDonald, discuss American-Israeli affairs.

Sixth: As a Temple family, we have socialized at such functions as our Installation BBQ, Shabbat Potluck, Sisterhood Spaghetti Dinner, Men's Club Steak Fry and many other dinners and activities, including our upcoming Sukkot dinner.

I could go on and on about what we have done, what we intend to do and how we will modify our programming to better suit member needs in an attempt to maintain and expand upon our being a full-service Temple. However, Susan Flascher and I, as your Co-Presidents and the leaders of your Board of Directors, are required to figure out how to pay for all of these programming components.

If we had to rely just on dues to operate our synagogue, we would have to drastically cut back on programming, not to mention the services and quality of our professional staff. Out dues account for less than one-half of what is necessary to run our full-service synagogue. Thus, a significant part of our operating budget **relies** upon voluntary contributions beyond the requisite dues structure. But, reliance is no way to run most organization.

However, somehow it has worked for our Temple in the past, but not without sweat and tears. Perhaps, it has worked not because we are only an organization, but we are a community and family, as well. And, it is a community and family whose members and friends have always been generous and understanding of our synagogue's needs. This feeling of family and of community is real and part and parcel of what makes Temple Beth Shalom so special.

I have not even addressed needs beyond programming. But, you all know our schul is over 40 years old. Costs of maintenance and operation continue to increase and some major repairs and improvements have been delayed and deferred. But, your Board of Directors will not delay or defer our efforts to meet the programming needs of our congregants, with one caveat -- if there is no money, then there is no money. And, the first casualty will be the extent and diversity of our programming. Last year even with reductions in certain expenditures, our total income was insufficient to meet our expenses. Our budget for this year, even with further cost controls and tight planning, again appears to be below break even.

I am not asking you to be generous with your High Holiday pledge. I am asking you to be more than generous.

Returning to the programming examples I touched upon,

One: Your generosity enables our youth through our Torah School, not only to prepare for their B'nai Mitzvot, but also to provide a deeper understanding of the Jewish people, of our history and of our proud heritage.

Two: Your generosity enables our teens, who are going through transitions and changes in their own lives, to balance secular demands with their evolving and maturing Jewish identity.

Three: Your generosity enables our adult programming to broaden our knowledge of Judaism as it impacts upon the changing aspects of our lives.

Four: Your generosity enables the religious and not-so-religious to experience Judaism in a manner best suited to their own personal spiritual needs.

Five: Your generosity enables those interested in or concerned about political issues to learn how these issues effect Jews.

Six: Your generosity enables our entire Temple family to know that in both good and bad times, not one of us is alone.

In return for your more than generous pledge, you have my pledge that your Board of Directors will do everything in its power to make sure Temple Beth Shalom remains a full-service synagogue, providing and expanding upon its programming, meeting the needs of its members and of the greater Long Beach Jewish community.

Rabbi Moshe Edelman
Department of Congregational Programming
Department of Leadership Development
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rapaport House
155 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010-6802

Dear Rabbi Edelman,

Once again you have come to my rescue by sending material that has helped me write my Rosh Hashanah Appeal Speech this year. You helped me with SUlam back in 1996 when I was ready to become Synagogue President for the first time and truly, you have been helping me and my synagogue, Congregation B'nai Israel since then. I am truly grateful.

United Synagogue has so much to offer and I especially enjoy the Presidents' Listserv and Program Suggestions. It will be wonderful to be able to download in the near future, files that are in the Synagogue Resource Center.

Attached is a copy of my speech that I gave this past Rosh Hashanah. I hope that it will be able to help another president when they write their speech next year. Once again, thank you so much for all your help and both my husband Jack and I wish you and your family L'Shanah Tovah.

Lenore Matin
Co-President
Congregation B'nai Israel
Toms River, NJ

ROSH HASHANA APPEAL SPEECH - 2003 - LENORE MA
TIN SHABBAT SHALOM

THE WORD "HOLLILLEH" IS A COMMON YIDDISH MAGICAL EXPRESSION FOR "GOD FORBID THAT SHOULD HAPPEN."!

WHEN THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS OPENED THE BIDDING FOR THE DIGGING OF THE GREAT TUNNEL UNDER THE ENGLISH CHANNEL, ENGINEERING FIRMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD PLACED THEIR BIDS. AND THE LOWEST BID WAS FROM THE FIRM OF MARANTZ AND SON.

FRIENDS CONGRATULATED MARANTZ. AND THEY ASKED HIM, "THAT'S WONDERFUL. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO BUILD THE TUNNEL?"

IT'S EASY," SAID MARANTZ. I'LL START DIGGING ON THE ENGLISH SIDE, AND MY SON WILL START ON THE FRENCH SIDE. AND WE'LL DIG AND DIG UNTIL WE MEET."

"BUT MARANTZ"!! AN ENGINEER PROTESTED, "DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT ONE OF THE HARDEST PROBLEMS IN ALL ENGINEERING - ONE THAT HAS STUMPED SOME OF OUR FINEST SCIENTIST - IS THE PROBLEM OF GETTING TWO TUNNELS TO MEET!"

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN" - SAID MARANTZ?

"I MEAN, THAT THE TUNNEL YOU START IN ENGLAND AND THE TUNNEL YOUR SON STARTS IN FRANCE - THEY START MILES AND MILES APART. AND THEY MUST COME EXACTLY TOGETHER - WHAT IF "HOLLILLEH" THEY DON'T?????"

MARANTZ SHRUGGED. "SO, THE CLIENT WILL GET TWO TUNNELS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!!!!!!!"

IN OUR SYNAGOGUE~ WE GET FAR MORE THEN "TWO THINGS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE."!

I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN CREATING THE COMPONENTS OF A WORTHY JEWISH LIFE IN OUR SYNAGOGUE. RABBI RICHARD HAMMERMAN WHO HAS BEEN OUR RABBI FOR THE PAST 28 YEARS AND CANTOR GREEN WHO HAS BEEN OUR CANTOR FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS HAS LED THE WAY TO HELP US TRANSMIT OUR RELIGION TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.

AS WAS STATED IN MY CO-PRESIDENT, DR. GLENN JACOBS' LETTER OF AUGUST 12, 2003, SENT TO EVERY MEMBER IN OUR SYNAGOGUE, "OUR CHILDREN ARE TAUGHT ABOUT OUR CULTURE, OUR CUSTOMS, OUR HERITAGE AND OUR RELIGION IN OUR FULL SERVICE TALMUD TORAH. THEY ARE TAUGHT TO READ HEBREW, TO DAVEN AND APPRECIATE WHO THEY ARE." THE EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT FUND SUBSIDIZES OUR TALMUD TORAH. THE B'NAI ISRAEL RAMAH YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP FUND SUPPLIES STIPEND TO OUR USY AND KADIMA MEMBERS WHICH ENABLES THEM TO ATTEND ENCAMPMENT AND CONVENTIONS DURING THE YEAR. OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS AND STIPENDS ARE GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN TO ATTEND USY ON WHEELS AND OTHER CAMP PROGRAMS. THE CHILDREN WHO REMAIN ACTIVE IN HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A SCHOLARSHIP FROM THE EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT FUND FOR A TEEN TRIP TO ISRAEL AFTER THEIR JUNIOR YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT ALTHOUGH MANY OF OUR MEMBERS' CHILDREN ARE GROWN AND OUT OF THE HOUSE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE PROVIDE JEWISH EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF TODAY IN THE SAME MANNER, IF NOT BETTER THEN OTHERS DID FOR US WHEN OUR CHILDREN WERE SMALL OR IN FACT, WHEN WE WERE SMALL.

WE ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR SYNAGOGUE. CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL IS LIKE A FAST MOVING TRAIN. WE HAVE MUCH TO OFFER TO OUR MEMBERS AND THERE IS LITTLE TIME TO WASTE. THE AGE OF OUR MEMBERSHIP VARIES FROM YOUNG TO MIDDLE AGE, TO MEMBERS OVER 55 AND TO ACTIVE MEMBERS BEYOND. ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2003, AT 1:PM, WE WILL HOLD OUR FIRST HAZAK MEETING WHICH IS THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM'S ORGANIZATION FOR ADULTS 55 YEARS OR OLDER. ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH AT 10:15 AM, WE WILL BEGIN AN OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR INTER-MARRIED FAMILIES IN THE CONGREGATION. "THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF INTER-FAITH FAMILY LIFE" WILL BE DISCUSSES AND

EVERYONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC IS WELCOME TO ATTEND. WE HAVE TWO WONDERFUL AND VERY ACTIVE AWARD WINNING YOUTH GROUPS, OUR USY AND KADIMAH. BOTH ARE KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND BEYOND FOR THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS. WE HAVE AN OUTSTANDING INSTITUTE OF ADULT JEWISH STUDIES AND AN ACTIVE AND MOST SUCCESSFUL SISTERHOOD THAT SUPPORTS OUR SYNAGOGUE AT ALL TIMES. WE OFFER SHABBAT CHILDREN SERVICES, A CHOIR OF ADULTS AND TEENAGERS AND A JUNIOR ZAMARIM FOR OUR YOUNG CHILDREN ARE BOTH UNDER THE DIRECTION OF CANTOR DANIEL GREEN. WE RUN A SUCCESSFUL FIRST STEP, A PROGRAM ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE 2 ½ YEAR OLD AS A FIRST SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND THEN WE ALSO OFFER A NURSERY SCHOOL FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLD STUDENTS. THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM TO COMBINE OUR STUDENTS INTRODUCTION TO BOTH THE SECULAR AND THE JEWISH WORLD. THERE IS SO MUCH THAT GOES ON IN OUR SYNAGOGUE THAT AT TIMES, ESPECIALLY ON SUNDAYS WHEN TALMUD TORAH IS IN SESSION, THERE IS OFTEN NO ADDITIONAL PLACE TO HOLD A MEETING. THIS HOWEVER IS GOOD BECAUSE THIS SHOWS THAT OUR SYNAGOGUE STRIVES FOR EXCELLENCE THAT IS WITHIN IT GRASP. MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED AND ARE MOTIVATED BEYOND THE PAYMENT OF DUES. IN ORDER FOR CONGREGATIONS TO THRIVE, HUMAN RESOURCES ARE ALWAYS NECESSARY AND OUR SYNAGOGUE EXCELS BECAUSE OF OUR DEVOTED MEMBERS'S CONTRIBUTIONS OF THEIR TIME AND ENERGY. PERFECT EXAMPLES ARE THE MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM THAT MANY OF OUR MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED WITH. IN ADDITION, OTHERS HELP AS CAREGIVERS, AN INTERFAITH PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY. WE ALSO HAVE A FUND DESIGNATED AS THE MITZVAH CARE FUND WHICH WILL ASSIST OUR MEMBERS - IN NEED OF - MAINTENANCE, CARE AND TRANSPORTATION. THIS TOO INVOLVES VOLUNTEERS.

MOST OF US CAN BE PROUD THAT WE DO GIVE TZEDAKAH. WE ARE WILLING TO HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE AND PERHAPS WE GIVE A GENEROUS GIFT SO THAT ISRAEL WILL LIVE. BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION? DO WE PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT? THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "DUES" AND "CONTRIBUTIONS". WE PAY OUR DUES BECAUSE WE HAVE TO. WE GIVE CONTRIBUTIONS BECAUSE WE WANT TO. WE CONTRIBUTE TO MANY INSTITUTIONS

BECAUSE WE UNDERSTAND THEIR VALUES. IT IS TIME TO ASSESS OUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT FOR OUR CONGREGATION. CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL IS MORE THAN A STRUCTURE. LET ME REMIND YOU THAT IT FULFILLS ITS ROLE AS A BET T'FILLAH, A HOUSE OF PRAYER WITH DAILY, SHABBAT AND HOLIDAY SERVICES. IT FULFILLS THE ROLE OF A BET KNESSET, A HOUSE OF GATHERING, WITH OUR WEEKLY ONEG SHABBATS AND OUR WEEKLY KIDDUSHES, IT PROVIDES SOCIALLY ENRICHED EVENTS. IT FULFILLS THE ROLE OF A BET MIDRASH, A HOUSE OF LEARNING THROUGH ITS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL, FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THERE ARE THEN THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SERIOUS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES DURING THIS PAST YEAR AND WE ARE THERE FOR THEM. NO MEMBER IS EVER TURNED AWAY FROM OUR SHUL BECAUSE OF A FINANCIAL HARDSHIP. OUR SYNAGOGUE IS AN INSTITUTION THAT WILL HELP US TO ENSURE JEWISH CONTINUITY. IT IS THIS INSTITUTION THAT WILL HELP US TO ENSURE OUR JEWISH IDENTITY.

NOW IS THE TIME TO LOOK FORWARD AND REALIZE THAT WHAT OUR SYNAGOGUE OFFERS COMES TO AN ESTIMATED EXPENSE FOR THE YEAR 2003/2004 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$714,000. KEEP IN MIND THAT ONLY HALF OF THIS IS COVERED BY DUES. THE REMAINDER OF THE MONIES COMES FROM RENTALS, BAR AND BAT MITZVAH FEES, NURSERY SCHOOL, TALMUD TORAH FEES AND MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS MADE TO THE SYNAGOGUE. THE CEMETERY AND SISTERHOOD HAVE ALSO MADE GENEROUS DONATIONS. WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, IT LEAVES ABOUT \$200,000 TO BE RAISED FROM GENERAL DONATIONS, TREE OF LIFE, CALENDAR DIRECTORIES AND THE ROSH HASHANAH APPEAL.

ABOUT 50% OF OUR BUDGET IS RELATED TO SALARIES FOR THE RABBI, CANTOR, PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS, OFFICE STAFF, CARETAKERS, TUTORS, YOUTH LEADERS, ETC. FORTUNATELY WE HAVE NO DEBT, NO MORTGAGE AND OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS OUR DUES INCREASES HAVE ONLY REFLECTED THE COST OF LIVING INCREASES.

IF YOU HAVE NOT DECIDED WHAT AMOUNT YOU WISH TO GIVE TO THE ROSH HASHANA APPEAL THIS YEAR, PLEASE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THINK ABOUT THE

FUTURE OF OUR PEOPLE. LET'S THINK ABOUT THE OBLIGATION OF MITZVOT AND ABOUT THE MOST BASIC OF THOSE MITZVOT.....THE OBLIGATION OF TZEDAKAH!!

PLEASE, I BEG OF YOU TO LOOK INTO YOUR HEARTS AND SINCE THIS CONGREGATION IS SO ESSENTIALLY A PART OF ALL OF OUR LICES, PLEASE GIVE AS GENEROUSLY AS YOU CAN. WE ARE ASKING YOU TO MATCH AND THEN EXCEED WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN IN THE PAST. FOR NEW MEMBERS, FOR THOSE MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT YET GIVEN AND FOR NON-MEMBERS WHO ARE WORSHIPPING WITH US, PLEASE KNOW THAT WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION. FOR THE ROSH HASHANAH APPEAL THIS YEAR, WE WILL BE PRINTING AN HONOR ROLL OF CONTRIBUTORS IN THE KOLENU AND WE WILL POST IT IN THE LOBBY UNLESS YOU REQUEST US NOT TO LIST YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS. WE WILL DO THIS BY BRACKETS, THE BRACKETS BEING: UP TO \$100, \$101 TO \$250, \$251 TO \$500, \$501 TO \$1000, \$1001 TO \$1800, \$1801 TO \$5000, 10% CONTRIBUTORS AND 5% CONTRBUTORS. PLEASE STAND UP AND BE COUNTED FOR THE ROSH HASHANAH APPEAL. WE HAVE MEMBERS WHO HAVE ALREADY PLEDGED TO MATCH THE TOTAL IN CONTRIBUTIONS BY EITHER 10% OR 5%.

TO DATE, THE FRIED FAMILY, THE PERLMUTTER FAMILY AND THE SAMBOL FAMILY HAVE EACH PLEDGED 10% OF THE TOTAL CONTRIBUTION AND TO DATE, DR. GLENN AND SUSAN JACOBS, STANLEY AND SARANN KRAUSHAAR, DR. WILLIAM AND BARBARA SCHULMAN AND DR. JAY AND AILEEN STONE HAVE EACH PLEDGED 5% OF THE TOTAL CONTRIBUTION. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT WE WILL BE HAPPY AND MOST APPRECIATIVE TO CONTINUE TO ACCEPT ADDITIONAL 10% AND 5% CONTRIBUTIONS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ROSH HASHANAH.

TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE ALREADY INDICATED YOUR DONATION BY SENDING US BACK YOUR PLEDGE CARD PRIOR TO TODAY, OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE - TO THOSE WHO GAVE FIRST WITHOUT BEING ASKED. YOU ARE TO BE ESPECIALLY COMMENDED. TO THOSE OF YOU WHO WISH TO INCREASE YOUR PLEDGE, WE WISH THAT YOU PLEASE CONTACT THE BUSINESS OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AFTER ROSH HASHANAH AND WE WISH YOU YASHER - KOACH. TO THOSE WHO ARE GIVING A PLEDGE FOR THE FIRST TIME, A SINCERE- AND HEARTFELT TODAH RABAH. TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SENT IN YOUR PLEDGE CARD TO DATE, PLEASE DO SO AS SOON AS THE ROSH HASHANAH HOLIDAY

HAS ENDED BECAUSE YOUR PLEDGE, AS ALL OTHERS THAT STILL HAVE TO BE MAILED OR BROUGHT IN TO THE SYNAGOGUE, WILL BE QUALIFIED FOR OUR MATCHING PROGRAM DUE TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE PREVIOUS MENTIONED FAMILIES AND WE SINCERELY THANK YOU.

IN HARRY GOLDEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, HE QUESTIONED HIS FATHER ABOUT WHY HE ATTENDED SYNAGOGUE REGULARLY AND HARRY'S FATHER REPLIED, "A JEW IS A JEW LIKE A FRENCHMAN IS A FRENCHMAN. NO RACE OF PEOPLE CAN SURVIVE LONG WITHOUT A RITUAL AND SOME DEGREE OF DISCIPLINE. THESE PEOPLE ARE MY PEOPLE, PEOPLE I LIVE WITH, THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM I CAME TO AMERICA WITH. MY BELOVED FRIEND, DUDYA SILVERBERG GOES TO SHUL TO TALK TO GOD, AND I GO TO SHUL TO TALK TO DUDYA'!!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT MAKES ALL OF YOU ATTEND THIS SYNAGOGUE BUT I DO KNOW THAT THIS SYNAGOGUE FUNCTIONS AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE AND IT STRIVES TO TRANSFORM OUR VALUES AND RAISE OUR STANDARDS AND TO ME, THIS HOME AWAY FROM HOME MAKES ME FEEL JUST A LITTLE CLOSER TO G-D.

ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS, MY CO-PRESIDENT, DR. GLENN JACOBS, MYSELF AND OUR FAMILIES, WE WISH YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES,

L'SHANAH TOVAH TIKATAYVU,

Temple Sholom, Bridgewater. NJ
Rosh Hashanah - President's Speech
September 27, 2003
Ruth Zelig

When I was growing up, I used to hear my grandmother, *zichronah l'olam*, say, "I pray to God all the time, but I don't have to go to schul to pray." She had never belonged to a synagogue. But she was very devout. She wasn't well versed in Jewish liturgy, but she kept a well-used, old Bible, with the family chronology written by hand on the back page. She did pray all the time. She had long conversations with G-d. But she attended *schul* only once a year, to say *kaddish* during Yizkor, because the nearest synagogue, like all synagogues, didn't stop anyone at the door during Yizkor. She was raised in an assimilated environment in Eastern Europe, and she used to tell me how her mother and step-mother lit *Shabbat* candles, that's all.

My grandmother, Magda, *safrah* Miriam *bat* Avraham, would have loved to belong to a synagogue. For one reason or another, she didn't. Instead, she put all her energy in the last 15 years or her life into a well-known, secular Jewish organization.

According to a NYT article published Sept 20, 2003, she belonged to a majority of Jews in the US, who were identified by a study as saying they do not belong to a synagogue, but feel a "stronger Jewish connection". That percentage was astounding: 80% of Jews felt they had some Jewish identity, but only 46% of them were affiliated.

In the same article, the NYT also quoted the founder of the National Jewish Outreach Program, who pointed out that it takes 4 generations of non-affiliated, non-ritualistic families to lose Jewish identity altogether. The bottom line, it shows, is that no matter how hard you work for a cultural, secular cause, if you don't participate in some public ritual, your grandchildren, or your great-grandchildren, *ain't gonna* be Jews. As much as I adore my *safrah*, she was wrong. At some point in our life, and the frequency is debatable, we must pray to G-d in public.

What makes a Jew feel Jewish? If we make it a habit to read the *Chumash* more often than once or twice a year, we start getting a sense that the Bible describes us, defines us, and makes us who we are. The Torah is a constant reminder that our religion is not just a private, internal devotion, but that it has important outward, social manifestations and many rituals. It teaches us that Judaism is to be practiced as a public event. To say that being Jewish is a cultural matter, not requiring any liturgical practice or ritual, is a copout, as my college friends of the late 60's would say. Unless you live in *Eretz* Israel, it means up don't care if your descendants will be Jewish.

I was raised unaffiliated, the third generation to be so. I belong to Temple Shalom, and devote my time to its affairs, because I wanted to reverse the trend and raise my children as Jews in the context of a synagogue, even if they rebel against it for now. At least I feel it in my bones that when I die, they will say *kaddish* for me, the way I say *kaddish* for my *Safrah*, the only one in her family to do so. And I'm sure it hasn't escaped you that saying *kaddish* is a public mitzvah. And *kaddish*, the carrot, is only possible with the stick, the *minyana*. We must gather together we must have a quorum. Similarly, to perform the mitzvah of repentance and asking forgiveness

during these *Yamim Hanora'im*, the high holidays, we must also gather together.

And so here we are today, with 99.9% attendance from those of us who belong to Temple Sholom with our immediate families and friends. And since you are all members of Temple Sholom, I will stop preaching to the congregation! I don't need to convince you to join. The objective of my preaching is to convince you to convince any unaffiliated Jew you know to join. Temple Sholom is growing once again, and this time we are not afraid to grow. Find your unaffiliated friends, neighbors, and work colleagues and convince them to become fellow congregants. I hereby appoint each and every one of you to the Membership Committee. Your objective is to bring a friend to Temple Sholom, and also make every new member happy and welcome. I charge you with the responsibility of creating an environment at Temple Sholom that provides the *chavurah* that everyone will want to be a part of, without cliques and without snob appeal. Whether you drive a Hundai or a Hummer, whether you live on the hill or by the river, whether you read Hebrew or not, this is the place to grow as a Jew and to learn the rituals of being Jewish.

And while we're praying or learning how to pray, it won't hurt to lend a hand in the strategic and operational aspects of synagogue life. The way to thank those who work for or on behalf of our synagogue, is to work alongside them. I also want to point out that paying dues, donating to the Kol Nidrew Appeal and donating our time are not mutually exclusive. There is so much to do here to build community, the ideas outpace the manpower. It also takes 362 days of a year to make 3 days of pageantry possible. It is apparent from the attendance rate of these 2 or 3 days, that we affiliated Jews love and need ritual and pageantry.

I wish you one and all a ***shanah tovah umevoret, briut, osher v'shalom***. A blessed year, health, happiness, and peace.

A synagogue is many things to many people. Obviously, it's a house of worship, a place to study, a place to celebrate as well as a place to find comfort and solace in times of trouble or loss. It helps us, encourages us, and strengthens our Jewish identity. This is where we teach our children to be Jews in a secular world.

Over time, as we get more involved, if we are lucky our synagogue becomes a second home to us, a place where we make many friends, and above all else, a place in which we are always truly comfortable.

The world has been changed dramatically in the two years since September 11th, ... in the years of the Intifada ... by the ongoing homicidal terrorist attacks in Israel. We have been affected by the ongoing difficult financial times here in our own country.

Yes, these have been difficult years, years we hope to soon put behind us. We hope and pray for better times.

In spite of uncertainty in the outside world, our synagogue has had a good year. Working together, we've had successful events, we completed our highly successful 50th anniversary celebration, and we've even managed to do some decorating and make improvements to our physical plant.

While we've re-carpeted and re-landscaped, a lot more remains to be done. Not only cosmetically, but structurally as well. Our building is getting older ... things deteriorate, break down, or just generally get tired.

This past year saw major problems with plumbing, air conditioning and other systems. We must improve, repair, or replace what has broken down. Two of our four air conditioner compressors have just been replaced. Just this past week we had a breakdown in a crucial part of our heating system. Other problems will arise with predictable regularity in a building this age. This is our home, we must take care of it.

In addition as never before, there is competition among synagogues for members. New members are an important and integral part of a synagogue's lifeblood. We **absolutely must** attract new people or we will simply wither away. To be stagnant is to shrink, and to shrink is ultimately to perish.

To attract people we must first improve our physical appearance. No, that's not superficial thinking, it's reality. Today, as never before, people shop around for synagogues just as they shop around for, nursery schools, medical care and a myriad of consumer items. And what they see from the parking lot, and what they see when they enter the lobby, can make a difference. We need a reliable, working air conditioning and heating system, not a promise to fix it eventually. We need an updated sound system, reliable plumbing, improved lighting throughout our building. We need to have our bimah accessible to those who are disabled. We need to improve, to fix, to update, and yes, we need to beautify. Now, more than ever before.\

At the same time, we have to pay salaries, utilities, insurance, postage, and the countless other costs associated with running our Center. Our budget is well over **ONE AND ONE QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS** per year. And we are 100% **SELF-SUPPORTING**. As always we must count upon and depend upon ourselves ... 522 families.

As Rabbi Weiner so eloquently said on the 2nd day of Rosh Hashanah, we need you to answer and be as generous as possible for our Yom Kippur appeal. Without the generosity of our members we not only can't flourish ... **we can't exist**.

In my heart I think most of us would love to be even more generous than we already are. The synagogue is much too important to be overlooked.. As I said in the letter you all received, I'd love to see 100% participation in the appeal this year. It would be wonderful if we could even come close to that goal.

On the positive side, we're extremely fortunate to have such a large number of enthusiastic and talented volunteers who work to make our synagogue a place we love to attend... from those who chaired events, to those who have participated on even one committee or event, I thank you all. Your work and your contributions do not go unnoticed. You are very much appreciated.

Looking back over the last year, it was marked by many successful events and undertakings. Once again we had a well-attended Purim carnival, a financially successful Purim Raffle, and a successful Membership lottery. We published a wonderful cookbook ... a few copies of which are still available from the office.

We had a Talent Show that brought everyone out ...a great cross section of all our Center members. I was one of the performers so I can comfortably say that what made us successful, was enthusiasm and a willingness to perform, not necessarily world-class talent.

Our Dinner Dance was simply the best fundraiser ever in the history of the JCCP. And just recently we had another in a series of very successful Golf Outings.

We came together to celebrate as a community at Sam Weiner's Bar Mitzvah.

I thank the Board of Governors who, in spite of the economy, managed to raise \$110,000, almost 10% of our entire budget.

I thank the Chesed committee, and all those who worked on our kiddushes and luncheons. I thank the long time members of our Chevra Kadisha. Community support

of our members during difficult times of illness and loss is something of which I am very proud; it is something we do particularly well.

I thank Larry Sturm and the Finance Committee for the countless hours of work they have put in this past year, both in analyzing our financial situation and in putting together a budget for the coming year.

I thank Joe Esrig for his special devotion and many hours he has put in dealing with our air conditioning system, and lately, our heating system too.

I certainly thank Rabbi Weiner for his help, his guidance, and his wisdom.

Working with my 3 Vice Presidents, **Steve Lichtenstein, Gary Hutmacher and Gershon Rosenzweig** has been nothing less than a pleasure ... and knowing they are always there has made being president a more manageable task.

A special thank you is in order to those of our past presidents who have been so tremendously helpful to me these last sixteen months. I truly value your advice and have benefited greatly from your knowledge and experience.

At times like this, when we mention events and thank people, no matter how we try to avoid it, we always run the risk of overlooking something or someone. If I did, I apologize for the oversight. One more "Al Chait" for me.

Our wonderful 50th Anniversary celebrations organized and led by Irene Reiss and Steve Charatz, highlighted our Center's past. While that was very worthwhile, it is even more important for me, as your president, to be concerned with our future welfare.

One of our goals set this past year was to improve attendance at services. The Proposal for an alternative Egalitarian service was passed overwhelmingly by our membership. Now, a year later, as Rabbi Weiner mentioned last week, we've had 9 such services and it has been declared a resounding success. As important as **that**

service's success, is the fact that those people who choose to attend the non-Egalitarian traditional service haven't in any way felt neglected or threatened. We've found the Egalitarian service not to be **divisive** as a few had predicted, but an extremely **unifying phenomenon**, as witnessed by the camaraderie at the kiddushes and the dramatic upsurge in overall Shabbat attendance. It has doubled or tripled the number of people coming to our synagogue on Shabbat. We had our first Egalitarian Bat Mitzvah and this year will see several more simchas at Egalitarian services, which will be held for the first time this year in the main sanctuary. Our next egalitarian service ... on November 8th ... will be in the main sanctuary. Please come on Shabbat, to the service of your choice.

The JCCP has certainly become **my** second home ... a most important part of my life ... and I know that so many of you feel the same. Last year I said I wanted to find out what **you** need this wonderful synagogue of ours to be **for you** ... and what **I** could do to help fulfill your needs. It's easy to make promises ... harder to fulfill them. If there is something of interest to you that I haven't addressed in this last year – won't you please give me another chance? At the JCCP, as in any volunteer organization things don't always get done in a manner to satisfy everyone. If you are less than happy with anything here, we are very interested ... we want to hear you and address the problem and whenever possible, satisfy everyone concerned. We are listening ... we will certainly continue to listen, If it seems that too often desired changes are slow to be realized, we ask for your understanding and patience.

Serving as president has given me a better understanding of the problems inherent in running a synagogue. There has been more dealing with emergencies, more financial crises, more need to be a conciliator and negotiator than ever before in my experience. It has forced me to rise to the challenge, and accordingly has been a year of tremendous learning and personal growth. Certainly it is one of the most important things I've ever undertaken.

We all want our synagogue to be a source of fulfillment. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we look within ourselves, ask repentance for our misdeeds and make resolutions to be better in the coming year. What finer way can we strive to be better than to become more involved in the life of our synagogue?

One person truly **can** make a difference. Why can't that person be you? The more you give of yourself, the more you get out of life and the more satisfied you will feel. Rabbi Weiner urged you to become more involved in the life of the JCCP because we need you. I suggest that you become more active because **you need us**.

So follow Rabbi Weiner's lead and resolve to do a little more than you did last year ... come to a minyan ... attend one more Shabbat service ... take an Adult Education class ... be a volunteer ... join a committee. The Chesed Committee, chaired by Nina Glaser and Eileen Schneider, needs you to lend a helping hand to our members who are in need. Please read the flyers at your seats. If you can't read Hebrew this is the year to learn: sign up for our beginning Hebrew reading class, taught by Gershon Rosenzweig. Rabbi Weiner will be teaching about the Shabbat morning Torah service in his synagogue skills class again this year. Knowing how to daven and what to expect will make you feel more comfortable at services.

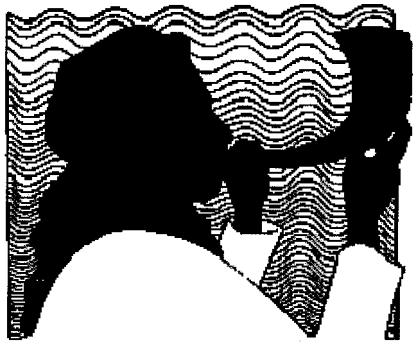
This last 16 months has further solidified my connection with the JCCP. The shul has become a vital part of my life ... a part I now **can't even imagine** living without. Don't think that it's too late for you. This is the first synagogue that I have ever belonged to and I have become involved enough over the 23 years of my membership, especially the last 13 years, to have the honor and privilege to hold the office of president.

Yom Kippur 2003

*Remarks by Franklin Wolf,
President*

Temple Beth-EJ

Good Morning and a Good Yom Tov to each of you on this beautiful and inspiring Yom Kippur morning the 10th day of Tishri year 5764. As this is the traditional moment for the president to deliver the "State of the Shul" address, I would like to begin by asking the question that I am asked several times each week "So how is Beth El?" My usual answer is "Great. We are extremely active. We are moving forward with a full head of steam and are generally making progress in somewhat of an easterly direction." However this morning, this day of introspection, this day of self-examination, this day of promise and this day of looking forward, let us together examine this question of "How is Beth El" in a bit more detail.



Before discussing "How is Beth El?" let me first raise the question "Who is Beth El?" Do we really conform with that mythical notion that our congregation is composed primarily of the 3.5 member nuclear family as was true in the latter half of the previous century or have we changed as the dynamics of our Jewish American society have changed?

Do our members belong to Temple Beth El primarily because of family history, or life cycle events, or do our congregants belong because the Temple fulfills our spiritual needs and enables us to cope with and better understand God's purpose for us on this planet? Our Jewish demographics are changing and we on your Board of Governors understand these changes and are focusing on them.

A first step in this direction was the recognition that our congregation now has more diverse needs than before when we were of a more homogeneous make up. To meet these needs, we as a Temple community agreed to increase our professional staff. So last year, we engaged Rabbi Rosin as Assistant Rabbi with the specific purpose of helping us reach out and better serve our Youth, Young Adult and Single populations. I am pleased to tell that as a direct

result of Rabbi Rosin, working with Rachel Opper over the past year, our Temple has a most exciting Young Adults Group of approximately 90 people. We were thrilled that almost 50 young adults attended last week's Honey and Apples Party. The word is on the street that "Beth El is the place to be if you want to meet young Jewish adults." I am also gratified to tell you that Rabbi Rosin's class in Basic Judaism is so well attended that it had to be moved to larger quarters in the Roseneath Building.

Secondly to better focus on program development and program implementation, your synagogue Board of Governors saw fit to create a stable rabbinic leadership. It is for this reason the Board has entered into a long-term relationship with Rabbi Creditor. One of the purposes of entering into this relationship is to allow Rabbi Creditor, and the Board of Governors, the freedom of devoting all of our resources toward making Temple Beth El our Jewish Home. An institution that will enable us, as individuals and as a community, to live a life of service to God and in observance of Mitzvoth by studying Torah, recitation of prayer and performance of acts of loving kindness through Tikun Olam, the repair of the world.

With this in mind, maybe, we are now better able to answer the question "Who is Temple Beth El?" In my mind, Temple Beth El is and should be composed of individuals who are looking for personal fulfillment in terms of the Study of Torah, Communal Prayer and Good Deeds. Our congregation needs to be more open and welcoming to all people who are looking for a more complete Jewish experience. I think that all of us as a synagogue community, not just the Membership Committee, need to make a conscious effort to reach out and embrace all members of society such as the singles, old and young, divorcees, widows and widowers; intermarried couples; people of diverse background and sexual orientation and invite them to join us in the expression of our Judaic values. The truth is that, according to the 1995 Federation demographic study of Richmond, two parent households with children under 18 make up only 35.1% of identifiable Richmond Jewish households. Temple Beth El can be and should be Richmond's reading facility as a House of Study, a Home for Communal Worship and Prayer, and an Institution for engaging in Social Action Programs.

How can we make Beth El a more user friendly home? There are many ways. One simple way that I would like to suggest is that each of us start immediately wearing nametags, as your board members are beginning to do. This friendly gesture will make it so much easier for new members to get to know us by name. All that is necessary is for everyone to bring in and wear a nametag. If you do not have a name tag either ask your child, grandchild, or neighbor to make you one

on the computer or just call Joni in the Temple office and she will gladly send you a name tag.

New members of our congregation you too have a responsibility and obligation to put forth the effort to become involved in Temple life. Participate in our activities, volunteer for leadership roles on our Temple Committees. Our Synagogue needs your vitality and energy. If you are interested, but not yet involved, either call Carl in the Temple office or leave a message for me on my cell phone.

So "Who is Temple Beth El"? My answer is that we are a community composed of all people regardless of family composition, family history or social background who want to share Jewish values and beliefs in terms of Study, Prayer and Social Action.

In answering the question of "How is Beth El" we also ought to ponder the question of "How are we letting Beth El become a significant part of our lives?" All of us face our challenging moments in this life that we do not fully understand. Our faith teaches us that our God is a Just and Loving God, whom we must accept without question.

In my own life, I have experienced the loss of my father at age 18, the day I graduated high school, the pain of divorce, the joy of remarriage and the loss of a first born child, the challenges of developing a business, emptiness from maturing children venturing out on their own, the uncertainty of approaching retirement and the complexities of dealing with an aging parent.

As I have moved through the various stages of my life, I have come to understand and appreciate more and more the strength and value of my Judaism. It is hard to describe the sense of community and fulfillment that being a part of the morning minyan generates, especially when you are the tenth person. Likewise it is hard to describe the sense of accomplishment that being an active member of a Temple Committee, a Board Member and Temple Officer generates. However, I submit to you that being a regular participant in Shabbat and Festival Services, enjoying Shabbat dinner complete with lighting the candles and reciting the Kiddush also evoke those same feelings of fulfillment and purpose in being a part of our Jewish Community.

So back to the question "How is Beth El?" Usually what is meant by this question is: "What is the financial status of Beth El?" The short answer is that we continue to struggle financially. We ended our past fiscal year-end on June 30, 2003 having to borrow \$30,000 from the bank on our line of credit. This was over and above the \$50,000 gift that we received from Sisterhood, No, I not am going to ask for an Increase in dues, They are too high as it is. In fact, any Increase in dues at this point would be counter productive as most members are struggling to pay their current level of dues.

Our problems are two fold. First, unfortunately many of our congregants are not paying their dues as promptly as they should. I urge you, If you are not paying your dues in a timely manner, to please do so, so we won't need to incur the additional expense of interest fees on our line of credit. And remember we do accept credit cards. Second, is that our dues and school fees currently account for a staggering 65% of total income. Ideally, dues and school fees should account for no more than 50% of total income. In other words, New Fund Raising Efforts are needed to generate additional revenue over and above the revenue we receive from our traditional fundraisers of Bingo, Auction, facility rentals, Memorials, Sisterhood support and Foundation remuneration.

I am going to ask for your participation in the following three fundraisers. Number #1, if you possibly can, become a Patron Member. Patron members are a private group of members who receive no public fanfare or recognition. We currently are blessed with 26 Patron members who, voluntarily through the grace of the Almighty, see fit to increase their dues to \$2,000.00 per year which is \$730.00 over and above our family membership dues of \$1270.00. This special group of members allows the Board to plan budgets with confidence while keeping general dues to a minimum. At this point I want to issue a formal appeal for an additional thirty families to become Patron members. To become a Patron member simply turn down the appropriate tab on your pledge card, Thirty additional Patron members will generate \$22,000 of additional income for our Temple.

Fund raiser #2. Last winter our School Committee developed a new fundraiser, under the leadership of Ellen Bernstein, who introduced to our congregation, the grocery gift certificate program that we call Bonus Bucks. This simple program of partnering with Ukrops, Kroger and Food Lion generates funds for our Temple. The math is easy. If you spend on average \$100 a week in the grocery store you are buying \$5000.00 in groceries a year. When you purchase gift cards for your groceries from the Temple, we receive a 6% discount on these gift cards, so you have, in effect, raised \$300.00 dollars for the Temple.