

Yom Kippur President's Remarks

How good it is to be together, to start our new year in community. Last year at this time, I stood here as your new, slightly nervous, congregational president. At that time, I shared that I was happy in my new role, and eagerly looking forward to the year ahead. Today I can share that I'm still joyful in my temple president work, I am much less nervous, and am again looking forward to the year ahead. Although this time, my anticipation is tinged with a bit "how did it go by so quickly?"

Of course, we know the answer to how quickly time passes. Rabbi Elyse shared a beautiful sermon on erev Rosh Hashanah about the carousel of time. Looking back from where we've come, Rabbi Jay continued this theme as he spoke of our founders, the small group of people who came together with a not-so-small dream of forming a Jewish community in Needham decades ago. In that moment, a shared vision was created, one that has led to our thriving community today. And whether you heard these sermons or plan to read or watch them online, I am sure you will agree that life unfolds with the milestone moments that we approach fully knowing the impact they will have on our lives. We see them coming, we plan for them, we dream of what it will be like when they are finally realized. We also know that life unfolds in those quieter moments, the daily and weekly events that aren't necessarily captured or planned for in the same way. For my family, these moments are things like an impromptu date night with David, a late afternoon walk at Cutler with my daughter Sam and our dogs, or a few rounds of mahjong with Tzipora and Adam. While these happenings might not be milestone moments, they truly form the foundation of our lives. While we eagerly and excitedly look forward to our big events - my own family included, as we anticipate Tzipora and Adam's wedding - it is the day-to-day interactions that truly sustain us.

And, at Temple Beth Shalom it is no different. We certainly have big moments. They are on our community calendar, printed in the TBS Scroll, and shared in our weekly Shabbat Shalom and TBS This Week email messages. These moments are spiritual, educational, and meaningful. They are important and bring us together for ritual and support, for learning and friendship. And we have the everyday moments which again, aren't necessarily noted or widely publicized, but are no less important to the fabric of this community, to the specialness of who we are. In many ways it is the smaller moments and our individual stories that sustain our full and thriving community.

My own Temple Beth Shalom journey is a love story, beginning with falling in love with my husband David. Although we were both Jews from NY, our Jewish experiences were quite different. My Judaism played out at home - holidays hosted in a variety of dining rooms amidst my large, extended family. On the other hand, David's Jewish identity developed through his family's active participation in temple life. David shared his joy of Jewish community early in our relationship, and I began to fall in love with the concept of belonging, of being part of something bigger. I knew I wanted that for our family and the truth is, we began temple hunting even before we began house hunting.

Three decades in, our loving commitment continues (yes to each other) and also to Judaism and to this community. Quite simply, Temple Beth Shalom matters to us and we, like every one of you, matter to this community. Evidence of this is all around us and contributes to why our community exists, and in fact why we thrive. We feel it at joyful moments, when our young children come home singing songs of Shabbat, and when our 13-year-olds chant

Torah. We feel it when we receive a warm embrace from Chesed - our TBS Caring Community - at those times when we most need a hug. We know we matter to each other each time we step into community, literally or virtually, because each time we connect we grow - spiritually, educationally, with laughter and tears, and of course with love.

As you might expect, part of my job today is to ask for your support in continuing to make all this and more possible. And while it may be tempting to tune out for the next 60 seconds, I'm asking you to especially tune in. To say *hineni*, I am here, I am here to listen and to help our community be all that it can be.

One of the things that makes TBS so special is that we are a community filled with dreams both big and small. Donations to our TBS annual fund allow us to go above and beyond and realize those dreams. Your gifts are an investment in our Children's Center and transform it from a Temple preschool into a nationally ranked program with experiential learning opportunities. Your gifts have reshaped traditional K-12 religious school into custom curriculum and learning journeys designed for each age cohort and an after-school program that supports the elementary-age child care needs of our robust community. Together we are supporting our youngest learners as they grow and mature into thoughtful, kind, generous, and curious adults. At which point, the annual fund continues to support growth and education with our adult learning series featuring internationally renowned lecturers as part of the Scholars-in-Residence program.

The Annual Fund allows community projects such as our beautiful new mosaic, created by more than 600 temple members ranging from our youngest preschoolers to our most senior members of ConNEXTions Plus. Community philanthropy allows us to dream about all the ways we can support each other through acts of loving kindness, through social action and tikkun olam. Gifts from within the congregation, and the hard work of many temple members, have led to dreams coming true through our refugee resettlement program. Truly the examples are endless and heartwarming, and a testament to who we are and what we can do together.

And so, it is my hope that everyone who hears this message will understand that, regardless of the size of your gift, it is your participation that matters. And I hope you will dream alongside me, that you will say *hineni* and offer the gift that is meaningful to you. I sincerely thank you.

David, Sam, Tzipora, and Adam join me in wishing you and yours much joy, sweetness, love, and the realization of dreams in 5784.

L'Shana Tovah