

**KOL NIDRE APPEAL  
OCTOBER 3, 2014**

Good Yom Tov. My name is Carol Kamin and I am honored to speak to you tonight.

Actually, I believe that my standing here --interrupting what should be a night of spiritual contemplation and soul-searching --to talk to you about the very unspiritual subject of money, is all because of Rav Claudia.

You see, I have been told that Rav Claudia had a dream. I don't know the details of her dream (we haven't talked about it), but from what I understand from others is that she dreamed that I gave TBZ's Kol Nidre appeal.

And in her dream, what ever I said was so meaningful and so persuasive that your hearts and pocketbooks opened wide and the financial needs of TBZ were met and exceeded.

Needless to say, when Rabbis have dreams it's serious (and, full disclosure, I co-chair TBZ's development committee with Sue Kahn, which gives me a personally serious need to be persuasive).

So for the past couple of weeks, I've obsessed over what to say on this one night when we all actually come together as a Kehilla- a community.

What to say to inspire you – not only to contribute to TBZ- but to consider increasing that contribution over last year.

And what to say on a night that each of us is challenged to reflect upon our lives, to look deeply at ourselves, to try and make things right with those whom we failed, and to work to determine what is really important.

So I went back to the advice of my seventh grade teacher – Miss Laughlin.

Miss Laughlin taught that the best antidote to a blank piece of paper is to dig deep into your person – into an experience, a moment, a place, a time, that you can feel and that has meaning, and then to try and connect that feeling with whatever you're attempting to convey.

So that's what I am going to do.

I grew up in Dorchester with my extended family, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandmother, living within walking distance. Everyone was Jewish, with many immigrants from the old country- including my parents. We were not there because it was a choice- we were there because that's where you lived if you were a Jewish immigrant living in Boston.

The shetl life was not paradise- far from it – particularly for the adults who had to overcome enormous hardships just to put food on the table. But for me- as a little girl- through the communal sharing of sorrow, joys and Jewish life, it brought feelings of safety, incredible love, total acceptance- a feeling of belonging, and a feeling of Jewish community.

Over 40 years ago I moved from Boston to Phoenix where my husband Alan and I worked and raised our two sons.

I kept yearning for that feeling- the feeling of belonging and of Jewish community. We joined a synagogue, helped found a Jewish day school, experienced the joys of our sons b'nai mitzvah, were active in the Jewish community– but, for me, something critical was missing.

Seven years ago we moved back to Boston- to Brookline- and at TBZ I found what I had been searching for:

- I found a community that treats us like intelligent adults allowing us to acknowledge the difficulty and complexity of life;
- I found a community that buffers our sorrows, losses and shortcomings with empathy, kindness and understanding; and
- I found a community that prays joyfully, wrestles with tradition, pursues justice and carries out deeds of loving-kindness.

In the late 40's and early fifties, my Bobbi would take me up and down the stairs of the apartment buildings in our neighborhood as she would ask people to donate money to European Jewry destroyed by the ravages of war and the Holocaust.

My job was to climb the stairs by myself to the higher floors that she was unable to climb and knock on the doors and say, "Would you please give to the European Aid Society?"

I did well (maybe a precursor to tonight?). I was skinny and scrawny and with my wool kerchief tied under my chin that Bobbi insisted I wear, I probably looked like a little girl that could use the aid.

I never really understood what this was about. I certainly couldn't appreciate at the time that Bobbi had sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, cousins and friends in Eastern Europe who were unaccounted for.

And I certainly never expected to make a connection between my climbing those stairs so many years ago and tonight's appeal.

So- from the third floor of an apartment building on Morton Street so many years ago asking, "Would you please give to the European Aid society" to this sacred place today on Beacon Street at TBZ."

I am here asking: "Would you please give to TBZ to ensure the continuity and strengthening of our loving Jewish community?"

When I was growing up in Dorchester, the Jewish community was thrust upon me. There was no choice- we were all in it together, which was for me a feeling of love and belonging.

We all have choices now- multiple choices.

You have chosen ownership in TBZ--a Jewish community that is there for you at all of life's milestones: when you or a loved one face an illness, when you celebrate a marriage, when you have a baby naming, an anniversary, a bar/bat mitzvah or any personal transition. That is a community.

Reb Moshe and Rav Claudia- I've seen and felt how you and so many in our congregation here tonight wrap your arms around our members at difficult times helping them navigate enormous difficulties with spirituality and respect. That's community.

I wasn't here 15 years ago with Reb Moshe at TBZ's incredible renewal; many of you were. You experienced the joy of being part of a Jewish community with a commitment to innovative adult spirituality and programming. With your support, that commitment will continue to flourish and grow.

At the same time, we revel in the wonderful increase over the past few years in the number of young families and children and our growing school- our Beit Rabban. Children are, after all, the message we send to a time we won't see. With your help our Beit Rabban and family programming will continue to flourish and grow.

We are indeed a multi-generational community,

Supporting everything we are – our wonderful Rabbis, our Beit Rabban, our office staff, our peaceful Shabbatot, our joy filled celebrations, our adult programming, our building maintenance-all come with a price tag.

And there is no one, other than all of us, who can provide that financial support.

*We are the caretakers of this holy community.*

In Parsht Nitzavim that we read just before Rosh Hashanah, Moses makes it clear that God's Covenant with the people of Israel is a *collective* Covenant.

The Torah tells us that we are all- every single one of us- called before God- and the only way to do that is to be part of the Klal- the community- and to assume the responsibility that comes with community.

Dues and fees at TBZ cover only about 70 percent of our annual budget. We need to raise the additional 30 percent (\$260,000) through our donations just to break even.

And remember- we are committed to never turn anyone away from TBZ membership.

But we want to do more than to march in place. We want to expand our programming capacity *for all ages*; and we want to repair and revitalize our beautiful 65 year-old building to keep up with our growing needs.

As Reb Moshe has said—the body is the vessel for the soul and we are asked by our tradition to take care of our bodies. The body for TBZ’s soul is our building that is in need of maintenance and preservation.

So as stewards of this community, please dig deep into your hearts and pocketbooks and think about a personally meaningful amount—and for those who are able, think about giving beyond what you gave last year.

This will mean some of us may give \$50.00 or \$100.00, some \$1,000, and it’s essential that some of us give \$3,000, \$5,000 or more. But we all give something.

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I hope Rav Claudia’s dream didn’t include those little circles to punch out or tabs to turn down because we don’t have them this year.

Instead we’re relying on you to have either already made your donation to TBZ from the letter you received a few weeks ago (and thank you so much for those gifts).

Or, if you haven't yet given your gift this year, please put a number right now--not just in your head (that you may forget) but also in your heart (that you will remember). And immediately after Yom Tov put that number on a check and put that check in the mail --or simply go to the TBZ web site or call the office.

And what a gift you get in return. Not a plaque or a reserved seat. What you get is belonging to a passionate Jewish community that inspires spiritual searching, lifts the soul, challenges the mind and works toward social justice. It doesn't get any better than that.

Gmar Chatima Tova. May you and your loved ones be inscribed in the Book of Life and may you know the spirit and joy of the TBZ community.

Shana Tova

