Gratitude the dictionary tells us is the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

We can never overestimate the quality of gratitude in seeking a spiritual path. Without gratitude there is no progress on the journey towards compassion.

In recent years we have seen the growing popularity of what is call positive psychology or the psychology of happiness

I was fascinated by what new research says about the role our brain's grey matter plays a role in forgiveness- there is a neural pathway for change in our ability to forgive ourselves and others –this is the Gratitude factor

Forgiveness Research and the Gratitude Factor

Those who have the ability to be forgiving are often viewed as people taking the high moral ground. Many times we see them as peacemakers. Yet, we learned from new research that there is a neuro-anatomical basis to forgiveness. The researchers reported:

"We found that local grey matter volume in the left anterior superior temporal sulcus, a region in the functionally defined theory of mind or mentalizing (Now that’s a new word for me) network, was associated with the degree to which participants relied on information about innocent intentions to forgive accidental harms. Our findings provide further support for the key role of mentalizing in the forgiveness of accidental harms and contribute preliminary evidence for the neuroanatomical basis of individual differences in moral judgments."

Wow! That’s a mouthful. We simply use the word teshuva.

Researchers in this emerging field of the psychology of happiness say about forgiveness for "unintentional harmful behaviors." While we may not be aware of the grey matter in our brains, we are aware of the our own feelings about anger and forgiveness, we have been made aware that anger can be harmful both to ourselves and others. When thinking about forgiveness, there is the one who asks forgiveness and the one who accepts the apology. But even if the apology is not accepted, when we are angry at someone, we are still ultimately responsible for forgiving the other person — even if they are wrong. Refusing to forgive and holding a grudge is dangerous to our health.

One of the themes of Yom Kippur is that we pray that any intentional harmful behaviors be judged as unintentional.

Another researcher adds: "If someone is stuck in an angry state, what they’re essentially doing is being in a state of adrenaline. And some of the negative health consequences of not forgiving or being stuck there are high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, not having a good immune response. You’re constantly putting your energy somewhere else." She explains the concept of forgiveness training in four simple steps:
• Identify what the problems are.
• Work on relaxation techniques.
• Challenge your own responses.
• Change your thoughts from negative to positive.

She also notes that help with overcoming anger may come from a mental health professional, a close friend, or a trusted religious adviser. Rabbis are always offering advice.

**The gratitude factor** Changing one's thoughts from negative to positive is a challenge. In addition to rewiring one's brain, an attitude of gratitude is helpful.

Professor Robert Emmons at the University of California, Davis notes that

"Gratitude is an attitude not a feeling that can be easily willed. Even if you are not satisfied with your life as it is today, if you go through grateful motions, the emotion of gratitude should be triggered. It is like improving your posture and, as a result, becoming more energetic and self-confident. Attitude change often follows behavior change. By living the gratitude that we do not necessarily feel, we can begin to feel that gratitude that we live."

As the children of Israel respond to the call of Sinai they say: na’aseh ve-nishma – we will do and we will hear. This is true of every mitzvah: we have to taste it, try it on, and only then can we come to understand how it will fit into your life.

He said that there are at least four gratitude boosters. These include: Smiling, saying "thank you," sending thank-you notes, and making gratitude visits.

In relationships, forgiveness is liberating. It frees us from a negative attachment to a person who has hurt us — even if that person is someone we love. This liberates us from the cycle of negativity and anger allowing us to open our hearts to gratitude, happiness, and love once again. Focusing on forgiveness, training one's brain for gratitude, or accepting gratitude as an attitude clears a path for embracing forgiveness and promoting positive relationships and a certain peace of mind.

**Rewiring your brain in three minutes a day**
Dr. Loretta Graziano Breuning, says that you can rewire your brain to see good in the world. She discusses the concept in her book The Science of Positivity: Stop Negative Thought Patterns by Changing Your Brain Chemistry.

She explains that positive energy "gets ignored because it has no place to flow until you build a new pathway. And you can do this by focusing on the good three minutes a day for 45 days or three times a day at one minute intervals," she said. This makes me think of our tradition of saying modim anachnu lach — we thank you in the Amida of Shacharit, Mincha and Ma’ariv- the three times set for prayer each day. Dr. Breuning added that there is catch. One must keep up the gratitude focus for 45 days even if it seems fake or foolish.

"If you miss a day, start over from Day One. You must go 45 days straight because that is what it takes to get a new trail established. Trailblazing takes a lot of focused energy. Make your energy available for gratitude. You'll be so happy that you did."
Once you’ve created that new neural pathway for gratitude "you will be less likely to take the old road of negativity."

So now we have scientific proof for the process we have had in the Jewish tradition for millennia, forgiveness is not only a measure of reacting to guilt –but that we can actually effect the anatomical pathways by training our brains for gratitude as a pathway to forgiveness.

In that spirit I want to take a brief time expressing gratitude:

To Howard Cohen and Myra Musicant who believed in the vision of transforming Temple Beth Zion into TBZ. They are the co-founders of our congregation, they have been and continue to be steadfast mentors since the beginning.

To Anne and my family –how grateful I am that you put up with me. It’s not easy to be a Rabbi’s wife and it isn’t always easy to be daughters of a Rabbi

To all of you in this marvelous congregation who have taught me the strength we have together in community. Strength to overcomes difficult times and to open our hearts to celebration

To all of our family’s dear friends over many decades.

To all my teachers (from Kindergarten to those who sat on my doctoral dissertation committee at Brandeis)

Too many teachers to mention tonight.

What I’d like to do is mention a few teachers that have had the greatest impact over me for the last 30 - to 40 years

As we enter into this 25-hour opportunity of introspection let me point to a number of lessons that, among many, has shaped my view of the what it is to be a Jewish human being. All of these lessons are building blocks to nurture our souls and our minds: all of these lessons are pathways that nurture our awareness of ourselves and our interactions with others and the world. I hope that you take these lessons in for yourselves.

All of the teachers I will mention have illustrious biographies. But in this short time it is impossible to go into them. I will be offering a late winter three session exploration of Jewish Renewal that I hope many of you will attend.

After my participation in founding of the Tibetan-Jewish dialogue with the Dalai Lama, in 1989-90, I was introduced to Sylvia by Rabbi Rachel Cowan, of blessed memory, who has recently passed away after a valiant struggle with cancer, I am grateful for Rachel’s nurturing of meditation practices within congregational life. Anne and I are also grateful that we were trained by Rachel in supporting Wise Aging explorations within our congregation. Rachel was an institution builder who will be greatly missed.

Both Nishmat Hayyim and Wise Aging are TBZ projects that are foundational to TBZ. Please continue to support them by hour participation.

Lesson One from my mentor Sylvia Boorstein, a very well respected mediation teacher in both the Buddhist and Jewish communities and a wonderful exemplar of the integration of Buddhist-kayt and
Yiddishkayt. Read her book, *Funny You Don’t Look Buddhist* for her fascinating story of her path to this integration.

Sylvia provided me an introduction to silent and spaciousness, the art of being in the moment and the creation of spaciousness of soul and spirit that liberates me from the constant flow of stories that our minds produce. The huge majority of these thoughts are illusory and by paying attention to the very nature of reality I see before me as I return to the moment and attention to the breath. The creation of spaciousness of mind, of being in the moment, the diminishment of ego, to see in YHVH the Divine as the unfolding of reality and most important how to integrate this practice into a strengthening of Jewish learning and observance. I am also grateful to Sylvia’s being there with me in difficult times. She is a model for my self-acceptance. This is a gift I will always cherish.

Our building of Nishmat Hayyim: The Breath of Life Meditation project is our way of paying forward this precious gift. I am grateful that Bobbi, Sheila and Reggie have made this paying forward possible.

I am grateful to the three Rabbis who agreed to pass on their lineage to me by granting me *semicha* in 1996 when I was 47 years old. I was ordained as a non-denominational rabbi and made sure that TBZ be an independent congregation with not bound by affiliation. We were simply going to be a Jewish shul.

These three teachers have illustrious biographies, but there is no time this evening to share them with you. I’ll be offering a 3 session class on Jewish Renewal in late winter/early spring. I hope many of you will attend to learn more about these remarkable teachers.

Among their many lessons I have been inspired by I will only pick a salient one from each of them.

I am grateful to Rabbi Everett Gendler for guiding me into the deeper meanings of seasonality.

I am grateful to Rabbi Arthur Green for guiding me the deeper sense of textuality.

I am especially grateful to Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, of blessed memory, for this deep understanding of davenology.

Seasonality

My early years were spent in walk up apartment buildings in the Bronx and Brooklyn. I was as far from nature, aside from Prospect Park, as one could be. Those were the days when veggies were eaten out of cans.

I am thankful to Rabbi Gendler for offering me many opportunities over the last decades, to sit on a large earth tiller; to fight the beavers damming up his creek; to shoveling llama manure to fertilize a vegetable garden; to build wire enclosures to protect blueberries from being filched by birds. And to his dear wife, Mary, for teaching me how to plant flowers and bushes. This was a great leap from the Brooklyn of my youth to the mountains of Great Barrington.

Rabbi Gendler taught me, and so many others, deep connection of our traditional to the earth. He reminded me that as we come from an agricultural culture – from an agro-culture we must become aware of the sun and the moon and the constellation of stars all around us. Rabbi Gendler’s patient paganism in the best sense of the word, pagan means a person associated with the land –in Hebrew an am ha-aretz –a term that took on negative connotations as we were exiled from the land.
I first met Rabbi Gendler at a birkat hakhamah – blessing of the sun ritual that takes place once every 28 years, it was on Wednesday, April 8, 1981 (4th of Nissan, 5741). I believe it was on the coast of the North Shore. According to rabbinic calculations, once every 28 years, on the same day of the week and at the same hour of the day, the sun returns to the position where it was when it was first created.

We celebrated Rabbi Gendler’s 90th birthday last month, may he be blessed with many more years of health. He has lived to see his plantings grow from saplings to solid trees, as many of our young Jews are involved in all aspects of food priorities from farming to food policy. It is gratifying that Rabbi Gendler, the grandfather of this Jewish environmental and ecological consciousness continues to have an impact.

Rabbi Gendler is a pacifist, a student of A.J. Muste, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.; a Diasporist, and a teacher of non-violence to Tibetans. He and his wife, Mary, have traveled to Dharamsala, India, the residence of the Dalai Lama and his community to teach non-violence techniques for political change annually over the last 20 years; their most recent trip was last spring. They have built well upon on the foundation of our 1990 encounter with the Dalai Lama and his community.

I am grateful that he has one of the most supportive people in my life and given me a blessed glimpse into the possibility of living in harmony with nature, how adam and adama remain in sacred balance

Seasonality is the presence of variations that occur at specific regular intervals less than a year, such as weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Seasonality may be caused by various factors, such as weather, vacation, and holidays and consists of periodic, repetitive, and generally regular and predictable patterns in the levels of a time series. The course of our holidays- hagim-which means circling-, the intercalation of the solar and lunar calendars marks the passing of the seasons. This cycle is crossed by the wheel of our lives and like a gyroscope it maintains its balance by marking our ongoing lives chronologically with the grounding of our spiritual lives that must be rooted in seasonality, the ground of our very being. The planet and the universe are to bear our stamp as we march through our lives. Our impact on the planet must coincide with our desire to make this planet truly an abode for the Divine spirit, a spirit that all reality possesses. The pulsing urgency of our lives is matched by the pulsing life of the natural world around us. The farmer is by his/or her very nature a person of faith; faith that all the necessary interactions of the self and nature will combine to sustain life.

I am grateful that he has one of the most supportive people in my life and given me a blessed glimpse into the possibility of living in harmony with nature

Textuality
Interpration of text was not knew to since by years in yeshiva, undergrad years at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and a doctorate from Brandeis attest to my ability to interpret text. But studying text with Rabbi Green was different. I am most grateful to Rabbi Green for what I have learned about being a teacher and a student. As a marvelous teacher he always studies with his students. All of us in the room struggle to wring meanings out of ancient words in Hebrew, Aramaic and in case, Yiddish.

Jews are deeply connected to text and textuality. and when we delve into our majestic Jewish library, texts that go back over 3 millennia we discover jewels of wisdom will enhance our lives as Jews and human beings.

Textuality is not just about the written word; it also comprises the placement of the words and the reader’s interpretation. There is not a set formula to describe a text’s textuality; it is not a simple procedure. This summary is true even though the interpretation that a reader develops from that text may decide the identity and the definitive meanings of that text. Textuality, as a literary theory, is that which constitutes a text in a particular way. The text is an indecidable (there is an inexistence of an effective or "strict" method of writing or structure).

According to one scholar the essence “...of textuality is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation – they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of”. To form an opinion, criticiz, or completely interpret a text you would first have to read the complete literary work as a whole, this enables the reader to make supported judgements on the personality and individuality of the text. The text is always hiding something. Although the reading may define and the interpretation may decide, the text does not define or decide. The text rests as operationally and fundamentally indecidable.

This is a high brow definition of how we engage with Torah every Shabbes morning at 9. By the way, this is a great time to join this study group as we will be beginning the Torah cycle right after Simchat Torah. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary.

The lesson that Rabbi Green, may he too be blessed with many more years of health, entrusted me to pass on is that no text is ever finished. The expansiveness of our commentary, our emotional reactions and the exhilaration of intellectual pursuit are forever pushing us into new depths of textuality.

A different view of textuality is that it is, mediated by an operational memory, "a shared (and internally contradictory) mental space of the cultural community and its various subgroups where texts are produced and processed", which contains different kinds of knowledge, standards and codes shared to different extent by the carriers of the culture. ... this model is complementary to a model of cultural practices, in which the production, distribution and transmission of meaning is regarded in the context of individual participation and activity, while a textuality is necessarily shared and perceived by its carriers to be an objective, albeit constructed, reality.

Rabbi Green is a pioneer in the late 20th and 21st century’s neo-Hasidism. He has delved into the mystical and Hasidic wellsprings of the tradition and grasps the radical nature of these teachings. Radical in the sense of getting to the root, the shoresh, of these materials. He has, as he says, dipped deeply in the muddy material to extract the gems that are sometimes hidden in traditional orthodox
commentaries on these teachings. He has rescued the pearls out of their enclosures and brought this intense Jewish literature to us in a relevant and thoughtful way. His introduction to a new and the best Zohar translation by Daniel Matt, for instance, provides a concise and excellent guide to this mystical masterpiece that has influenced Jewish life since the end of the 13th century.

While no one can master all of these texts, but everyone here should at least know what opportunities there are to deepen your Jewish journey. Again, language is no longer a barrier and Rabbi Green and his students are translating and interpreting more and more of classic mystical and Hasidic texts every year to provide access to all of us. We should at least know what we are missing out on.

Please consider taking a life-long learning course at TBZ this fall. A brochure of offerings is available to you this evening.

Davenology

Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi who passed away on July 3 2014 was my rebbe for 40 years. Davenology the art of tefila. I am grateful for his ingenuity in Connecting to the divine in tefila. davenology is a technique for davenen, the Yiddish word for prayer. Reb Zalman said the word may have evolved from the Latin, divinus, the Divine.

Reb Zalman’s great contribution to Jewish spirituality is his invigoration of our prayers lives. Davenology is the path of revealing the deep structure of our liturgy- how to chant it in Hebrew and the vernacular, how to elevate from to a form that uses all of our parts.

I first became enchanted with Reb Zalman, the founder of the Jewish Renewal approach to Judaism and Jewish life, in 1974 when I heard him sing Yedid Nefesh, the poem we sing as an introduction to kabbalat Shabbat in an English translation that could be sung to the same tune. For a former orthodox yeshiva bochur this was astonishing. I continued to be astonished by my teacher over all years I was his student. Imagine English that didn’t have to sound Protestant, no stiff responsive readings but rather using words in every language to open the heart. To achieve a tefila that was avodah she- be- lev, the service of the heart. (The Yedid Nefesh tune happens to be a Chabad tune. Reb Zalman was a Chabadnik for close to 40 years. He was one of first shlichim –emssaries, to establish a Chabad presence on American college campuses in the early 1950’s.)

I am grateful to Reb Zalman’s gift to us- the capacity to reveal the deep structure of tefila. The many parts of the tefila that correspond to the deep structures within us.

Body consciousness, heart consciousness, intellectual consciousness and transcendent consciousness, four worlds, the four quadrants of our humanity. We inhabit all of these worlds at all times. Using his version of the arba olamot the four worlds, Reb Zalman, who was immersed in Kabbalistic and Hasidic tradition, saw the prayer experience as an echo of all our desires. Davenen in the four worlds —is true Avodah she be lev –true service of the heart.
Using is his invigoration of our prayers lives –Davenology is the path of revealing the deep structure of our liturgy- how to chant it in Hebrew and the vernacular, how to elevate from to a form that uses all of our parts.

In his last talk a few weeks before his death at the age of 90 he taught

*They used to say that when you’re davvening alone, you davven in Hebrew; when you’re, however, davvening with a group you can, from time to time, put in English, the vernacular. I want to turn it around. I want to say it’s much better to davven in Hebrew when you’re with a group and when you’re alone, during the week, you davven in the vernacular.*

*He continued:*

*But what would be if you had to have the Siddur show you how to read from the book to someone (and in this case, to God.) So it will touch you only if: hashma l’ozn’cha mah she’motzei mipicha / if you cause your ear to hear what your mouth is saying.*

*השמע לאזנך מה אתה מוציא מפיך*

*Then: nafshi et yatza b’dabri /

Then: nafshi et yatza b’dabri /

This is the thrust of our ancient wisdom pathDavennen with feeling –the importance of kavana- directed intentionality. Where do wish tefila to lead you? Could you imagine you do a Mitzvah, whatever you do and your heart feels fully harmonious with your action, how good that feels.

“You will see: The more you do it, there will be a moment of the breakthrough that you will have the sense that ‘Ah! Today, not only did I talk to God; today I knew that I was heard by God and I was given back an answer!’, though not necessarily in words. So keep trying that.”

Some will hear that voice as a shofar gadol yetakah- a clarion trumpet call to action- others will hear the kol demama daka- the small silent voice deep within you that offers consolation.

Rabbi **Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel**, talked about Anthropopathy, the belief that if we have feelings of love and of care, that the universe, God has these feelings for us and so that we can [converse].

Gratefulness is a very [easy] entrance door, “Thank you, thank you.”

Reb Zalman suggests say something about how you are inspired about what you see in the world, the plants that are growing, the animals that you see, etc.: Whatever it is that you want to say, “*Hallelujah, I thank you for this, hallelujah I thank you for that.*”

And then, he suggests, after you’re done with that, go inside of yourself and reach into a place where the archetypes are, where the angels are, where the great future lives, and there, address God to align you to Her will so that you can really feel that what you’re living, what you’re doing is, “Thy will be done rather than my own.”
Gratefulness is a very [easy] entrance door to prayer. Each morning we awaken with a declaration

Modeh ani lefaneccha she hazarta be nishmati- thank you for returning my soul to me. This awakens us to life renewed.

Prayer can be many things: a petition, protest describing how things ought to be but aren’t yet. Gratitude and praise aren’t technically prayers but rather are externalizations of our deep inner lives expressed in poetry and prose. avodah she-be-lev - the service of the heart.

Reb Zalman’s refinement of the kabbalistic methodology of kavanot –directed intentionalities. is such a contribution- distilled through his many years as a Chabad Hasid that brought us to the understanding of the four worlds –the ladder upon which we climb to connect to the divine. For Reb Zalman God has a listening ear and we are able to offer ourselves as the speech that is heard. While this can be done in any language we are bound as Jews to rediscover of Siddur and makhzor as vehicles for the transmitting and receiving the shofar blasts and the thunder of Sinai –at all times.

Reb Zalman wanted us to know that you should not pray silently in Hebrew or English. It may feel funny at first but once you reflect that you couldn’t speak if it weren’t for God making a mouth for you; that you couldn’t think if it weren’t for God to make you conscious. So it’s not a question of is God present or is God not present. If I am here, then God is here. I wouldn’t be here without God being here.

My dear teacher’s last words at that talk, weeks, before his petira, his leaving the plane of physical existence were:

If the Ribono Shel Olam (the Master of the Universe) is going to grant me another year to be with you here, it’ll be a joy!

And if not:

SO LONG IT’S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YOU
SO LONG IT’S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YOU
SO LONG IT’S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YOU
Yai diddle diddle dai.

I hope that I have over the ears at TBZ and in former incarnates that I have passed these lessons on to you.

Seasonality our appreciation of the nature’s seasons and the seasons of our lives. Thay wse find harmony and be a part of the world and not apart from it.

Seasonality –where we are in the natural world

Textuality –to find ourselves in our traditional chain of Torah study; to learn a Jewish way of interacting with our tradition with a mindful heart-centered intellect; to make Torah a part of our ongoing curiosity and to extend that curiosity forward to those who come after us.
Davenology how we situate ourselves to speak to God and be heard. Our voices in tefila are never blocked- the ozen kashevet- the listening ear of YHVH the unfolding of reality is always receptive. IKt is always transmitting to and we must tune in the station each of us needs for clear reception of that transmission. In turn our transmission to the Source of Being is always received on the station that best reveals our hearts.

Take these lessons into your hearts and minds as we sit here together over the next 25 hours and then take them outside to your joy-filled Sukkah. Take these lessons and build your life renewed on these foundations. Bring all of these lessons into the world.

Last but not least, my grandson Eli has been a great teacher of mine. My daughter Brina, my daughter, and my son-in-law, Ian are wonderful parents. They have the direct responsibility for Eli’s needs and will make the necessary decisions for their family’s welfare. For close to 6 months I have learned a new role. It’s not an easy one. How to let go and accept decisions that I haven’t made. In my direct observation of Eli I have learned much about what it means to be a Zayde. In the June Koleinu I wrote a letter to Eli and apologized that I will have to learn on the job.

I am very grateful for Eli’s coming into the world. My father is a sole survivor of a large family, his wife, daughter, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews were all gruesomely murdered. My mother the eldest of 8 children had only her mother and one sister who emerged from the devastation of mid- 20th century Europe. Imagined portraits of phantom faces - unknowable ghosts that inhabit my dreams. The Shoah constantly hangs over me and has been the greatest impetus for my work building bridges and connections with people of good faith wherever I can find them. This immense sense of loss committed and commits me to the rebirth and continuity of Jews and Jewish life. Eli is a most wonderful link in fulfilling these aspirations. All of our children and grandchildren are the links of continuity as we go on our journey in the never-ending saga of the ever-dying people. We still have a lot to contribute, as we have throughout our existence, to humanity’s progress towards a better world. We continue to do despite the growing animus towards us in many places in the world.

For this I am very, very grateful.

This is the last Kol Nidrei talk I’ll be giving at TBZ. Next fall I will be here in another capacity. Rav Claudia, as the Rabbi of the congregation, will take on this honor.

I first met Rav Claudia 15 years ago or so at a Rabbinic conference. At the time I believe she was interning at B’nai Jeshurun in NY as part of her rabbinical studies at the Conservative movement’s seminary in Jerusalem. A few years later, after completing her studies, she found her soul mate in Rabbi Ebn and they moved to Boston. When I heard she was the Rabbi at the Jewish Community Day School, I reached out to her and asked her to consider being a pulpit rabbi at TBZ. As a daughter of a pulpit rabbi she had some understandable hesitation. Her dedication to working with young people was her main focus. For its first decade TBZ had flourished as an “adult” shul, but no congregation wants to be a one-generation phenomenon.

I asked her if she would at least assist me for the High Holidays one year while she was at JCDS and, fortunately for us, she agreed to co-lead the services. Our collaboration was a successful and has continued to be so over the dozen years we have been together. This led her to join us as an assistant
Rabbi, progressing to associate Rabbi and then Rabbi, when I became senior rabbi three years ago. She has been instrumental in making TBZ what it is today and continuing its spirit into the next generation. Her commitment to what TBZ has accomplished and her vision for the future is exciting and invigorating.

Rav Claudia’s deep learning, compassionate heart, extraordinary energy, and remarkable davening (leading the congregation in joyous celebration) is exceptional and has deeply touched all of us.

Her innovative spirit brought us Bet Rabban, our Hebrew school, as well as our remarkable monthly Nariya service one Friday a month. Attendance at Nariyah, after 3 years, continues to grow and it is the most intergenerational service in our area.

Most important of all is Rav Claudia’s commitment to our community; she has joined me over the years to both celebrate milestones in our congregation as well as to provide comfort and solace to our members as their lives move on in both predictable and unpredictable ways.

Rav Claudia’s is bringing TBZ forward in fulfilling the mitzvah of tikkun olam. In these difficult times, activism is more necessary than ever.

On April 1st, I will start a 3-month sabbatical and will return in my new capacity as founding Rabbi or, as I like to think of it, the “Zayde position” in the shul. As I embrace this role, I will take Eli’s lessons very seriously.

My wise wife, Anne and I, will continue our Wise Aging project, and I will continue to be active in Nishmat Hayyim, our mediation community and will train the next generation to take on these efforts. I will also still be available to those who will want me to officiate at life cycle events.

As founding Rabbi of TBZ over 20 years ago, it is gratifying that Rav Claudia’s joining us has brought us from strength to strength. It is gratifying that what was started over 20 years ago will remain an integral part of the Boston Jewish community. Over the years, innovations at TBZ have had enormous influences on other congregations in our community. This will be the case for many years to come.

Transitions are hard. There are many things I will miss in the everyday running of the shul. And there are many things I really glad will no longer be my responsibility. Rav Claudia and the Board will be responsible for decision making. Zaydes don’t make decisions, they encourage, offer advice if asked, they smile and make funny sounds and faces. Sometimes we are asked to babysit. Most of all, Bubbies and Zayde’s love unconditionally. TBZ was once my baby and now it is grown and it is vibrant and vigorous. A new generation will join our founding generation in building and maintaining a bond that strengthens the whole shul.

It is a thrill that Rav Claudia will be TBZ’s Rabbi. You will still see me as a part of TBZ in the capacities mentioned above until my retirement in five years, if God gives me these years.

When it comes to gratitude it is hard for me to articulate how deeply supportive Rav Claudia has been to me and my family. Her steadfastness will serve the congregation well in the, hopefully, many years to come.

I have grown greatly from my interactions with all of you. You have taught me what generosity of spirit can do. I wish that all of us offer this generosity of spirit to our Rabbi Rav Claudia. I hope Rav Claudia
knows how deeply our family appreciates her and her family. Her presence makes this community so special.