

## **Marilyn Saltzman** **Yom Kippur speech**

Shana Tova. I am happy to be here with you tonight to celebrate the holiest day of the Jewish year, which allows us to cleanse our souls through atonement and our bodies through fasting. Since Kol Nidre is my mother's favorite service, please picture with me my mother sitting next to Jesse Zeller. My mother – a beautiful, almost 84-year-old woman, shorter than me but with less gray hair.

For me, Yom Kippur is inextricably tied to fasting. As I wrote in my Shofar article, I remember my early fasts as a teen-ager: the pounding headaches, the competition among friends about who could last the longest, the bargaining with God to be written in the book of life.

Then, in college, I stopped believing in the omnipresent, omnipotent God, and I stopped fasting. Later, as I cautiously waded back into Judaism, I began (and I'd better say this carefully) to half-fast, eating a small breakfast and a late dinner.

However, I still didn't get it until studying with Rami Shapiro and Rabbi Jamie. Now, I fast with intention, to cleanse my body and mind and to partner with God in my soul searching. A Native American friend once told me that fasting and chanting helped him reach a deeper level of self-awareness. That's my wish this Yom Kippur.

So as I begin my fast, I think about what I have to offer. And I recognize that I have three very valuable commodities to spend – love, money and time. Luckily, love is infinite. In fact, the more I give, the more I get. But unfortunately, time and money are finite. So I have to make choices about how I spend them ...and this Yom Kippur I reflect on whether my choices truly mirror my values.

Sometimes, I spend these precious commodities by habit rather than intention. I go to Safeway rather than checking whether the items I need are on sale at King Soopers. I waste gas and time as I go up and down the mountain rather than being efficient in running my errands. Though I believe in recycling, I can't seem to get into a new habit of taking my CBE Tikkun Olam recyclable bags into the grocery store.

But other activities clearly show what I value. For example, how I spend time. I spent the last week with my ill mother in Florida. We talked about life and death, her childhood and mine. We watched re-runs of Bonanza and sat next to each other on the couch reading our mystery novels. And in a role reversal, I cooked our family menus – steak on Tuesday, meatballs and spaghetti on Wednesday, fish on Thursday, and of course, matzo ball soup and chicken on Friday. I will remember this valuable time together for the rest of her life and mine. Time spent doing what I value most.

And then there's charitable giving. What does that say about what we value? For me, it's about fighting breast cancer, clothing children, feeding the hungry...and of course, CBE. For Irv, it's about saving animals and supporting NPR. Choices based on values.

According to Jewish tradition, there are two types of generosity – t’rumah, a gift from the heart and tzedakah, a commitment.

The first, according to Alan Morinis in our Mussar book, *Everyday Holiness*, is “giving because your heart is so moved that without even the flicker of a thought your hand rushes to dig into your pocket.” An example: I remember one night when Irv and I went to dinner before a concert. He was carrying a box of leftover salmon as we walked to the DCPA, and there was a homeless man on the street, asking for spare change. Irv asked the bedraggled fellow if he liked salmon, and when the man said yes, Irv handed over his Styrofoam container without missing a beat.

Tzedakah is giving as a commitment, like when I answer the phone and a tenacious telemarketer convinces me to give to the Israeli Red Cross or Chai Lifeline for sick Jewish children. I write the check and fulfill the commitment.

Like me, each of you is making daily choices about how you spend your time and money – these valuable and finite resources. Like me, you probably make some of these choices unconsciously, by habit, and others are made thoughtfully, reflecting your values.

So today, I’d like you to think about where CBE ranks on your list. How much do you value CBE? What does it mean to your spiritual and social life? How important is it that we have a vibrant Jewish community in the mountains? How much do you care about a religious education for your children?

As you consider your priorities, think about why you became a member of CBE. Is our community of equal value to your membership in a gym? A country club? Your ski pass? We hope there is a higher purpose here. We need your financial support and, in return, we will sustain you in ways other memberships cannot – providing support for your spiritual needs, your simchas, and your sorrows.

I hope you will decide, as our board and other donors have, that CBE is a high priority for you, and your giving reflects how much you value it. Thanks to their generosity, we have met about a quarter of our \$36,000 goal for the year. Whatever amount you are able to give, we hope it comes both as t’rumah, from the heart, and as tzedakah, a commitment to our synagogue.

To make it easy for you to give, we have pledge cards in the foyer. Just fill in the blanks and leave it in the box. Or take the card home, discuss what you can give as a family and mail it back.

While our campaign is based on the number 36, double chai, marking our 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we encourage you to give at whatever level is comfortable. Our goal is 100 percent participation – an expression that ALL members value CBE and want to participate in creating a financially secure, vibrant Jewish community today and for the future.

Before I conclude, I want to thank Neshama for all her hard work to make the holiday services seamlessly successful and the Board and the committees for their work during

the holiday season and throughout the year. Thanks to Rabbi Jamie and Steve Brodsky for their contributions to our services.

Finally, I'd like to follow in the footsteps of my predecessors and ask for your forgiveness on this night. Whether I have hurt or offended you by any action, or inaction or by any words I have spoken, including my HH appeals, I apologize and ask for your forgiveness.

May this Yom Kippur be filled with meaning and may you start the new year with a clean slate where you give and receive love infinitely and make intentional choices, based on your values, about how to spend your finite resources of time and money. I hope you choose to spend both with CBE!