

L'SHANA TOVA

FROM RABBI STEVE



Congregation N'vay Shalom

*A Transdenominational
Synagogue
Dedicated to the
Renewal of
Jewish Spiritual Life*

CONGREGATION N'VAY SHALOM

Oasis News

High Holiday Issue

The Road Back

“Transgression is one of the most frequently words used applied to sin. In Hebrew a transgression is called an ‘Aveyrah.’ It comes from the word Avar, which means to cross over or to pass by. It means an act, which crosses a boundary or blocks the path of another, thereby, disrupting the path of that person against whom the transgression is committed. We all live lives that either parallel or intersect with the lives of others. Intersection is not always transgression. Frequently, and more commonly, the intersecting enriches both parties. It may in fact change their direction for good, rather than for ill. Or it may enrich the moment while the two continue on their original path. A transgression, however, leaves one blocked, confused, hurt or misdirected by the transgressor. It is also understood that the transgressor continues in the wrong direction along a path, which leads to more transgression of others’ boundaries and the disruption of their lives. These Days of Awe demand of us that we look back at the moments of intersection where we may have inadvertently or intentionally transgressed the life of someone in our path. We are then directed to make T’shuvah, reconciliation (badly translated as repentance) by turning backwards along the path we came, retracing our steps to where we have caused hurt and/or damage to the life of someone who had the misfortune of being in our way. In my studies, of both the spiritual and the psychology of a transgressor, one thing seems to be held in common and that is that such a one is so intent on their own path, that they have little or no insight into the impact upon others around them who intersect with their lives or even parallel it for a while. This one is so single focused about their life’s purpose and accomplishments that they tend to interpret everything they do in terms of their own path rather than that of the other. Each of us on these Days of Awe are offered a ‘stop sign’ so that our head long progress towards some unknown destination must cease for a moment while we are obligated to turn around and look back down the road to see what ‘litter’ and ‘damage’ we have left behind. The word T’shuvah means to turn around and go back, literally to return. It is similar to returning to the scene of an accident that we’ve caused in order to take responsibility for it and whatever injuries have resulted. In these difficult days that we are all facing, in which our personal lives and fortunes, as well as our professional lives and futures, are threatened, it is profoundly difficult to stop, take a breath, turn around and assess what our lives look like at the end of this year of carnage. Since last Rosh Hashanah to this, our country and our lives have turned upside down,

many of us are profoundly uncertain about the way we are going, let alone where we have been. The engine that drives us now is fueled by loss, fear, anger, abandonment and even panic. We have all been witness to the consequence of those people who have transgressed the lives of so many and their thoughtless abuse of influence, only to leave many lives in ruin. We have seen and felt how our government is truly unable to provide protection and support and we wonder about the future and if it will change any time so that each of us can redirect our lives externally, in the way we sustain our selves and our families or internally about our psychological and spiritual selves of safety, well being and meaning. Transgression happens at all levels of our society, whether it is the micro or the macro event, we are either disruptors or those who are disrupted. So we need to learn to give each other the permission, and even the request to turn around and come back to a place from which we began, last year, and to assess how we got here. To return is a profound act of giving to the one who is injured because like Tzedakah (the act of righteous giving to one in need), T’shuvah provides healing, support and nourishment to those who we have hurt. This T’shuvah is a gift of righteousness for in it we offer ourselves for judgment, both to G-d and those we’ve hurt. In doing so we surrender defense self defense and become vulnerable to their pain, their anger, their disappointment and their fear of us and what we did to them. In so doing we step back over the boundary we have broken and seek to prepare it as much as possible. And for those of us who were transgressed upon, the act of T’shuvah is a gift and must be seen as so, because it provides us the opportunity to heal a wound and to regain a sense of wholeness. To the one who has the courage to return and make T’shuvah, we in return offer the gift of forgiveness, M’chilah, which comes from the Hebrew which means to blot out, remit a debt, to renounce and to forgive. When we receive honest T’shuvah we respond with M’chilah and blot out the debt, which is owed to us, by the damage caused in the transgression. By doing so, we are both free of the transgression and are able to proceed, in our lives, along the path of health and accomplishment.

Slichot

The poignant and mystic late night service of Slichot opens the High Holiday Season. We come together to open our hearts in prayer, study and song to prepare for the Days of Awe and Truth which begins a week later on Rosh Hashanah. This beautiful candlelit experience reminds us that we will leave our homes in the company of each other and stand in honesty before G-d on Rosh Hashanah to judge, cleanse and renew our lives. Slichot permits us to begin the gathering of our lives over the year, to sort out the issues we must resolve, and to establish the spiritual and psychological agenda that each of us will bring to the Days of Awe and Truth. This is a wonderful way for us to gather and to reestablish our unique and special community of N'vay Shalom. Location will be announced shortly. Also please go to our website and click on coming events for information for all services and events.

High Holiday Schedule

12 September	Slichot	9:00 PM
18 September	Erev Rosh Hashanah	7:30 PM
19 September	1st Day Rosh Hashanah	10:00 AM
20 September	2nd Day Rosh Hashanah	10:00 AM
27 September	Kol Nidre	7:30 PM
28 September	Yom Kippur	10:00AM
	Yizkor	1:30 PM
	Afternoon Service	4:00 PM
	Neila	6:00 PM
13 October	Sukkot	7:00 PM
21 October	Shmini Atzeret (Yizkor)	10:00 AM
21 October	Simchat Torah	7:30 PM

High Holy Day Services
will be held at
Temple Akiba
5249 S. Sepulveda Blvd

www.NvayShalom.com

L'SHANA TOVA FROM CANTOR EVA



What a year! There isn't one person who hasn't been impacted by the events of 2008-2009. Every corridor of our world has shifted, changed, been reduced and in some cases totally wiped out of existence. Jewish organizations, large and small, have been impacted, needing to adjust their *raison d'être*, needing to question the future, understand the past and/or cope with the present.

We watched the political landscape blossom as the first Black man became President and at the same time our financial structures collapsed, men cheated to such an extent that is humanly unimaginable, thousands lost their homes and millions have lost their jobs. The level of insecurity and fear is palpable amongst all those we know in every walk of life and every level of our society. This kind of anxiety, that is imposed by all the external realities of our lives, is often hard to understand and/or manage. None of us have control over the world and the many people who greatly influence it. We are often the casualties of forces beyond our control. Yet, we must find the where with all to continue our lives, sustain some semblance of sanity and walk through each day with as much dignity as we can muster. We all question what the future holds and dig deeply within to find the resources to move forward, despite any opposing forces.

Personally, it has been challenging, as well, since, I too, have become one of the statistics, we hear ever day on the news, one of the over 10% who is now out of work. I will no longer be the Director of Admissions and Recruitment for the Academy for Jewish Religion. It is a shocking reality that one is never prepared for.

We all question what the future holds for us and our families. We question our own competence and wonder if we have failed and why we have not been able to go untouched by the inevitable forces of these times. The High Holy Days are precisely the time within the Jewish calendar that we are called to take a deep breath, look within ourselves, assess our strengths and achievements as well as our failings and misguided behaviors. The Jewish calendar is a cycle of precious moments that each provide opportunities for the full gamut of human experiences—from the joy of Sukkot, the cleansing and rebirth of Pesach, the reattachment to Torah at Shavuot, the frivolity of Purim, the sadness of Tisha B'Av, the rededication of Channukah and the personal/spiritual growth of the Yamim HaNoraim, the Days of Awe.

We have entered into the month of Elul. In Hebrew, each of these letters represents a phrase from Shir HaShirim, "*Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li*", "I am my Beloved and my Beloved is mine." Why would the most sacred of months, that demands deep inner work and reconciliation with our loved ones, with G-d and with ourselves, be described in this statement which represents the intimate and loving relationship of two people, or as the Rabbis point out, the intimate and loving relationship of the people Israel and God? Because this is precisely what T'shuvah is all about. As Rabbi Steve pointed out, its literal meaning is 'to return' to deepen the connections with those we love and/or have friendships with, with the Holy One and with the best part of ourselves. To be able to reconnect with our *true nature*, that so often gets veiled by all that impacts us physically, psychologically and interpersonally. As Rav Kook teaches "T'shuvah is rising above the limitations of finitude and seeking higher levels of development, to aspire to 'perfection.' It is a statement of faith, to know we have the power to improve our lives, our relationships and our future.

Rabbi Akiva started his path of study at age 40. Totally ignorant of Judaism, he opened a door to a world unknown to him and became one of the greatest Rabbis in our history. He proved that it is never too late to begin a new path and recreate who we are. Each year we receive the gift of this precious time, dedicated to changing our lives for the better and strive for greatness. I share a section from a beautiful poem by Rabbi Harold Schulweis that articulates so beautifully this concept.

The last word has not been spoken, the last sentence has not been written, the final verdict is not in.

It is never too late to change my mind, my direction,
To say no to the past and yes to the future,
To ask and give forgiveness.

It is never too late to start over again,
To feel again,
To love again
To hope again.

May this year bring each of us closer to our true selves, closer to those we love and closer to the Holy One, Blessed Be He and She. In these trying times let us share, together, in community, the lifting of our spirits and the journey to 'Perfection' that the Days of Awe offer. Shana Tova!

"RUACH" A Spirited Shabbat Service

This year we will share celebratory, meditative and dynamic Shabbat services.

We will announce the location this High Holy Days. We are committed to providing meaningful, shared experiences. In these trying times communal gatherings provide support and care we all need. Stay tuned!!



****If you wish to order a memorial plaque for your 'loved one(s)' please let Cantor Eva know at 323-463-7728 by Sept. 20. The cost is \$250.00.**



Tashlich

Join us after services Sept 19 to symbolically cast out our sins into the flowing water so it can be swept out to sea. We will meet at Marina Del Rey Lagoon, 6666 Esplanada, Playa Del Rey. Bring a bag of crumbs or empty your pockets to lighten your soul of all that it carries. Directions will be provided at services.

Go to www.JLTV.TV click new programs and see Rabbi Steve's and Cantor Eva's new show

"In the Moment"