

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

So much has happened to me and my family in the year since we have prayed together. At that time, I spoke about the difficulties we would face due to the financial crisis. We were deeper into the recession than any of us knew. Our losses could be substantial, not just in terms of money but also in frustration and despair. I spoke about the need for wisdom of discernment regarding those who spoke the truth whether in business, politics or personally. We understood that the one place we have to turn is our family and friends to share our struggles. My goal was to find a way to understand happiness, fulfillment and satisfaction. Ironically, it came to me in a slum in India. I had returned to India last Dec. for another round of healing. Eva bundled me off for 6 weeks to find the strength, stamina and courage to continue our lives while living with my chronic condition. I lived with a good friend, adjacent to one of the many slums that are the universal condition of most Indians in this city. We went regularly to help care for some of the families with food and medical care. I was welcomed with great courtesy and deference. I watched these families work together in the direst of conditions and yet find moments of happiness and satisfaction and hope. They soon began calling through the alleys, 'the rabbi is coming' and they would welcome me into their homes/hovels where I would share a meal and even participate in some healing. On New Years Day morning I went to cash some travelers' checks, preparatory to my leaving so I could buy some presents for my family and friends. As I walked out of the bank with a wad of ruppies I saw an old woman. She look about 80, sitting on the curb sorting the contents of a dumpster, not an unusual sight in Mumbai. Suddenly this wad felt too heavy and I said to my friend, "I would like to share some of this with the woman." I offered her a \$50 ruppie note, which for her was a fortune. At first, with a toothless grin, she accepted the gift, then seeing the amount, her eyes widened, she became agitated and handed it back. Puzzled, I looked at my friend. His inquiry of her revealed that she was only in her early 40s, the sole support of her family and if she took the note, her life would be in danger, since she would be a target for thieves. I took back the note and gave her some smaller bills and walked on, my ears still filled with her blessings of me, my family and that I should live a long life. I felt so overwhelmed that I said to my friend, "We should do something for all the kids in the slum. Let's give them a party for Near Years." So he let it be known that we would be having a party for all the children. I spent about \$5 providing food for 250 children. As we

walked into the field there were so many waiting for us. We set up a table and he said, "OK you pass out the food." As I sat there, handing out hot sandwiches and chocolate to a long line of kids, I was overwhelmed by their sense of joy. It became a really party with music and dancing. I received so many genuine smiles of gratitude that my heart burst with a sense of satisfaction that I have not had in a very long time.

Since I have been home, those images remain with me. When I sit with Eva, our children and our grandson, living the life that we do here, I realize how inappropriate my complaints and worries are. My life is so full of blessing and abundance that I can't describe the sense of gratitude that I feel for all the blessings that are poured upon me from those I love and all of you, with whom I pray. In Torah there is a phrase that says, "You shall eat, be satisfied and then bless." It is the first appearance of the requirement to pray, so the earliest formal blessing is to bless G-d for the food we eat. As difficult as our lives may be, in this last year, and as difficult as they may be in the year to come, the Jewish New Year, for me, is like the feeding of the children of the slum. It teaches me to be in gratitude for all that I have been given and for all that I can give. The greatest of all my transgressions happen when I fall into despair of my own life and forget my blessings. One of the meanings of the word B'rachah, blessing, is a flowing of water that never ceases, like an oasis in the desert, from which we can all drink when we are thirsty. These Days of Awe are for me an expression of gratitude, for the gift of healing I received in India and for those who made it possible. It is my support against the struggles that I face every day. I join this year with you in this spirit of blessing and gratitude for the ability to cleanse myself from the darkness I create in my own life and pray that each of you can do the same. I wish you all a Shana Tova. May it be filled with joy, satisfaction, peace and more importantly good health.

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. This beautiful candlelit experience reminds us that we stand, together, in honesty before G-d on Rosh Hashanah to judge, cleanse and renew our lives. Slichot permits us to establish the spiritual and psychological agenda that each of us will bring to the Days of Awe. This is a wonderful way for us to gather and to reestablish our unique and special community of N'vay Shalom. We will meet at our home, for this beautiful service, Saturday, Sept. 24, 9:00 pm as the darkness fills the universe and we open ourselves to the fragility of our lives.

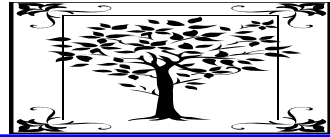
High Holiday Schedule

24 September	Slichot	9:00 PM
28 September	Erev Rosh Hashanah	7:30 PM
29 September	1st Day Rosh Hashanah	10:00 AM
30 September	2nd Day Rosh Hashanah	10:00 AM
7 October	Kol Nidre	7:30 PM
8 October	Yom Kippur	10:00AM
	Yizkor	1:30 PM
	Afternoon Service	4:00 PM
	Neila	6:00 PM
12 October	Sukkot	7:00 PM
20 October	Shmini Atzeret (Yizkor)	10:00 AM
30 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



The Jewish New Year is approaching, a strange concept, for those of us who mark our time by a very different calendar. Being a Jew in a non-Jewish world can often feel schizophrenic. We're pulled by the daily routine, the four seasons, the academic year and the major civil holidays that hold our culture in unity. And yet we are called to a different order, one that awakens deep emotional connections. The Jewish year is a cycle that demands our attention, historically and spiritually. It moves us through every emotion imaginable. We cry and we sing, we mourn and we celebrate, we feel shame and we feel pride, we feel angry and we feel awe, we search for crumbs of bread to prepare for Pesach and we display a horn of plenty for Sukkot, and we dig deep inside and most importantly we connect with family and friends. Each moment reflects a unique quality. It is a healing spiral, lifting us higher and higher, closer to our truer selves and the Divine connection.

So here we are again. The alarm is ringing—wake up, wake up. Your spiritual clock is calling you, reminding you it is time to focus on your inner canvas. It is a time that is either filled with doom and dread or awe and anticipation. It is evaluation time. Do we deserve an A, B, C or F? Was this past year meaningful, productive or growthful? Was it filled with highs or lows or both? Did we accomplish our goals, move forward or did we fall short, stagnate and/or procrastinate? Were we kind, patient, loving, accepting, giving, honest, dedicated or were we lost, angry, sad, mean, uncaring, disappointed and/or disillusioned? We are called to examine whom we have been, to take a deep look at ourselves. Our Jewish calendar is marked by a kind of 'therapeutic' awareness during the month of Elul. Time dedicated to deeper understanding, careful evaluation and thorough cleansing of our souls. This is the time in 'our' year that is deeply personal, highly emotional and incredibly transformative.

Not only do we look backward but we also look forward. How will each one of us approach the future—with regret or with anticipation? Can we move ahead or will we stand still? Do we see possibilities or not? Can we let go or must we hold on? Will we be open to new insights or tied to long held beliefs? This is our challenge, as the New Year, in our Jewish calendar, invites us, once again, to enter this dynamic vortex. To walk through the portal

and become more than we ever thought we could be. It is a time to feel pain, sadness and/or regret and lift it to acceptance, satisfaction and joy.

It is also the birthday of the world. It is a time to reconnect with the miraculous works of creation and the author of it all. The Divine presence, many of us lose touch with—to reconnect and become reacquainted with G-d. To share all that we are in the safety of our community and in the loving arms of the Shechinah.

This year marks another kind of moment that we all have to confront. I enter into the classification of 'senior citizen,' the big 6—5—moving me into the population of the aging adult—that place I never quite expected to reach. I still remember my parents and their friends in their sixties and how old they seemed, just a generation ago. No talk of vitamins, supplements, exercise, fresh and organic food, continued studies, massages, facials, anti-oxidents, glucosamine, fish oils, anti-aging creams and powders etc etc etc. They weren't bombarded with information to stay healthier, younger and more vibrant and neither did they have the benefit of the scientific knowledge to support health and increase stamina and longevity. It is a new world we live in and I certainly don't feel 65, whatever that is. I often forget that I am aging at all and continue to work, play and study as if I am a mere young adult. However one does take stalk of ones life when these pivotal moments in our lives present themselves. As many of you know I am in Rabbinic school expanding my wisdom and increasing my skill. Being memory challenged, however, a typical phenomena of aging, I'm not sure how much I will retain, but the joy of learning and expanding is something that feeds my mind and my soul. In the Jewish world they call it 'aging and saging,' growing more mature and wiser and shifting into a place of teaching and mentoring for others. I'm still not sure how I want to celebrate this upcoming birthday, but I hope I will continually see each year and each stage as an opportunity for celebration and expressing gratitude.

It is an enormous gift to be able to share with all of you the tender moments our Jewish calendar provides. I look forward to seeing your shining faces at Temple Akiba as we pray, sing and meditate, choosing life always.

****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 29 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.

HOLD THIS DATE!!

November 18, 19, 20

**Weekend of Renewal and Rejuvenation
With Rabbi Steve and Cantor Eva
Find Peace-Calm-Joy**