Healing from the Pandemic
By Rabbi Michele B. Medwin, D.Min.

When we gather together for Rosh Hashanah this year, either in person or on Zoom, I would like to take time to collectively reflect over the past year. A great deal has happened since we last "gathered" for High Holy Days. At the time we were deeply immersed in the Pandemic, trying to keep safe, hoping for a successful vaccine, missing friends and family, and experiencing the High Holy Days like we never have done before - alone in our homes, but also together through our electronic devices.

Jewish history reminds us that life is a journey. We know of the Israelites travels throughout the wilderness, and the many places our ancestors have journeyed to, escaping persecution, or trying to find a better way of life. During the past year our journey was more personal, more inwardly directed, until the vaccine finally enabled us to once again journey outside, but with a very different perspective than we had before the Pandemic hit.

When we go through difficult "journeys" in our lives, we can let it get to us, let it take over our lives, or we can find a way to grow and mature emotionally and spiritually. There is a Jewish expression – *Gam zu l'tovah* – Even this is for the good. We can be permanently wounded or find a way to move towards healing. Healing comes from acknowledging losses but also by realizing the positives that were gained through the experience. I encourage you to reflect on the past year since Yom Kippur. Write a paragraph about the losses you have experienced over the year, but also what you have gained, and what you might have learned about yourself. (Losses include not only the physical but also loss of experiences.) Send your paragraph to me in an email (rabbimedwin@me.com) by August 15th, and we will use these reflections to share our collective experiences as a community when we meet again during this Rosh Hashanah.