

A Rabbinic Perspective *By Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom*

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From Rockin' and Rollin' to Davenin' and Learnin'



Last month got underway with "AJ's *Shabbat Rockin' Eve*." It was a spectacular event on an absolutely glorious summer evening. So many people made the joyous, festive, hand-clapping and toe-tapping, "service and happening" possible. **David Seltzer** and the band he organized were phenomenal. They got us singing and swaying and lifting our voices in a spirited way.

The challenge we face now is to take the enthusiasm, spirit, and love of God and friendship for each other that we felt and make it part of everything we do at AJ. We have a wonderful congregation. But we need to make it better by harnessing our energy into making this not just a congregation that can rock 'n roll, but one that is committed to "davenin' n learnin'."

And that is much harder. Judaism is not an easy religion. Despite attempts to make it "accessible," despite the efforts to make services and study fit easily into our lives, Jewish living requires effort and knowledge. It requires learning what to do, and the dedication to putting it into practice. It requires not only the feeling of the heart but the commitment of the will.

The *Talmud* teaches us that the world exists by virtue of three things, *Torah*, *Avodah* (prayer), and *Gemilut Hasadim* (deeds of loving-kindness). Each of these three pillars is interrelated. *Torah* teaches what is to be done. *Avodah* and *Gemilut Hasadim* are how we express what we must do for God and for others.

As we begin a New Year, I implore you to search your heart and your will to find the desire to learn through studying our sacred texts, to worship regularly at synagogue services, and to perform kind deeds that make our world sweeter. We have so many ways of fulfilling these goals. We need but the will to embrace them and fold them into our lives.

We will find that our own lives become sweeter, and we make those of all we meet and greet sweeter, too.

I want to again thank David Seltzer for a herculean effort in organizing our *Shabbat Rockin' Eve*, along with the instrumentalists and vocalists who formed the band, **Mark Margolies**, **Harvey Orkin**, **Fred Poritsky** and **Jeremy Seltzer**. In addition, special thanks to **Neil Wise** who conceived of the great backdrop and handled publicity and arrangements for the evening, **Debbie Quint** for organizing the food service and membership outreach, and **Gavi Miller** and his office and custodial staffs for all of the set-ups. It was a great beginning.

Our year is off to a Rockin' and Rollin' start. Let's continue with Davenin' and Learnin'!

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