Shortly after the Northridge Earthquake a few years back a popular refrain in Rabbi's sermons was "Where was God during the earthquake?" This thought provoking question was an echo of "Where was God during the civil unrest" following the Rodney King verdict. But then the student of history realizes that we have pondered the whereabouts of God numerous times over the past century. Where was God when young men were being sent off to the Jungles of Vietnam? Where was God when our nation was torn by the struggle for civil rights? Where was God when young men again went off to war in Korea? Where was God when our parents and grandparents, brother, sisters, uncles and aunts marched to the gas chambers of Aushwictz, Birkenau, Treblinka, Madanjic? We are not the first, nor are we the last to ask "Where was God?" Each generation, each community asks and wonders in their time of need, in the greatest times of pain and hurting. We ask and we wait for the scholars, the preachers, the community leaders to provide us our answer, to tell us where God was hiding in our time of need.

Today on this Day of Remembrance, the question is raised again, "Where was God this past year?" Where was God when death took our loved ones, where was God when pain filled our homes, where was God when anger took over our emotions. We are hurt, we feel abandoned when tragedy strikes, and we cry out, "God why didn't you stop this, why did you let this happen, why weren't you there when I needed you?

Maybe God was stuck in traffic. I suggest that God was there in the tragedies that befell us only God arrived too late. God was too far away, we called out in need and our call, which should have been local was long distance. God was out of immediate reach because that is where we had put God.

When we look back on this past year, on the days we felt most abandoned, we must remember to ask was God in our lives the day before. Was their a place in our daily life, in our family ritual for God? Or had we become so caught up in our own successes, so sure in our own abilities to handle whatever pitch life through our way, that we had relegated and delegated God to some small far away place.

We ask where was God? And only we can answer because only we know where we put God last. When we make a space for God in our lives,

when we set a shabbat table, hang a mezzuzah on our front door, learn a little bit of our tradition, say the shema before we go to bed. When we keep God close to our heart, God will never be too far away to grab onto in our times of need.

Many of us who went through the earthqauke now keep a survival kit in our car, in our home, in our office. We are never too far from the sense of security that radio, water and granola bar provides. Yom Kippur reminds us to do the same with God, to keep a little piece of our faith close at hand, when we lie down and when we rise up, to keep a reminder of God as a sign upon our hand and between our eyes. Yom Kippur reminds us to keep God near even as we walk on our way through all of life's inspiring and successful journeys. If our reflections have taught us anything this Yom Kippur it is that life is full of twists and turns, challenges and obstacles. Many we navigate with great efficiency and skill, but every now and then we get tripped up, we feel lost and we call out for help, we call out for God. And no matter how far off the path we are we expect God to hear our call to find us in our time of need. Our tradition teaches that God will always come looking, God will never abandon us, but it is up to us how hard we are for God to find.

We have already made a lot of promises and resolutions for the New Year, but this year let us make one more, let us all resolve to keep God close in our lives, to keep God near. So that the next time we are in pain, the next time we call out where is God? We won't have to feel alone, and we will hear that soft whisper, "He'nani, I am right here, right where you kept me."