

## **Rabbi Lewis' message for November 2003**

If you were with us at Neilah at the end of Yom Kippur, you may have heard the sounds of a local soccer game being played outside our open sanctuary windows. Now I confess that there are times when noise bothers me during a service (almost always if I am trying to deliver a sermon at the same time a baby has decided to deliver one of her own), but this was not one of those times. This time, the sounds made me smile because they reminded me of two reasons why we always build a sanctuary with windows to the outside. First, we are never to become so inward in our prayers that we forget about the world outside. Second, we hope that those outside of our sanctuary will hear us praying and will know that we have included them in our prayers.

The noise from the soccer game made me think about the relationship between how we pray inside our sanctuary and how we live outside in our daily lives. When we are outside the synagogue, do we think: What can I bring from my Jewish tradition that will help me to handle this situation? When we are inside the synagogue, do we think: What can I bring in from my outside life that will benefit the members of the congregation? The high holy days just past challenge us to integrate our lives so that the outside and the inside enhance each other in this new year. Just as the spices of havdalah are supposed to remain in our nostrils from one Shabbat to the next, reminding us of last Shabbat and staying with us until next Shabbat, so, too, are the themes of the holy days designed to stay with us as both a reminder of the past and a hope for continued change in this new year.

May the sounds outside our window remind you of your vows for this new year and may we in your synagogue community help you to fulfill them.

Rabbi Ellen J. Lewis  
November 2003