

## **Rabbi Lewis' Message for October, 2011**

No matter what I write about Israel, it will be out-dated by the time you receive this newsletter. Right now, we are holding our collective breath, anticipating what might happen when the UN decides how to respond to Mahmoud Abbas's request for recognition of a Palestinian state. By the time you read this, we will know the answer. It is hard to know what road to peace is the right one but declaring a unilateral Palestinian state at the UN surely isn't it. We can only hope that the threat of doing so will bring both parties back to the negotiating table; that will be the only road to peace for Israel and the Palestinians.

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs e-mailed a packet this week to American rabbis and educators. I'd like to share with you the words of their introduction. I felt that the words captured the feelings I have as I wait for the UN vote.

The High Holy Days are a time of dichotomous emotions.

The sternness captured in the liturgy, of asking for forgiveness and praying for our future, is balanced by the sweet honey that elicits the opportunities that lie ahead. This year, 5772, we feel the Holy Days' urgency as dramatic changes grip our region. Indeed, we will usher in the New Year on the heels of unprecedented shifts in the Middle East.

At this crucial moment in the history of Israel, Jews around the world are coming together to welcome the New Year. Israel, the ancient homeland of our people and the modern realization of our self-determination, relies on the strength of our community world-wide.

It is poignant that the holiest time of year aligns with a turning point for us within the international community. As our Palestinian neighbors choose to circumvent engagement, we call on them to take our outstretched hand, to advance down the true road towards peace.

Neighbors must learn to be friends, not enemies. Now is the time to make our united call.

We are committed to peace. We seek an end to conflict. We must achieve a viable and secure future with two states for two peoples.

We strive for a time when our children and our neighbors' children never again experience war, and when all of us will be able to realize the dream of a better future.

We present to you, rabbis and educators, this resource guide on the theme of peace, with the hope that it will be of assistance during the Tishrei holidays. We all understand the need for peace, security and hope. Now is the time to engage those around us to find our communal voice.

May the coming year be a sweet one in which the vision of the prophet will be fulfilled that each man will sit under his vine and every woman under her fig tree and none shall make them afraid.

L'Shana Tova U'Metuka

State of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We echo the ancient words of the psalmist who long ago prayed for peace:

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

May those who love you be at peace.

May there be peace within your ramparts,

Peace within your citadels.

For the sake of my family and friends, I pray for your well being.

Psalm 122

Rabbi Ellen Lewis