

further out than my neighborhood and certainly not much beyond the border of our country. Today, what happens on the other side of the globe is as relevant and known, in an immediate sense, as what happens in our own neighborhood. Perhaps in some cases it might be easier to know what is happening across the globe than it is next door.

Yet culturally, we Jews often look at the world through very different eyes and actions. The Jewish approach to New Years, Rosh Hashanah, is very different than the secular New Year. The Jewish people gather together at synagogues and Temples. We pray together, we think about the past year – our sins, and also what we were proud of. We examine ourselves and our community. Lastly, we try to re-center ourselves and plan to do better the next year. Unlike the revelry and party like atmosphere of the secular approach, the Jewish method is done with much seriousness and focus of judgement on our acts as individuals and as a community.

Do not misunderstand – the Jewish people like to party as much as other cultures and religions. I have said many times that there is no such thing as a sad Jewish holiday. Even Shabbat should be full of joy, song and happiness. Yet unlike the secular New Year, we take the time to make our holidays and celebrations far more relevant, significant and meaningful. The day after we party on December 31<sup>st</sup>, we simply take a new breath as a person and then begin to plan forward, if we plan at all. After the Jewish New Year, our thoughts have already been focused, so on the following day we are ready to forge ahead.