Dear Friends,

At the start of the Hebrew New Year, I would like to thank you for your courage in the face of a reality that is more convenient to ignore, when it is far easier to think of other things.

Rosh Hashanah, our New Year, is an opportunity to review the past year and be grateful for the courage shown by over two hundred Jewish-Israeli leaders from across the political and social spectrum. Men and women who, despite internal and external complexities within a conflicted and challenging reality, bravely chose to touch upon, listen to, and cope with the Palestinian reality. Over five hundred Jewish American leaders continue to deal with this reality, despite being faced with a multitude of other challenges.

This is also an opportunity to acknowledge the great privilege of being part of our nation, while recognizing that our present and future—as a nation—are entwined with the fate of the Palestinians who live among us. We have no choice but to cope with the many complexities that it entails, while prioritizing our future as a nation in this land with irrefutable respect and compassion toward all who live in the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

According to our tradition, Rosh Hashanah also marks the day when mankind was created. The Talmud (BT *Hagigah* 12a) states that God created a light on the first day of creation that allowed mankind to see from one end of the earth to the other. Our vision since the days of Adam and Eve may be increasingly less discerning, but this light is a fundamental part of who we are; it allows us to clearly see things that are only visible when we shift our gaze to the East, toward our realm of responsibility, making us the sons and daughters of Adam.

Upon this New Year we choose to see from every direction, clearly and with much sensitivity, the reality in which we live; to study it in depth and to work toward a better and more stable reality.

In order to enable several hundred Israeli and North American Jewish leaders to spend the next few years looking, listening, and clearly analyzing this reality for which we are all responsible, we turn to you with a plea/invitation to donate to Encounter.

Anyone who donates over $360….