



September 2024 D'Var Torah

Dear Friends,

We are amid the month of Elul, the period of spiritual preparation for the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe often referred to as the High Holy Days. At the end of each weekday morning service during this month the shofar, the ram's horn, is sounded with the notes that we will soon hear in synagogue on Rosh HaShanah, the New Year.

This year the seven staccato blasts of the shofar known as the shevarim (meaning "the broken") will have heart-breaking relevance for so many of us. Will they remind us of the sobbing of the relatives and friends of so many murdered among our Israeli brothers and sisters? Will the shrill, short notes drive home for us the brokenness that exists throughout the world and in so many of our lives?

And yet this is not the finale of the shofar sounding. The shevarim are followed by the three longer blasts known as teruah and concluded by the long concluding blast of the tekiah g'dolah, the great majestic eternal sound that we hope ushers in better days if not the messianic era.

I believe that the most important sound in the shofar service is the one that follows the tekiah g'dolah and that is the sound of silence. We look into our souls and ponder the following questions: What kind of a year do we want it to be? What kind of world do we want to exist? And what kind of lives do we want to live?

I wish you, your loved ones, and the entire world a Shanah Tovah u"Metukah, a Better, Sweeter, New Year, and let us work together to make it so.

Shalom,

Rabbi Stephen Shulman,
Pastoral Services