

Shofar Service Reflections

And from the top of the mountains the shofar sounded, heralding a new year, a new month, a message for the people to wake up and pay attention. The words of our Shofar service, *Areshet s'fateinu ye-erav l'fanekha, el ram v'nissa, mevin u-ma-azin, mabbit u-makshiv l'kol t'ki-atenu. U-t'kabbel b'rah.amim u-v'ratzon seder malkhuyyotenu*, May the words of our lips be pleasing to You, exalted God, who listens, discerns, considers, and attends to the sound of our shofar blast. Lovingly accept our offering of verses proclaiming Your Sovereignty.

For almost fifty years, Alan Friedman, z'l, stood in this place, first with Sam Weiner, and then after he passed, as our ba'al tki'ah, sharing with us the sounds of the shofar. For almost fifty years, as Alan would breathe into the shofar, he opened our ears, our minds and our hearts with each note that we may listen, discern and consider our actions and our lives. He fulfilled the mitzvah of sounding the shofar for all to hear that we should be called together on this Rosh Hashanah day to examine our lives, placing each moment of the past year, each action of each day, before ourselves and before God. That we should embrace our accomplishments and challenge ourselves to reach higher with each breath. His sounding of the shofar asked us to consider our place in the world remembering that each of us have the responsibility to be co-creators with God in building a world of peace, respect, and compassion for all.

These past few years were challenging for Alan as his breath began to diminish. It would take as much effort as possible for him to walk from one place to another and with his oxygen tank close by, he would spend more time listening and sharing in the breath of others. However, when it came to Rosh Hashanah, the oxygen tank was set to the side and his breath filled his lungs like no other time during the year. The desire to stand in this place and sound the shofar and ask God to lovingly accept our prayers, filled his lungs, his soul, and ours.

This year, we miss his presence in this space. But his breath is still a part of ours. And while Chelle asked Matthew Griffin to stand as our ba'al t'kiah as Alan truly respected the compassion with which Matthew sounds the shofar, we hold this space for him at this moment.

And with Alan's shofar before us, we still hear his call, and we are moved to listen and breathe.

We call upon Matthew Griffin, Joel Ross, and Michael Gropper to sound the shofar, from mountain top to mountain top. Bring us to the heights where we find God and where we are moved to listen and hear.

May the words of our lips be pleasing to You, exalted God, who listens, discerns, considers, and attends to the sound of our shofar blast. Lovingly accept our offering of verses proclaiming Your Sovereignty.

Amen.

And now, as we begin our calls, join with me, in one voice as we recite each call. But for this first section, we shall pause after each call, silently recalling Alan's call to us.