



Dear Community,

There is anticipation for change in the air.

After living where the weather barely changes through the year, I have gained an appreciation for these moments. The warmth is just a touch less steady as summer begins to consider sliding into autumn.

I'm reminded of a teaching by Rabbi Tali Adler, about how the concept of a new year is not intuitive in nature. She writes that "days and hours follow one after the other without natural demarcations", in a teaching about the necessity of human ingenuity and courage to carve out true change.

Nature will not tell us that a new year has begun; the change will be gradual and different year by year. But the gently ebbing warmth reminds me also of how slow transitional periods are built into our calendar quite deliberately. The new year may require human demarcation, but it is not sudden. We are reminded, slowly and steadily, of the place we are going.

This change began with a cycle of special Haftarat after the close of Tisha B'Av. This month, Elul, is filled with preparation as we move toward Rosh Hashanah. The sounds of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur have been winding into our liturgy. We have introduced the Psalm of the Season (Psalm 27), which will accompany us through the High Holy Days. The shofar is blown every morning, a kind of spiritual alarm clock. And through all of this, we are reminded that the goal of this month is to engage in *cheshbon hanefesh* (spiritual accounting) and *teshuvah* (repentance/returning), specifically in our interpersonal relationships.

And soon, we will come to S'lichot - special prayers for forgiveness for the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah. We hold a dedicated evening service for the introduction of this liturgical intensively. This year, our S'lichot service (9pm on Saturday 13 September) includes our cantorial leads, Yoav and David, alongside guests Chazzan Bex Blumenfeld, Clive Kennard, Shir Jewish Music, and guests from around the Masorti Movement. I hope to see you there.

Rabbi Adler teaches that it takes human courage to create the change we desire. I believe these moments of growing anticipation are essential for creating the space for that experience. Our rich liturgical tradition is not only beautiful, it is also a profound reminder that there is work to do: to prepare for change, and to have the courage to create it.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Natasha

