

In just a few days, we will begin our celebration of the high holidays - the yomem no'rah'em. One of the most striking parts of our celebration of these high holidays is the blowing of the shofar. The 20th-century mystic, HaRav Kook, explained the pattern of shofar blasts like this: *Tekiah*, is one long blast—it signifies that the world was created complete. The second one, *Shevarim*—literally means breaks or fractures and signifies that human beings, and natural forces, have broken and shattered the world. The short, staccato sounds of *Teruah*—might make us feel as though the world is broken beyond repair. But we return to *Tekiah*—with help, we can rebuild it again and make it whole.

Welcome back. It has been about 6 months since we closed school to protect ourselves from the COVID-19 virus. I can still feel it in my heart when I think about collecting my belongings, turning off the lights, and closing the door on the 19-20 in-person school year. I prayed for our students, our families, our community, our world—to rebuild and to be made whole again. I hoped to return in two weeks but knew it might be longer, and indeed it was. And here we are! Our school building has reopened to welcome our new and returning students. Despite these challenging times—HDS has enrolled 18 new students from 13 new families. The sound of laughter has once again filled our space, engaging learning across all subjects can be heard from our indoor and outdoor classrooms, and our smiles can be felt, even from under a mask. Having our children back in the building feels like rebuilding and feels whole. *Tekiah*.

As we listen to the sounds of the shofar this year, let's remember that this cycle of wholeness, brokenness, wholeness, is a part of the human experience. Let the shofar blasts be our prayer that, for all of us, our broken notes—our *Shevarim* and *Teruah* —are always followed by a whole note, a *Tekiah*, and ultimately even a *Tekiah Gedolah*.