



THE SYMBOL OF SHOFAR by Seth Goldsweig

LESSON AT A GLANCE

Students will explore the role the shofar plays in the synagogue during the High Holidays and the role it played in the Tanakh.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will hear the different types of shofar blasts sounded in synagogue.
- Students will learn about the role of the shofar in the Tanakh.
- Students will create shofar sounds that reflect their own understandings of the themes and messages of the High Holidays.

LINKS

- Behrman House resources on shofar:
<http://www.babaganewz.com/teachers/lessons/bhshofar.pdf>
- Source sheet: <http://www.babaganewz.com/teachers/lessons/7101sources.pdf>
- Videos of the sounds of the shofar:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkThNw210is&feature=related>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6iNXRVN-WE>
- How to blow a shofar (video): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyHNKqmr-R8&feature=related>
- Instructions from My Jewish Learning on how to make a shofar:
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Rosh_Hashanah/In_the_Community/Shofar/How_to_Make_a_Shofar.shtml
- Origami shofar instructions: <http://www.babaganewz.com/articles/in-crease-ing-fun/>

VOCABULARY

תנ"ך	Tanakh, Bible
רגש	Emotion
מצב רוח	Mood
לתקוע	To sound, to blow (as in a shofar or trumpet)

ACTIVITY

1) Opening Discussion

(See the list of Behrman House resources provided to help answer these questions – see link at beginning of lesson.)

- Why do people go to synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?

- What are the special symbols you see in the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?

- What are the spiritual goals of the holidays?

2) Sounds of the Shofar

Explain to the students that the shofar plays an important role on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It would be helpful to have a shofar in class.

Play the sounds of the shofar that one would hear on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. These two brief videos review the sounds.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkThNw210is&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6iNXRVN-WE>

Ask students to write down emotions, thoughts, memories, etc. after hearing each sound. Have students share their ideas either in small groups or as a class discussion.

3) Role of the Shofar in the Tanakh

Divide students into four groups. Give each group one of the source sheets (source sheets are available to download and print – see link at beginning of lesson) and have them read the text, answer the questions, and then create a skit that re-enacts the scene in the Tanakh, with a focus on the role of the shofar. Ask each group to present its skit to the class. After every skit has been presented, ask a student to go to the board and write a summary of the role the shofar played in each context.

Questions for discussion for each of the following texts:

[What role does the shofar play in this story?](#)

[What mood/emotion is the shofar trying to create?](#)

Text #1 – The Giving of the Torah and Mount Sinai

<p>SHEMOT 19:16-19 On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses led the people out of the camp toward God, and they took their places at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for God had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently. The blare of the horn grew louder and louder. As Moses spoke, God answered him in thunder.</p>	<p>שמות יט:טז יט וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בִּהְיֹת הַבֹּקֶר וַיְהִי קוֹל דְּבָרָה וַיִּתְּנוּ קוֹל שֹׁפָר חָזֵק מְאֹד וַיִּתְּרַד כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה. וַיּוֹצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם לִקְרַאת הָאֵל קִים מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתְּיָצְבוּ בַתְּחִמֹת הַהָר. וְהָרַסִּינִי עֵשׂוֹן כָּל־וּמָנִי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו ה' בְּאֵשׁ וַיַּעַל עֲשָׂנּוֹ כַעֲשׂוֹן הַכִּבְשָׁן וַיִּתְּרַד כָּל־הָהָר מְאֹד. וַיְהִי קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר הוֹלֵךְ וְחֹזֵק מְאֹד מִשָּׁה יִדְבֵר וְהָאֵל קִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְּקוֹל.</p>
<p>SHEMOT 20:15-16 All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw</p>	<p>שמות כ:טו טז וְכָל־הָעָם רֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹל וְאֶת־הַלְפִידִם וְאֵת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר וְאֶת־הָהָר עֹשֵׂן וַיִּרְא הָעָם וַיִּגְעוּ וַיַּעֲמָדוּ</p>

it, they fell back and stood at a distance. "You speak to us," they said to Moses, "and we will obey; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."

מִרְחָק. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אֵתָהּ עִמָּנוּ וְנִשְׁמָעָהּ וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים פֶּן־נָמוּת.

Text #2 – Announcement of Certain Holidays

VAYIKRA 23:23-24

God spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month (Rosh Hashanah), you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts.

ויקרא כג:כג כד

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שַׁבָּתוֹן וַזְכֹּרוֹן תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ.

VAYIKRA 25:8-10

You shall count off seven weeks of years — seven times seven years — so that the period of seven weeks of years gives you a total of forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the horn loud; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month — the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)— you shall have the horn sounded throughout your land and you shall hallow the fiftieth year. You shall proclaim release throughout the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: each of you shall return to his holding and each of you shall return to his family.

ויקרא כה:ח י

וּסְפַרְתָּ לְךָ שִׁבְעַת שָׁבָתוֹת שָׁנִים שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שָׁבַע פְּעָמִים וַהֲיִי לְךָ יְמֵי שִׁבְעַת שָׁבָתוֹת הַשָּׁנִים תִּשְׁעַן וְאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה. וְהִעֲבַרְתָּ שׁוֹפָר תְּרוּעָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ דֵּשׁ בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים תִּעְבְּרוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּכָל אֲרָצְכֶם. וְקִדַּשְׁתֶּם אֶת שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וּקְרַאתֶם דְּרוֹר בְּאַרְצְךָ לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹבֵל הוּא תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם וְשַׁבְתֶּם אִישׁ אֶל אֲחֻזָּתוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶל מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ תָּשָׁבוּ.

Text #3 – Announcement of War

JOSHUA 6:1-5

Now Jericho was completely closed up because of the people of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And God said to Joshua, See, I have given to your hand Jericho, and its king, and the mighty men of valor. And you shall surround the city, all you men of war, and go around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. And seven priests shall carry before the ark seven shofarot of rams' horns; and the seventh day you shall go around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the shofarot. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the shofar, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and

יהושע ו:א ה

וַיְרִיחוּ סָגִירָה וּמְסֻגָּרָה מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִין יוֹצֵא וְאִין בָּא. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ רְאֵה נָתַתִּי בְיָדְךָ אֶת יְרִיחוֹ וְאֶת מַלְכָּהּ גִּבּוֹרֵי הַחֵיל. וְסָבַתְּ אֶת הָעִיר כֹּל אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה הִקִּיף אֶת הָעִיר פַּעַם אַחַת כִּי תַעֲשֶׂה שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים. וְשִׁבְעָה כֹהֲנִים יִשְׂאוּ שִׁבְעָה שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים לִפְנֵי הָאָרוֹן וּבְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִסְּבוּ אֶת הָעִיר שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים וְהָכֹהֲנִים יִתְקְעוּ בַשׁוֹפְרוֹת. וְהָיָה בַמָּוֶל בְּקִרְוֹן הַיּוֹבֵל כְּשִׁמְעַכֶּם אֶת קוֹל הַשׁוֹפָר יִרְעוּ כָל הָעָם תְּרוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וְנִנְפְּלָה חֹמַת הָעִיר תַּחְתֵּיהָ וְעָלוּ הָעָם אִישׁ גִּגְדּוֹ.

<p>the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. . . .</p>	
<p>JOSHUA 6:20 So the people shouted when the priests blew with the shofarot; and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the shofar, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up to the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.</p>	<p>יהושע ו:כ וַיִּרְעוּ הָעָם וַיִּתְקְעוּ בַשִּׁפְרוֹת וַיְהִי כַשְׁמַע הָעָם אֶת קוֹל הַשּׁוֹפָר וַיִּרְעוּ הָעָם תְּרוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וַתִּפֹּל הַחֹמָה תַּחְתֵּיהָ וַיַּעַל הָעָם הָעִירָה אִישׁ נֶגְדוֹ וַיִּלְכְּדוּ אֶת הָעִיר.</p>

Text #4 – Celebration

<p>II SAMUEL 6:12-15 And it was told to King David, saying, God has blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David with gladness. And it was so, that when those who carried the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.. And David danced before God with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of God with loud, joyous sound, and with the sound of the shofar.</p>	<p>שמואל ב' ו:יב טו וַיִּגַד לְמֶלֶךְ דָּוִד לֵאמֹר בֵּרַךְ ה' אֶת בַּיִת עַד בַּד אֲדָם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ בְּעַבּוֹר אַרְוֹן הָאֵל קִים וַיִּלַּךְ דָּוִד וַיַּעַל אֶת אַרְוֹן הָאֵל קִים מִבַּיִת עַד בַּד אֲדָם עִיר דָּוִד בְּשִׂמְחָה. וַיְהִי כִי צָעְדוּ נְשָׂאֵי אַרְוֹן ה' שֵׁשָׁה צָעָדִים וַיִּזְבַּח שׂוֹר וּמְרִיא. וְדָוִד מְכַרְכֵּר בְּכָל עֵז לִפְנֵי ה' וְדָוִד תָּגוֹר אֶפּוֹד בָּד. וְדָוִד וְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מְעַלִּים אֶת אַרְוֹן ה' בְּתְרוּעָה וּבְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר.</p>
--	--

4) Class Discussion

Considering all we have learned about the shofar today, what moods/emotions are important to create on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur? Explain your answer.
How can the shofar help you to achieve these moods/emotions?

5) Concluding Activity

Challenge your students to blast some notes on a shofar. Ask them to say whether or not they were able to create the mood they wanted with the shofar.

How to blow a shofar (video): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyHNKqmr-R8&feature=related>

FOLLOW UP AND ENRICHMENT

Host a shofar making program in your school so students can take home their very own shofar. Many organizations run shofar making programs, or if you have handy parents or members of your synagogue, you can find instructions online.

>>>Instructions from My Jewish Learning:

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Rosh_Hashanah/In_the_Community/Shofar/How_to_Make_a_Shofar.shtml

Pass out origami paper and these instructions so each student can make an origami shofar.

>>Instructions: <http://www.babaganewz.com/articles/in-crease-ing-fun/>