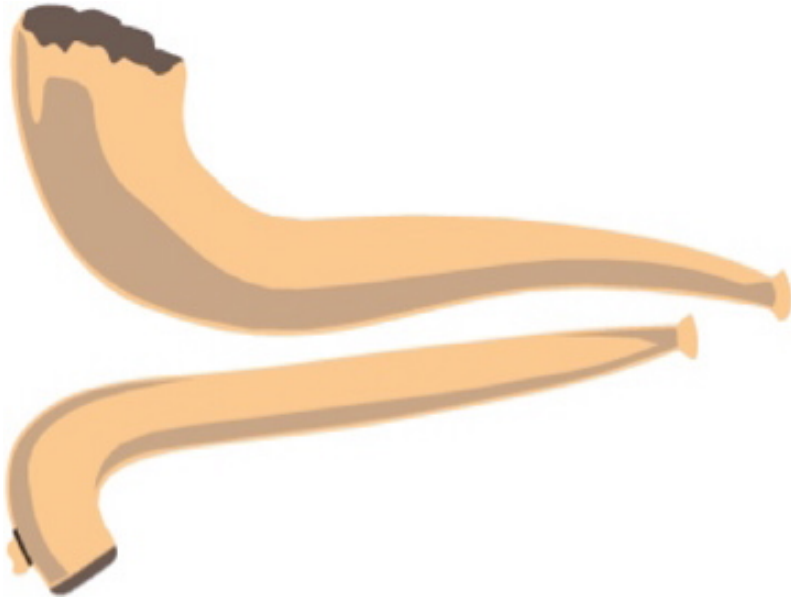


# SHOFAR



## ORIGIN OF THE WORD

Shofar is the Hebrew term for a trumpet made from a curved ram's horn. To sound the ram's horn came from the root word "Teruwah" in Hebrew which means clang-or of trumpets, acclamation of joy, clammer, rejoicing, high joyful sound, loud noise, wild shout, a battle cry, to announce forcefully or loudly. "Uwah" means to split the ears with sound.

Another root word of 'shofar' is "shafar". Shafar means "to shine as with brilliance of sound". It is called so because it makes a clear sharp sound, hinting at a brilliant burning into the hearts of Adonai's people.

## WHAT IS A SHOFAR?

The traditional short shofar is made from the ram's horn of a "Jacobs Sheep". The longer, "Yemenite" shofar, is made from the Kodo, an African antelope. They are also made from some gazelles. All shofars are

made from kosher animals. It cannot be made from the horn of a cow because of what happened with the golden calf image.

It is not considered a musical instrument but is blown for a variety of reasons.

## THE REASONS FOR THE SOUNDING OF THE SHOFAR

There are ten reasons for the mitzvah (commandment) of blowing the shofar, based on Rav Sa'adiah Gaon.

1. Rosh HaShana is the day that commemorates the creation of the world and it is described as the "coronation" of HaShem. As it is customary to sound a trumpet at a king's coronation so we blow the Shofar on Rosh HaShana. By blowing the shofar we recognize the "purpose" of the creation. (Theme: Kingship)
2. The shofar blast marks the beginning of a period of amnesty which is known as "HaYamim HaNora'im" or Days of Awe -- The Ten Days of Repentance. Repentance is based on the fact that since humanity has been given free-will, and our actions are not pre-determined, we must take responsibility for our actions. The ability to repent teaches us that our future is not bound by our past and that by changing our behavior we have the ability to change our past. (Theme: Resurrection/Repentance)
3. When the Israelites accepted the Torah at Mount Sinai, the sound of the shofar is described as "continuously increased and was very great" (Exod.19:19). The shofar serves to remind us of the revelation at Mt. Sinai and therefore to renew our commitment to HaShem and to accept that Torah morality is absolute and Yahveh given - not relative, nor does it depend on human understanding. (Theme: Marriage)
4. The prophets called out to the Jewish People and aroused them to improve their ways (the root of the Hebrew word for "shofar" also forms the root for the Hebrew word "to improve" (L'Shaper). The shofar reminds us of the admonitions of the prophets and their calls to repentance. We should be aware of the fact that HaShem communicated with us, via the Prophets, and displayed through them His desire to perfect us and not to punish us.
5. The shofar reminds us to pray for the rebuilding of the Temple where trumpets and shofarim were sounded. Just as HaShem manifests His presence in the world in specific places like the Temple in Jerusalem, He also manifests His presence at special times, such as during HaYamim HaNora'im (Days of Awe).
6. The ram's horn reminds us of the Binding of Yitzchak when Avraham demonstrated his absolute faith in HaShem by being prepared to sacrifice his son. HaShem demonstrated His absolute love for Avraham by having Him sacrifice a ram in his place.
7. The sound of the shofar is supposed to inspire fear in the hearts of those who hear it. It allows one to dwell upon fear of punishment, to progress from there to fear of doing evil and then to fear Yahveh. Finally one arrives at the feeling of awe of Yahveh.
8. The shofar reminds us of the day of judgment in the future. And inspires us to pray for the renewing of the world, all of mankind, and the Messianic era.

9. The sound inspires us to yearn for the ingathering of the Exiles, that will be heralded by the sound of a shofar. There will be absolute unity among the Jewish People and our connection to the Land of Israel will again be absolute.

10. The shofar recalls the resurrection of the dead which will be accompanied by the sound of a shofar. As Yahveh is the source of all life and the creator of all existence so He has complete control over death. (Theme: Resurrection)

#### **OTHER REASONS FOR SOUNDING THE SHOFAR**

The shofar ushers in the Divine court session and shows our trust in HaShem's judgement. By showing our eagerness to be judged by HaShem we thus confuse the heavenly prosecutor, HaSatan.

Shofar blasts were sounded preceding a war - to rally the troops for action and to call the people together for prayer and repentance and assembly. The shofar is therefore like an air raid siren that alerts us to danger, and summons us to action.

The Shofar (Ram's Horn) is a natural wind instrument, one of the oldest known to the world. In earliest times, the Shofar was used by Jews as a musical instrument.

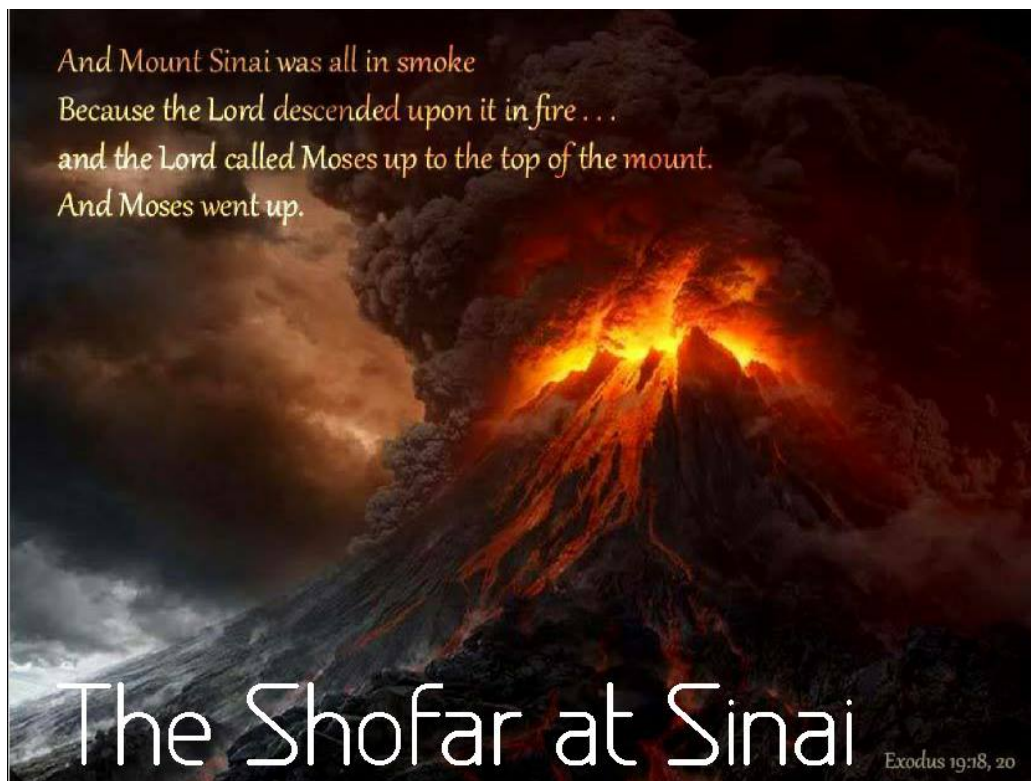
Originally the shofar was blown to signal each new month (the New Moon). On those occasions short blasts were sounded. But on the New Moon of Tishrei, long alarm blasts were sounded. The Torah states in vi'Yikrah (Leviticus 23) the reason for the long blasts. It explains that the New Moon of the seventh month marked the beginning of the period of the Holy convocations of Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippor and Succot. The first two of these feasts are NOT joyous holidays. They are rightly called "HaYamim HaNora'im" or the Days of Awe and they celebrate Yahveh's role as Master of the universe. They contain themes of resurrection, kingship, marriage and judgement but they emphasize morality, self-examination, spirituality and holiness. On Rosh HaShana, the Shofar blasts about 100 times.

The Blasts of the Shofar also cause us to recall the time that Yahveh revealed Himself on Mt. Sinai and gave us the Torah. *"The whole world trembled at Your Presence, Creation shook in awe before You, when You, our King, did reveal Yourself on Mt. Sinai to give to Your People the Torah and its Commandments, letting them hear your majestic voice, your holy words out of flashes of fire. Amid thunder and lightening did You reveal Yourself to them, amid the sound of the Shofar did you appear to them."*

The Shofar will be blown during the final battles of Israel with its enemies. It will be sounded when our Exiles return. It will be sounded when the Temple will be rebuilt. It is the sound signifying the Presence of the majesty of Yahveh. We ask that it be sounded again with the arrival of the Mashiach.

#### **WHAT IT REPRESENTS**

The shofar represents the ram caught in the thicket, when Abraham was about to sacrifice his 37 year old son Isaac. Likewise, it represents Yahveh's humble substitute for us, Yeshua. In this way it represents all that we are, prepared to sacrifice for our faith in Adonai.



One thing we must always remember is that in order to have a shofar the ram (lamb) must die. Yeshua had to die in order for us to have His power and authority to sound the alarm. It also represents "power and repentance". It represents the material of Adonai's manifest presence Exod. 19:16.

In the following examples you will find the shofar mentioned for various reasons:

1. Blown to herald Adonai's descent and the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. Exod. 19:16,19 and 20:18
2. Blown to usher in the Feasts of Adonai and festivals. (Num. 10:10)
- A) The shofar is mentioned over 100 times in the Bible, that is the reason that traditionally, it is blown 100 times for the Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashannah.

**The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanna).** Blown to herald the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). A long blast is sounded to begin Yom Kippur (Lev. 25:9). It is blown traditionally 100 times during the Feast of Atonement. Blown during this time to signal repentance and make way for forgiveness. This was a call to "*Sabbath rest, a memorial of blowing trumpets, a holy convocation.*" It marked the beginning of a ten-day period of self-examination and repentance culminating with the Day of Atonement. The one who blows the shofar recites the blessing: "*Blessed art Thou, Adonai or Yahveh, King of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to hear the sound of the shofar.*" *The congregation responds with "Amein."* It tells us to "*Awake, ye sleepers from your sleep...and ponder your deeds.*" **Num. 29:1**

- B) It is said to represent the sinners cry for mercy from Yahveh.
3. Blown to instil fear in adversaries Amos 3:6.
4. Blown to announce the Year of Jubilee. Jubilee in Hebrew is "Yabel," meaning to flow and is rendered trumpets. Every fifty years slaves were freed, debts were forgiven and land returned to the original owner. Lev. 25:10 says, "*Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants*".
5. Blown continually by seven priests before the Ark of the Covenant, as part of strategic warfare at the battle of Jericho. Joshua 6:4-20
6. Blown by Gideon to rally troops, and by the 300 men in his army in battle. Jgs. 6:34 and 7:8, 16, 20
7. Blown to usher in the ark of Adonai (His presence) as David danced with all his might. 2Sam. 6:15; 1Chron. 15:14
8. Blown when a king was anointed. 1Kgs. 1:34, 39, 41; 2Kgs. 9:13
9. Blown at the taking of an oath. 2Chron 15:14
10. Blown to rally the troops. Nehemiah 4:18, 20
11. Blown to announce Yahveh's presence and to praise and worship Him. Ps. 47:5, 98:6, 150:3; Is. 27:13, 18:3. Rev1:10
12. Blown to call people to repentance. Is 58:1; Hosea 8:1; Joel 2:1
13. Blown to sound the alarm of war. Jer. 4:19, 21, 6:1, 17; 51:27; Joel 2:1
14. Blown to sound the warning of danger. Amos 2:2, 3:6; Zeph. 1:16; Hosea 5:8,8:1; Ezek. 33:2-9; Isa. 58:1 (The sound of the trumpet is compared to a prophet's voice.)
15. Blown to call the assembly together to repentance and fasting. Joel 2:1, 15
16. Blown by Adonai. Zech. 9:14
17. Blown by the angels. Matt. 24:31; Rev. 8:2, 3; 9:1, 13-14; 10:7; 11:15
18. It will be blown at Yeshua's second coming. 1Cor. 15:52; **1Ths. 4:16** "*FOR YAHVEH HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, AND WITH THE SHOFAR OF YAH: AND THE DEAD IN MESSIAH SHALL RISE FIRST.*" Isa. 27:13 also.
19. Blown to announce the New Moon. Ps. 81:3.
20. Blown as a signal. Josh. 6:16, 2Sam. 15:10, Jgs. 3:27.
21. Blown for processions. Josh 6:4.
22. Blown in accompaniment with other instruments. Ps. 98:6, 150:3-6,
23. Blown for a solemn assembly. Num. 10:2, Joel 2:15.
24. They were used to signal the workers to come in from the field. "*the labourers are few but the harvest is plentiful*". Two will be out in the field and only one will recognize the sound of the shofar to mark the end when Yeshua returns. The priest would sound the shofar from the southwest corner of the Temple specifically.
26. Trumpets (shofars) are voices. (1Ths. 4:16-17, Rev. 1:10, Isa. 58:1)

#### **BLESSING FOR THE SHOFAR**

There is a special blessing that is often spoken before the shofar is blown. It is as follows: "*Blessed are You, Oh Adonai, our Yahveh, King of the universe, who sanctified us with Your commandments, commanding us to hear the sound of the shofar. Blessed are You, Oh Adonai, our Yahveh, King of the universe, who granted us life, who sustained us, and who enabled us to reach this day*"

#### **SOUND OF THE SHOFAR**

The Bible specifies two distinct shofar sounds. One is "**teki ah**", and one is "**teru'ah**". **Num. 10:5-8** "*But when you blow an alarm, the camps that are pitched on the east side shall set out. And when you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are pitched on the south side shall set out; an alarm is to be blown for them to set out. When convening the assembly, however, you shall blow without sounding an alarm.*"

*"The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations."*

Good shofars will sound 3 notes. A master shofar blower, (master of sounding), is called a "ba al haleki' ah". A "ba al haleki' ah", can produce seven or more notes.

NOTE:

The shofar is never to be painted.

Tradition has it usually blown in daylight hours. The end of Yom Kippur is the exception.

The shofar sound is said to represent, repentance, righteousness and holiness in the churches.

The verse, "Blow the trumpet in Zion" is found in Joel 2:1. It is speaking of the last days.

**Joel 2:1** *"Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of ADONAI is coming; Surely it is near,"*

**Amos 3:6** *"If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not ADONAI done it?"*

**1Cor. 15:52** *"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."*

**Zeph. 1:14-16** *"Near is the great day of ADONAI, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of ADONAI! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, **A day of trumpet and battle cry**, Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers." Speaking of last days.*

**Matt. 24:31** *"And He will send forth His angels **with A GREAT TRUMPET** and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."*

It was a law that the shofar be sounded on a new moon, full moon, and Feast days. **Ps. 81:3-4** *"Blow the trumpet at the new moon, At the full moon, on our feast day. For it is a statute for Israel, An ordinance of the Yahveh of Jacob."*

The Holy Spirit sounded the shofar as per. **Jgs. 6:34** *"So the Spirit of ADONAI came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him."* In the Hebrew it means the SPIRIT of Yah blew the shofar, not Gideon.

**Num. 10:9** *"And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before ADONAI your Yahveh, and be saved from your enemies."*

**1Cor. 14:8** *"For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?" We must recognize the sound of the shofar so that when it is sounded we are all alert.*

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