

Shofar Calls

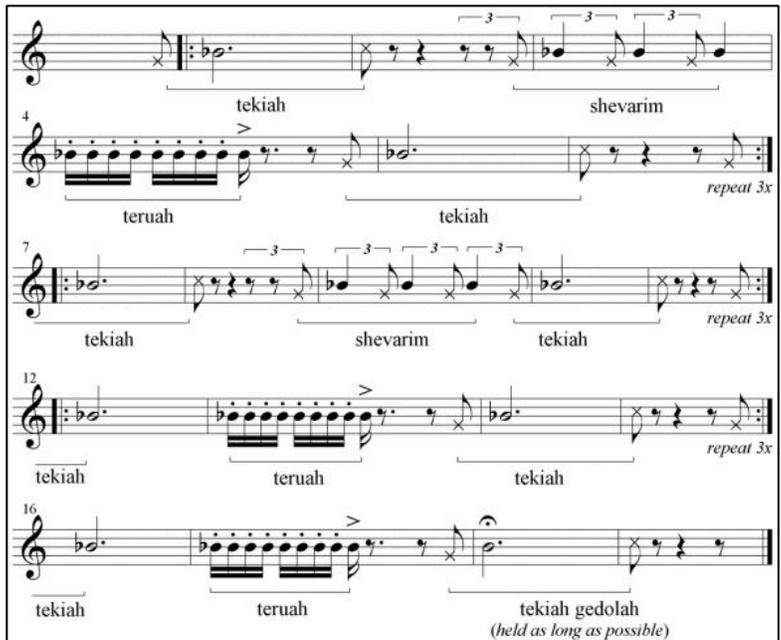
Most Jews associate the blowing of the shofar with the ram sent to Moses to sacrifice instead of Jacob. But the shofar and its calls have much more meaning. Many people believe that the shofar calls are intended to inspire people to mend their lives and repent. In the Rosh Hashanah service there are four calls: TE'KI'AH, SH'VA'RIM, TE'RU'AH, and TE'KI'AH GE'DO'LAH.

In this activity, you will learn the meanings of the shofar calls and come up with some of your own.

When to do this activity: Any time leading up to the High Holidays

Preparation: You will need:

- An internet-connected computer with sound
- *Optional* -- A musical instrument and someone who knows how to play it. A brass or woodwind instrument is recommended, but you can use a piano or even a kazoo.



The musical score is written on five staves of music. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with three groups of three notes each, labeled 'tekiah' and 'shevarim'. The second staff shows a sequence of notes with a group of six notes labeled 'teruah' and a group of three notes labeled 'tekiah', followed by a 'repeat 3x' instruction. The third staff shows a sequence of notes with three groups of three notes each, labeled 'tekiah', 'shevarim', and 'tekiah', followed by a 'repeat 3x' instruction. The fourth staff shows a sequence of notes with a group of six notes labeled 'tekiah', a group of six notes labeled 'teruah', and a group of three notes labeled 'tekiah', followed by a 'repeat 3x' instruction. The fifth staff shows a sequence of notes with a group of six notes labeled 'tekiah', a group of six notes labeled 'teruah', and a group of three notes labeled 'tekiah gedolah (held as long as possible)'.

The Activity:

1. Listen to the sounds of the shofar. Here are a few of the many available sites and YouTube videos:
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jR20-0sy1Y>
 - b. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pb0A_cPIHlk
 - c. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73Qw4HZkZDw>
 - d. <https://amenvamen.com/shofar-blowing-meaning/>
2. Find out what the four traditional sounds mean. Here are a few sites with good explanations. Read through a few and then discuss how they apply to our modern life.
 - a. <http://www.mazornet.com/holidays/RoshHashanah/shofar.htm>
 - b. <https://amenvamen.com/shofar-blowing-meaning/>
 - c. http://www.aish.com/h/hh/rh/shofar/Shofar_Symbolism.html
3. Hum or play the sounds using the score to the right using your own musical instrument.
4. If you were asked to create a new call to action beyond the ones we already do, what would it mean? What would it sound like? Hum, sing, or play the sound on your musical instrument



This activity augments the Rodef Reads selection for 2018-2019, *My Jewish Year* by Abby Pogrebin. It is designed to support at-home family celebration of the Jewish holidays.

Tashlich at Home

Tashlich is a traditional ritual where Jews discard their sins (often symbolized by bread or pocket lint) into a natural body of flowing water such as a river, lake, sea, or ocean. The practice comes from a reference in the Prophets (Book of Micah): "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

In this activity you will symbolically throw away a specific sin.

When to do this activity: On Rosh Hashanah or between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Preparation: You will need:

- Leaves. Some people use bread or pocket lint, but leaves are more environmentally-friendly.
- Fine-point, water-based markers
- Bucket of water or garden hose.
- If possible, go to a body of water such as a lake or stream. If you are not near a body of water, go to an area where you can use a garden hose.

Activity:

1. With your family, go to the body of water or gather where you can use your hose or spill you bucket of water.
2. Each person identifies a trait or behavior that they want to throw away (stop doing)
Some examples, but do not feel limited to these:
 - Defensiveness when someone makes a suggestion to you.
 - Impatience with friends or family members
 - Guilt (about something)
 - Rudeness (to parent, teacher, sibling)
3. Using a marker, write the trait on a leaf.
4. Throw the leaves into the water or wash them away.



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Your Behaviors: Helpful or Not?

The month leading up to the High Holidays -- the month of Elul -- is a time of reflection and introspection in preparation for Selichot and Yom Kippur.

In this activity, you will spend time with family and/or friends thinking about your behaviors during the previous year.

When to do this activity: Any time during the 30 days leading up to Rosh Hashanah. Consider making this a daily activity to fully observe the month of Elul.

Preparation: You will need:

- For the drawing option – a whiteboard with markers OR easel with large paper
- For the charades option – nothing is really needed, but it is fun to have a box of random clothes and items that can be used as costumes or props
- A list of traits for inspiration. Come up with your own list or, for your convenience, you can use all or some of the behaviors or traits mentioned in *My Jewish Year*. (Below)

The Activity:

Going around the group, each person:

1. Picks an item from the list and says what they think the characteristic is or means (An optional step could be to look up the meaning and discuss it.)
2. Acts out or draws a situation when it was helpful to have this behavior or trait. For example, act out or draw a time when being angry was a good thing. Everyone tries to guess what happened and discusses the situation.
3. Acts out or draws a situation when it having this behavior or trait made things worse. For example, act out or draw a time when being angry made a situation worse. Everyone tries to guess what happened and the group discusses how the situation could have been handled differently.
4. Optional – Instead of acting out or drawing, each person could describe a situation when a behavior or trait had a negative impact and when the same trait had a positive impact.

Traits for Elul from *My Jewish Year*:

Abstinence	Alacrity/Zeal	Arrogance	Anger	Awe of G-d
Compassion	Courage	Cruelty	Decisiveness	Envy
Equanimity	Faith in G-d	Falsehood	Forgiveness	Generosity
Gratitude	Greed	Hatred	Honor	Humility
Joy	Laziness	Leadership	Fear/awe	Love
Loving kindness	Miserliness	Modesty	Order	Patience
Presence	Pride	Regret	Recognizing good	Repentance
Respect	Restraint	Righteousness	Self-Awareness	Shame
Silence	Simplicity	Slander	Strength	Truth
Trust in G-d	Watchfulness	Wealth	Willingness	Worry



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Resolutions for the Upcoming Jewish Year

The Al Cheit prayer lists 44 types of mistakes we may have committed in the previous year, either ourselves or as a community. It is repeated several times, often twice during the same service.

In this activity you will look at a modern list of things that harm our community and pick one to work on in the coming year.

When: Any time during Yom Kippur

Preparation: You will need:

- List of modern transgressions from <https://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/guide-to-repentance-and-transformation>.
- Some way to write down or record the family's plans.

Activity:

1. The group reads through the list of transgressions and discusses what they mean.
2. Option 1: The family picks one item from the list and makes a workable plan of at least a few specific activities they agree to doing over the coming year related to this item to avoid committing this mistake.
Option 2: Each person picks an item and writes down specific activities they will do over the coming year to avoid committing this mistake.
3. Store a copy of the resolutions as a "Time Capsule" to be opened next year. Keep another copy handy for reference during the year.
4. If you did this activity last year, open the Time Capsule to see how well everyone did in meeting their goals.

Build a Reusable Sukkah

Sukkot is celebrated five days after Yom Kippur. One tradition, which takes the commandment to dwell in booths literally, is to erect a small, temporary booth or hut. The sukkah is used during the seven-day festival for eating, entertaining and even for sleeping.

While there are many ways to build a sukkah, to be considered Kosher:

- It must be built under the open sky, rather than under a tree or in a larger room.
- It usually should have four walls but it is also acceptable to have at least two complete walls and part of a third (for example, leaving an open space for a door in the third wall. There cannot be a space of more than nine inches between the bottom of the wall and the ground (this is a common problem with fabric sukkahs).
- Each wall needs to be at least 28 inches wide and 40 inches tall, but it may not be more than thirty feet tall. It should be at least big enough to fit one person inside.
- Roof: Your sukkah cannot be shaped like a teepee or a lean-to because it must have a roof. The roof covering must be made from something that grew from the ground but which is not still attached to the ground (Another reason why building under a tree doesn't work -- Vines or leafy trees cannot be used because they are still attached to the ground.).

In this activity you will create a simple sukkah that you can reuse each year

When: Technically, you should start building as soon as Yom Kippur ends. But Sukkot starts five days after Yom Kippur and lasts for seven days so you have some flexibility.

Preparation: You can buy sukkah kits and find many sets of instructions online for building a sukkah from scratch. Here are instructions for a simple structure that can be dismantled and used for multiple years. If you want a larger sukkah, build multiple 6' x 6' cubes. For this sukkah you will need:

- 12 pieces of PVC tubing (6' length, 1-1/2" or 2" in diameter recommended. Longer or thinner poles will "sag", necessitating additional vertical supports.)
- 8 PVC 3-way elbow connectors of the same internal diameter
- Three (or more) shower curtains and shower hooks or rings to create walls. These are generally available at a dollar store. If your walls will be longer than six feet, buy more shower curtains.
- Bamboo poles for roof. The roof must be made from natural materials. Bamboo poles are available at home improvement stores.
- Branches with leaves for roof.
- Duct tape
- Decorations, furniture





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Build a Reusable Sukkah, continued

Activity:

1. Create a large cube using the corner connectors and PVC poles.
2. Using the shower curtain hooks/rings, attach walls.
3. If desired, poke holes in the sides of the shower curtains and use some of the curtain rings attach them to vertical poles to prevent the walls from blowing in any wind.
4. Lay bamboo poles across the top of the structure. If needed, tape poles together to create longer bamboo that will span the width of the sukkah.
5. Lay branches and leaves across the roof, making sure the sky is visible.
6. Decorate as desired. Add a small table and chairs for meals.
7. After Sukkot, dismantle the sukkah, bundle the pieces, and save it for next year.



<http://www.instructables.com/id/Sukkah-PVC-Freestanding/>

Jewish Continuity

Simchat Torah, meaning “rejoicing of the Torah,” is the day we end the reading of the Five Books of Moses with the story of Moses’s death and start the scroll all over again with the story of Adam and Eve.

In this activity you will connect with Jewish history by comparing yourself with one of the “characters” from the stories in the Torah.

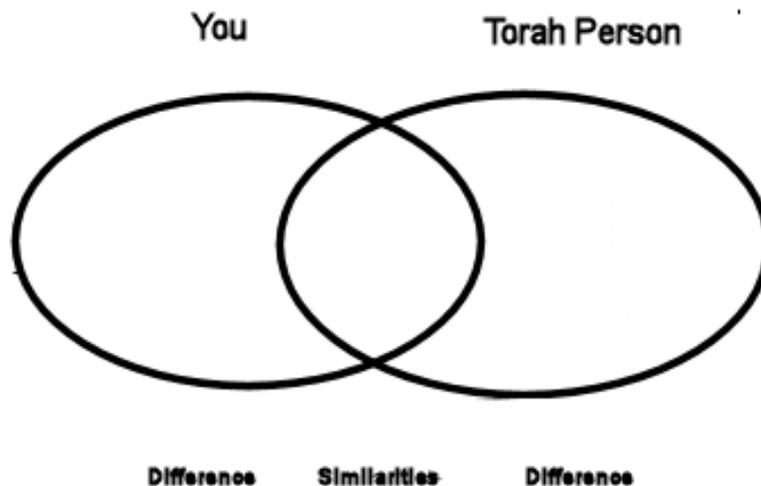
When: Any time during Simchat Torah

Preparation: You will need:

- A list of people in the Torah. Come up with your own list or you can refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Torah_people
- Paper and writing instruments.

Activity:

1. If you have an English or Hebrew name that is the same as or similar to one of the people in the Torah, you may want to choose that person. Otherwise, look over the list of people in the Torah and choose one.
2. Read a bit about this person.
3. Complete a Venn diagram comparing yourself to this person. How are you alike? How are you different? Try to get beyond the obvious characteristics such as: “I live in a different time period.” or “I wear different clothing.” or “We are both Jewish.”



4. If you are doing this activity as a family or with friends, tell a little bit about the person you selected and share your diagram. Can your family members or friends think of any similarities to add?