

Shofar

שׁוֹפָר



Meditation: The sound of the shofar is primal. Part music, part siren, part animal cry, the blasts of the shofar focus our attention like nothing else. Adults crane their necks to see better; children are lifted onto shoulders to watch as the shofar is blown. Whole, broken, and whole again, the sounds shake us, awaken us, and stir us. Ultimately, they direct our attention to return to our hearts, our people and our God.

As you hear the shofar being blown, focus on the different sound combinations. May each sound of the shofar awaken you to the sacred presence in all things. Allow all the sounds of the shofar to stir you, linking you to the past and the future. Reminding you of the individuals and communities that sustain and need you. And let it connect you to the place where you are now and to your commitments to the future. (The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices)

T'kiah! - One blast: What does the first sound call you to remember?

Shevarim! - Three broken blasts: What felt broken in the past year?

T'ruah! - Nine short broken notes: What does this alarm mean for your community?

T'kiah gedolah! - The longest blast: What will you devote your breath and strength to in the coming year?

Shema שמע



Listen Carefully

Meditation: Listening is an act of love. How can I listen closely and deeply? How can I make someone feel loved by listening to them?

Practice: Try to really listen to the people who are talking to you. Put away all distractions and focus on them. Can you hear what they are expressing underneath their words?

Oseh Shalom עושה שלום



Make Peace

Meditation: What is “peace” anyway? Have you ever thought about it? Peace might mean that we are safe, as long as we live without violence or pain. The best our Torah offers are visions of peace, with love and justice flowing together like a mighty stream. But peace in the world is not possible until we learn to be peaceful beings ourselves. Inner peace refers to equanimity and resilience in our responses to conflict. This can lead to wholeness.

Practice: Take a moment to quiet your own mind. Remove all distractions from around you and breathe. Ask yourself, do I possess an internal conflict between who I am and I should be? Envision what peace from that conflict looks like and dwell in that idea for longer than one moment.

Amidah עמידה



Standing Up & Stepping In

Meditation: When will you stand up and speak out? When will you step back and allow others to shine?

Practice: Take a private moment. Visualize any challenge in your life. See it in front of you, and stand up tall and face it. Take 3 steps backward, starting with your weak foot. Once completed, pause, standing with your feet together. Then take 3 steps forward, starting with your strong foot. Stand tall and erect, with your feet together, and breathe. The next move is yours.

Aleinu עלינו



It's Up to Us

Meditation: On bended knee we bow and give thanks... Our Tradition teaches us that one should be as gentle as a reed and strong like a cedar. Inevitably in life there are things that push us around. Without flexibility, we would surely break. But there must also be things that keep us standing straight. We call this integrity.

Practice: Stand facing a full-length mirror. Look at yourself, top to bottom. Who, or what, challenges your moral compass? In your mind, separate what you will and won't bow to in your life. That which you can/will be flexible towards, bend your body at the waist and bow to it. That which you cannot bow to, stand up tall and face your reflection. How do you feel? What do you see?