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
רֶגֶשׁ	Emotion
מַצַב רוּחַ	Mood
לִתְקוֹעַ	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?

<u>Text #1 – The Giving of the Torah and Mount Sinai</u>

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.	**שמות יט:טז יט** וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בִּהְי֣ ֹת הַבֹּ֑קֶר וַיְהִי ק ֹל֨ ֹת וּבְרָקִים וְעָנָן כָּבֵד עַל־הָהָר וְק ֹל֥ שׁ ֹפָר חָזָק מְא ֹד וַיֶּחֱרַד כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה. וַיּוֹצֵא מ ֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם לִקְרַאת הָאֱל ֹקִים מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתְיַצְּבוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר. וְהַר סִינַי עָשַׁן כֻּלּוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו ה' בָּאֵשׁ וַיַּעַל עֲשָׁנוֹ כְּעֶשֶׁן הַכִּבְשָׁן וַיֶּחֱרַד כָּל־הָהָר מְא ֹד. וַיְהִי קוֹל הַשׁ ֹפָר הוֹלֵךְ וְחָזֵק מְא ֹד מ ֹשֶׁה יְדַבֵּר וְהָאֱל ֹקִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְקוֹל.
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	**שמות כ:טו טז** וְכָל־הָעָם ר ֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹל ֹת וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִם וְאֵת קוֹל הַשׁ ֹפָר וְאֶת־הָהָר עָשֵׁן וַיַּרְא הָעָם וַיָּנֻעוּ וַיַּעַמְדוּ

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."	מֵרָח֑ק. וַיֹּ֣אמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁ֗ה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּ֤ה עִמָּנוּ֙ וְנִשְׁמָעָ֔ה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּ֥ר עִמָּנוּ֖ אֱלֹקִ֑ים פֶּן־נָמֻֽת׃

<u>Text #2 – Announcement of Certain Holidays</u>

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.	**<u>ויקרא כג:כג כד</u>** וַיְדַבֵּ֥ר יְהֹוָ֖ה אֶל־מֹשֶׁ֥ה לֵּאמֹֽר׃ דַּבֵּ֣ר אֶל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל לֵאמֹר֙ בַּחֹ֣דֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔י בְּאֶחָ֥ד לַחֹ֖דֶשׁ יִהְיֶ֣ה לָכֶ֑ם שַׁבָּת֔וֹן זִכְרוֹן֙ תְּרוּעָ֔ה מִקְרָא־קֹֽדֶשׁ׃
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.	**<u>ויקרא כה:ח י</u>** וְסָפַרְתָּ֣ לְךָ֗ שֶׁ֤בַע שַׁבְּתֹת֙ שָׁנִ֔ים שֶׁ֥בַע פְּעָמִ֖ים וְהָיוּ־לְךָ֑ יְמֵי֙ שֶׁ֣בַע שַׁבְּתֹ֔ת הַשָּׁנִ֖ים תֵּ֥שַׁע וְאַרְבָּעִ֥ים שָׁנָֽה׃ וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ֨ שוֹפַ֜ר תְּרוּעָ֗ה בַּחֹ֤דֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי֙ בֶּעָשׂ֣וֹר לַחֹ֔דֶשׁ בְּיוֹם֙ הַכִּפֻּרִ֔ים תַּעֲבִ֥ירוּ שׁוֹפָ֖ר בְּכָ֥ל אַרְצְכֶֽם׃ וְקִדַּשְׁתֶּ֣ם אֵת־שְׁנַ֣ת הַחֲמִשִּׁ֗ים שָׁנָה֙ וּקְרָאתֶ֣ם דְּרוֹר֔ בָּאָ֖רֶץ לְכָל־יֹשְׁבֶ֑יהָ יוֹבֵ֣ל הִ֔וא תִּהְיֶ֥ה לָכֶ֖ם וְשַׁבְתֶּ֣ם אִ֑יש אֶל־אֲחֻזָּת֖וֹ וְאִ֥יש אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתּ֖וֹ תָּשֻֽׁבוּ׃

<u>Text #3 – Announcement of War</u>

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** וִיר֣יחוֹ סֹגֶ֔רֶת וּמְסֻגֶּ֖רֶת מִפְּנֵ֣י בְנֵ֑י יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל אֵ֤ין יוֹצֵא֙ וְאֵ֣ין בָּֽא׃ וַיֹּ֣אמֶר יְהֹוָ֔ה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁ֖עַ רְאֵ֣ה נָתַ֑תִּי בְּיָדְךָ֙ אֶת־יְרִיחוֹ֙ וְאֶת־מַלְכָּ֔הּ גִּבּוֹרֵ֖י הֶחָֽיִל׃ וְסַבֹּ֣תֶם אֶת־הָעִ֗יר כָּל־אַנְשֵׁ֤י הַמִּלְחָמָה֙ הַקִּ֣יף אֶת־הָעִ֔יר פַּ֥עַם אֶחָ֖ת כֹּ֣ה תַעֲשֶׂ֑ה שֵׁ֥שֶׁת יָמִֽים׃ וְשִׁבְעָ֥ה כֹהֲנִ֖ים יִשְׂאוּ֣ שִׁבְעָ֣ה שוֹפְרוֹת֮ הַיֹּבְלִים֒ לִפְנֵ֣י הָאָרוֹן֮ וַבַּיּוֹם֒ הַשְּׁבִיעִי֙ תָּסֹ֣בּוּ אֶת־הָעִ֔יר שֶׁ֥בַע פְּעָמִ֖ים וְהַכֹּהֲנִ֑ים יִתְקְעוּ֙ בַּשּׁוֹפָרוֹת׃ וְהָיָ֣ה בִמְשֹׁךְ֮ בְּקֶ֣רֶן הַיּוֹבֵל֒ כְּשָׁמְעֲכֶ֣ם אֶת־קוֹל֙ הַשּׁוֹפָ֔ר יָרִ֥יעוּ כָל־הָעָ֖ם תְּרוּעָ֣ה גְדוֹלָ֑ה וְנָפְלָ֣ה חוֹמַ֔ת הָעִ֖יר תַּחְתֶּ֑יהָ וְעָל֣וּ הָעָ֔ם אִ֥יש נֶגְדּֽוֹ׃

the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. . . .	
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.	**יהושע ו:כ** וַיָּרַע הָעָם וַיִּתְקְעוּ בַשֹּׁפָרוֹת וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעַ הָעָם אֶת קוֹל הַשּׁוֹפָר וַיָּרִיעוּ הָעָם תְּרוּעָה גְּדוֹלָה וַתִּפֹּל הַחוֹמָה תַּחְתֶּיהָ וַיַּעַל הָעָם הָעִירָה אִישׁ נֶגְדּוֹ וַיִּלְכְּדוּ אֶת הָעִיר.

<u>Text #4 – Celebration</u>

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.	**<u>שמואל ב ו:יב טו</u>** וַיֻּגַּד לַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד לֵאמֹר בֵּרַךְ ה' אֶת בֵּית עֹבֵד אֱדֹם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ בַּעֲבוּר אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹקִים וַיֵּלֶךְ דָּוִד וַיַּעַל אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹקִים מִבֵּית עֹבֵד אֱדֹם עִיר דָּוִד בְּשִׂמְחָה. וַיְהִי כִּי צָעֲדוּ נֹשְׂאֵי אֲרוֹן ה' שִׁשָּׁה צְעָדִים וַיִּזְבַּח שׁוֹר וּמְרִיא. וְדָוִד מְכַרְכֵּר בְּכָל עֹז לִפְנֵי ה' וְדָוִד חָגוּר אֵפוֹד בָּד. וְדָוִד וְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מַעֲלִים אֶת אֲרוֹן ה' בִּתְרוּעָה וּבְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר.

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/