

ROSH HASHANA CLASSES FOR GRADES 5-6

No.	Title	Main Objective
1	The Shofar as a main symbol of Rosh Hashana	To get acquainted with the symbolic meaning of the shofar and its connection to the holidays of Tishrei.
2	Renewal and a new beginning.	Rosh Hashana as an opportunity for renewal and for asking for forgiveness.
3	Rosh Hashana Seder	A ceremonial and festive opening for the New Year.

LESSON ONE – THE SHOFAR AS A DOMINANT SYMBOL IN TISHREI HOLIDAYS

Objectives

- To get acquainted with a shofar, the materials it is made of and how it is produced.
- To get to know the symbolic meanings of the shofar.
- To understand the connection between the shofar and Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and the reasons for blowing the shofar on these holidays.

Procedure

1. Make two different statements about the shofar and ask the students, which of the statements is true and which of them is false. At the same time, draw pictures on the board to illustrate the concepts. After eliciting the correct answer from the students, elaborate on the topic with additional information (use pictures in the appendix). (15 min.)

Questions

- A. A shofar is a musical instrument made from a hollow horn of an animal with horns. **True**
The shofar is a drinking utensil made from the spine of an animal. **False**



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Additional Information: Generally, shofars are made out of the horn of a ram, which is an adult male sheep, which with the commandment of shofar is fulfilled to its optimum. It is prohibited to use the horn of an ox or any other animal whose horn is not hollow and is made out of solid material, since these are not considered shofars, and only horns that are shaped like a tube are called shofars.

B. In ancient times shofars were used as an instrument for gathering flock. False

In ancient times shofars were used as an instrument for alerting people for announcements and alarms. **True**

C. Nowadays, the main function of shofars is to fulfil the commandment of shofar blowing on Rosh

Additional Information: In ancient times blowing a shofar had quite a few functions, among them: it was blown to gather people, to prepare them for war, to scare the enemies, it was blown in difficult times, to arouse the hearts of the people for repentance and to make public announcements.

Hashana. **True**

Nowadays, the main function of shofars is to call the people to come to the synagogue at the onset of Shabbat. **False**

Additional Information: Nowadays, the major use of shofars in Judaism is to fulfil the commandment of blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashana. The person who blows the shofar is called, "Ba'al Tokeah". In several communities it is customary to blow the shofar throughout the month of Elul (excluding - the day before Rosh Hashana, in which there is no shofar blowing, to create an intermission between customary blowing obligatory blowing). Also on the night Yom Kippur is over, the shofar is blown at the end of the "Ne'eila" prayer, in commemoration of the shofar blown in the jubilee year.

D. Ask the students to organize the stages of shofar production (they are to fill in the appropriate number at the right of each row in the following table.

Separation of the horn from the bone – removal of the surrounding thick layer	
Decoration	
Straightening – the horn is straightened partially or totally by applying heat.	
Sorting –choosing horns without no holes in them.	
Polishing the shofar and drilling the hole.	
Disinfecting- cleaning the horn from bacteria in a process called hot-oven sterilization.	



Correct Answers

1. Sorting – choosing horns without no holes in them.
2. Separation of the horn from the bone – removal of the surrounding thick layer.
3. Disinfecting- cleaning the horn from bacteria in a process called hot-oven sterilization.
4. Straightening – the horn is straightened partially or totally by applying heat.
5. Polishing the shofar and drilling the hole.
6. Decoration.

Additional Information – Horns for shofars are imported from Arabian countries. Only a third of them are found suitable for use and undergo initial processing by which the horn is cleaned and polished. The hard covering of the horn is separated from the bone material in the inside of the horn, while taking care to prevent the horn from breaking. After the separation is done the horn is checked once again. If it has a hole or crack on its width, it's invalidated. If the hole is merely external, the horn is kosher. The processing continues with the horn being disinfected in an oven where it is slowly straightened. After this stage, its mouthpiece and body are polished making it possible to blow the shofar effectively, in a manner requiring a special skill. (you may show a video clip illustrating the preparation of shofars)



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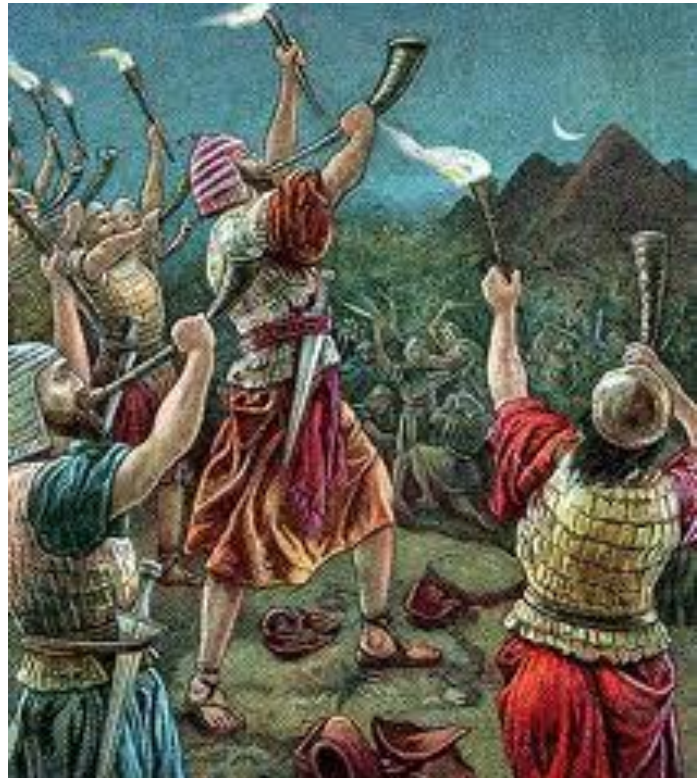
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Pictures for Illustration:

Question A After the Answer is Given



Question B After the Answer is Given



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Question C After the Answer is Given



Question D After the Answer is Given



2. Divide the class into groups. Each group is given an information page containing one of the reasons to blow shofar. The students are instructed to read the information, to understand it and to prepare a placard/skit that would explain to the rest of the class, why shofar is blown according to the Jewish tradition. (40 min.)
- **The binding of Isaac** - a trial of belief - read on Rosh Hashana.
 - **The Mount Sinai event** – mentioning the Torah that symbolizes the virtuous way.
 - To arouse the people **to atone for their sins.**
 - **To open the gates of heaven.**
 - **The Jubilee Year** – in memory of Yom Kippur on the 50th year in which the blowing of the shofar symbolizes the release of the slaves and the return to their homes.

Appendix

1. The Binding of Isaac

On Rosh Hashana we read the story of Isaac's binding in synagogues. This story reflects Abraham's great belief in G-d. The shofar symbolizes the ram that Abraham had sacrificed instead of his son, Isaac.

The Midrash relates that G-d knew that the Children of Israel would commit transgressions, and therefore Rosh Hashana became their day of judgement (repeated annually). If the Children of Israel find a way to be forgiven, and recall Abraham's positive virtue expressed in the binding of his son, Isaac, they ought to blow the horn of the ram that was offered in the event of the binding of Isaac.

2. The Shofar in the Mount Sinai Event

At the Torah-Giving Event, the voice of the shofar was sounded. Blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashana and on Yom Kippur serves as a reminder of the Mount Sinai Event, and the commandments given then. The shofar reminds us, on the Day of Judgement, in which people are judged for their deeds, the laws of the Torah, which is the path we must follow.

Exodus 19, 16-19

It came to pass on the third day when it was morning, that there were thunder claps and lightning flashes, and a thick cloud was upon the mountain, and a very powerful blast of a shofar, and the entire nation that was in the camp shuddered. Moshe brought the people out toward God from the camp, and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. And the entire Mount Sinai smoked because the Lord had descended upon it in fire, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of the kiln, and the entire mountain quaked violently. The sound of the shofar grew increasingly stronger; Moshe would speak and God would answer him with a voice.

When the Torah was received

Lyrics: Leah Naor / Music: Nurit Hirsch

From the mountain smoke had risen

Like from a furnace

Thunder and Lightning struck

And awe of a shofar sound

And the nation stood at the side

Since the people were awe stricken

The entire nation moved backwards

And only Moshe went to the mountain.

This exactly - is what occurred

When the Torah was given

3. The shofar awakens the people to engage in introspection

Blowing the shofar in the month of Elul, the month of mercy, and on Rosh Hashana, is intended to arouse people to return from evil ways and to ask for forgiveness. At the time of shofar blowing, people must inspect their deeds, their lifestyle and seek ways to improve their actions.

"In the month" – ('month' in Hebrew - stemming from the word 'chadash' in Hebrew, means renewal) – renew your deeds.

Shofar – (which stems from the Hebrew word – "shapru" – meaning – Improve), hence - improve your ways. (Vayikra Raba 29:5).

4. Shofars Open the Gates of Heaven

Some claim that the sound of the shofar is capable of opening the gates of heaven. Blowing shofar is like a wail or cry that reaches G-d and opens a path for people's prayers and requests to ascend.

This Idea is expressed in Naomi Shemer's song "Lu

Yehi"

What is the sound that I hear,
the cry of the shofar and the sound of drums;
all that we ask for - may it be,
If only there can be heard within all this
one prayer from my lips also.
All that we seek - may it be.

...and in the Song of Abraham Chalfi, "A Jewish Autumn"

A Jewish autumn in the land of my forefathers
Sends to me
hints of Elul.
They already madden me
- the tiny birds that whistle the sadness
of Yom Kippur.
Then the **shofars** will be blown to open the gates of
heaven.

5. The Shofar of the Jubilee Year

According to the Torah, , on Yom Kippur once every fifty years, slaves would be freed, and any person who will have lost ownership of his land or – who was compelled to sell it, would regain his land or – its ownership would be regained by his family. The shofar blowing would be a sign, indicating that slaves are to be freed and lands are to be restored.

This is the first reason explaining the shofar blowing on Yom Kippur.

And so it states in the Torah:

And you shall proclaim [with] the shofar blasts, in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Atonement, you shall sound the shofar throughout your land:



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And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and proclaim freedom [for slaves] throughout the land for all who live on it. It shall be a Jubilee for you, and you shall return, each man to his property, and you shall return, each man to his family. (Leviticus 25: 9-10)



APPENDIX – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SHOFAR FOR THE HOME ROOM TEACHER

The Shofar and its Roles in the Scriptures

A Shofar of War – The shofar was used as an alarming tool for gathering the defenders to set out to an attack, as in the example of Gideon in the book of Judges 7:20: "And they blew three hundred shofars, and G-d set every man's sword against his fellow, and throughout the whole camp". Explicitly for the reason the shofar is also considered a

Shofar of Repentance, that resonates and frightens, as is if it proclaims: "improve your deeds". For example, in the story of the Prophet Amos, 3:6 "will a shofar be blown in the city and the people would not quiver?"

A Shofar of a Melody – An all year-round shofar, designated to bring joy to people and it was used to crown the king on his coronation day. The shofar of song and tune is that of the Book of Psalms. For example, we

recite verses from psalm 47 seven times before blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashana: "the Lord has risen in a blast, G-d – in the sound of the shofar. Sing to the Lord, sing: Sing to our King, sing".



A Shofar of Revelation – at the Mount Sinai Event the shofar played a central role in the most awesome audiovisual scene of all times. In Exodus 19 it is written: "It came to pass on the third day when it was morning, that there were thunder claps and lightning flashes, and a thick cloud was upon the mountain, and a very powerful blast of a shofar, and the entire nation that was in the camp shuddered... and the sound of the shofar grew increasingly stronger; Moshe spoke and God answered him with a voice".

A Shofar of Freedom – The shofar of releasing slaves and territories in the Jubilee and Sabbatical years, about which it is written in Leviticus 25:

Picture Courtesy of the Newspaper of the Tali Foundation

"You shall proclaim [with] the shofar blasts... and proclaim freedom [for slaves] throughout the land for all who live on it". That is the shofar that gives tidings of consolations and



salvation, peace and tranquility in the world. Liberty and freedom, release and equality. This is the shofar that will gather all the dispersed people of our exiles in the future and will bring peace onto the world.



LESSON TWO – RENEWAL AND A NEW BEGINNING

OBJECTIVES

- Rosh Hashana as an opportunity for renewal.
- Rosh Hashana as an opportunity for asking for forgiveness.

PROCEDURE

1. Opening - Singing together in a Canon (5 min.)

The days pass a year is gone 2X

But the melody, but the melody

but the melody always remains.

2. Placards for attitudes are hung on the walls and students are asked to enter their attitudes on the pages on the placards. (10 min)

- Rosh Hashana for me is....
- My most exceptional memory from Rosh Hashana is...
- What does Rosh Hashana symbolize for me?
- This year my new beginning is...
- How I wish to begin this year?
- What is the connection between Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah?
- In which aspects of life do I wish to start anew?

3. Take the placard with the question, 'What does Rosh Hashana symbolize for me?' and ask: (10 min.)

- What is the meaning of a new beginning?
- Why do we start anew particularly on Rosh Hashana?
- When do people start from scratch?
- When did you start something from scratch in your lives?
- Is what we are doing here now a new beginning? How is it expressed?
- How would you like to see this year turn out? What would you like it to contain?



4. Display the following short text passage on the board and ask one of the students to read it: (10 min)
 - Ask a student to explain the passage in his/her own words.

If you want to lift up a man sunk in mire and mud, do not figure that you can stay on top and merely hold out your hands to him. You must descend all the way down into the mire and the mud, and once you are there - grab him with strong hands and pull him and yourself out into the light. (Martin Buber, The Hidden Light)

- Ask: What is the importance of commandments between man and fellow-man?
 - Why is it important to ask for forgiveness and why is it important to forgive?
5. For grade 6 – Read 'The Difference between Holidays of Memory and Festivals of the Future – Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur' by A.B. Gurion (10 min)

Most of the Jewish holidays are memorial ceremonies. Individuals, family and communities are instructed to recall and recreate in a ceremonial manner, a significant historical event that had happened in our past. A Jew is called upon to ask himself and to educate his son to ask: Where did I come from? What does my biography contain? On Passover, Sukkoth and Shavuot we ask: When and where was I born; in Egypt as a slave and I was released, I was at Mount Sinai, I wandered in the desert towards the Promised Land. I settled and cultivated its soil.

But Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur have no history, no memory. There is no past, no story, no drama. Therefore, neither time nor birth nor identity determines their contents. It's not what had happened in the past, but what could happen.

One's face and the heart are directed to the future dimension of time.

These two holidays ask you: What is the direction of your life? How did you choose to live? Do you have a dream, a desire to realize? Do you have a human and social image in your mind? What is the image of the Israeli society in your eyes? What is your home and family like?

If you want to create a different, better and fairer reality, it is up to you alone. In your hope for change. It depends on your current commitment, in the present, but with impact on the future. According to this, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are human and optimistic holidays and their message us to man and to his image for his future.

Ask

- Do you agree with the description of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur as Holidays with an outlook to the future?
- What is Ben Gurion's demand of us?

LESSON THREE – ROSH HASHANA SEDER

Objective: Ceremonial and festive opening for the New Year.

Preparations: (1) Organize the tables in the class to form the letter 'chet [ח]' (in Hebrew) and spread white tablecloths on them (2) Prepare the following items: wine, disposable cups, apples and honey, a pomegranate, dates, Hallah. (3) Have on hand a presentation with songs and texts.

Procedure

Sing together: On Rosh Hashana / Naomi Shemer

ON ROSH HASHANAH

On Rosh Hashanah, on Rosh Hashanah,
in my garden - bloomed a rose.

On Rosh Hashanah, a white sailboat
suddenly set anchor by the shore.

On Rosh Hashanah, on Rosh Hashanah,
our heart responded in ancient prayer:
May the year, beginning today
and be beautiful and special in every way.

On Rosh Hashanah, on Rosh Hashanah,
in the autumn sky - bloomed a first cloud .
On Rosh Hashanah,
rising like a memorial flame,
in the meadow - bloomed the first squill .

On Rosh Hashanah, on Rosh Hashanah,
our heart responded in ancient prayer:
May the year, beginning today
be wonderful and special in every way.

On Rosh Hashanah, on Rosh Hashanah,
bloomed a melody - new and unknown,
And overnight its strains did resound
from every casement in town.

On Rosh Hashanah, on Rosh Hashanah,
our heart responded in ancient prayer:
May the year beginning with a song -
be beautiful and different.

Fill the cups with wine and recite the blessing: We shall bless over the vine and the fruit of the vine, and over the precious, good and spacious land, for the deeds of the past year, and for the onset of the new



year. Let us hope it will be a beautiful and different year, a year of renewal and blooming, creativity and peace. To life!

Dip the apple in honey and sing together: A land flowing with milk, milk, and honey...

A Quiz (between groups)

- In the song, 'The 12 Months' what occurred in the month of Shevat? (The sun shined on a single day)
- What are the Ten Days of Atonement? (The ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, in which one may be forgiven)
- What is "Tashlich"? (Casting the sins in a body of water, after the prayer of 'Mincha' on the first day of Rosh Hashana, and recital of the last three verses of the Book of Micha)
- Mention three foods customarily eaten on Rosh Hashana (apples dipped in honey, beets, pomegranates, honeycomb, the head of a fish)
- Complete this statement: "On Rosh Hashana like a a appeared in the field (a memorial candle, a squill)
- How long, prior to Rosh Hashana, is it customary to blow shofar? (a month, beginning the month of Elul)
- Why does Rosh Hashana fall in the month of Tishrei? (Since the world was created in the month of Tishrei)

Sing the song Halevai (If Only) - together

If only - from a cloud, a rainbow will settle over us.

If only - this world can be fixed!

If only the day would spring up out of the raging storm.

If only the gift would not be lost forever.

If only the desert would grow grass.

If only we'd get to sit under the shade of the fig tree



If only we wouldn't suffer and each man would love his brother.

If only the gates of Eden would open again.

If only east and west will merge,

If only we'd renew our days here as in ancient times.

If only nation to nation would no longer raise swords.

If only we wouldn't abandon the path of hope.

If only man would be compassionate till the evening.

If only there'd be a single chance for love.

If only we wouldn't suffer....

Recitation – Pomegranates found in Israel ripen at Rosh Hashana time. They contain sweet seeds. According to a tale passed on from generation to generation, each pomegranate contains 613 seeds, corresponding the number of commandments. Whether or not pomegranates actually have 613 seeds each, they have become a symbol of good deeds. So we'll take some seeds of the pomegranate and recite the blessing: Let it be the Will of Above that our good deeds multiply like the seeds of a pomegranate.

Assignment – The teacher mentions a word connected to the holiday. The first group is required to select a song beginning with that word, then the 2nd group is required to suggest another song with that word and so on. A group that is unable to suggest a song with the introductory word loses. The words (in Hebrew) are: Rosh (head), Shana (year), Hatchala (beginning), Stav (Autumn), Tov (good), Selicha (sorry, forgiveness)

Dip apples in honey and recite: May it be the Will of Above that the oncoming year be renewed for us as a good and sweet year, from the beginning of the year until its end.

Competition of Tasks Between the Groups:





- Take no more than a minute to create as many words as possible from the Hebrew letters comprising the word "Rosh" (ראש).
- Find as many words as possible, comprised of at least three letters each, of the statement (in Hebrew) meaning – "May the year and its curses be gone – May a year and its blessings begin".
- Act out a pantomime for each of the following statements (one statement per representative): "May it be the will that we be a head and not a tail", "May we merit a new year full as a pomegranate".





Beshana Haba'ah

Lyrics: Ehud Manor

Music: Nurit Hirsch

Next year we will sit on the porch
and we'll count several migrating birds
Children on vacation will play tag
between the house and the fields.

You will see, you will see
How great it will be
next year.

Red grapes will ripen till the evening
and will be served chilled to the table.
And languid winds will carry to the crossroads
old newspapers and a cloud.





You will see, you will see...

Next year we will spread out our hands
towards the radiant light.

A white heron, in light will spread her wings
and within them the sun will rise.

