



Guided Shofar Breathing Exercise and Meditation for the High Holidays

Finding connection through the Shofar Blasts

This guided meditation is intended to help you create a space within yourself for connection and purpose during the High Holidays. As you follow along, stop at any time to focus on a particular part or to repeat it.

The shofar (rams horn) has a prominent role in the holidays, revitalizing the connection between God and the Jewish People. The shofar blasts are also meant to awaken your deeper self, your soul, to God. It calls you to pay attention. It also calls you to take care of yourself.

The Shofar blasts are done in different ways to symbolize summoning, weeping and alarm. They all call for attention. **Tekiah** is one blast, **Shevarim** is three blasts, **Teruah** is many blasts.

For the first part of this exercise, we are going to use our breath as a shofar, our personal call for revitalization and connection.

I. Connection

- Find a comfortable position, preferably seated with both feet on the ground, your back supported, and your hands open on your thighs.
- Close your eyes if you are comfortable. Now pay attention to your breathing. Notice how your body moves as you breathe in. Slow and deepen your breath a little – with each breath in feel your body lengthen. With each breath out relax into that expansion. Continue breathing at your regular pace.
- In a moment, you are going to make the shofar blasts with your breath. With each deep breath in through your nose, focus on the idea of renewal. When you breathe out the “shofar blasts”, breathe out of your mouth like you are fogging a mirror. Breathe out what no longer serves you.

Tekiah

Inhale renewal

(One breath) Exhale what no longer serves you

Shevarim

Inhale renewal

(Three breaths) Exhale what no longer serves you

Teruah

Inhale renewal

(Many breaths) Exhale what no longer serves you

[Repeat Tekiah, Shevarim and Teruah]

Tekiah Gedolah (Great Breath)

Inhale slowly and deeply and breathe in trust in yourself and in God.

Hold it.

Exhale *completely* and reach for connection

II. Intention

- Turn your attention back to your body.
- With each breath in allow your body to expand and loosen and with the breath out let it settle into the expansion. We are going to move slowly through your body. As you move around, notice the physical feelings in your body without judgement. Notice if those physical feeling connect to an emotions you are feeling. Is there tightness, tension or discomfort anywhere?
- Start by focusing on your feet. Breathe in to relax and expand and breathe out to settle into the expansion. Move up through your body - calves, thighs, pelvis and hips, lower abdomen, lower back, stomach, chest, hands, forearms, upper arm, shoulder blades and upper back, top of shoulders and collar bone, neck through the back of your head to the top, jaw, tongue, lips, cheeks, eyes, forehead, top of your head.
- As you continue breathing calmly, take a few moments to consider how you want to feel after the High Holiday prayers? At the end of the High Holidays? Hopeful, connected, present, joyful, at ease, calm, unafraid? Whatever is where you want to be. Pick 2 or 3 feelings to hold onto.
- Picture the actual words of those feelings. Visualize the words turning into orbs of light. Now visualize yourself reaching out to them and guiding them to a place in your body to keep them safe and strong.
- With them safely in place, visualize them connecting to your body. Imagine their light spreading through your body. Now notice your whole self with this light shining within you.
- If you are able, try to expand your vision to picture yourself with those feelings, with that light, while you are around other people in your life.
- Now imagine yourself expanding beyond that and being in God's presence, connecting, while those feelings are safely within you, their light shining and connecting you to God.
- Take a few breaths and let those feelings, the light, the connection, and your expansiveness settle into you.
- Continue to pay attention to your breath. Calmly breath in and out.

III. Closing Prayer

You have been an open and holy vessel of possibility for the past several minutes. You have traveled deep within yourself and reached far beyond yourself. While you remain this open and holy vessel, read this prayer or offer words from your heart.

I have been breathed into life and I am breathing now. I am a living holy vessel of You, God. I have much to be grateful for, yet I carry with me a deep pain. I have been hoping and praying for a child yet month after month I am disappointed. During this celebration of creation, during this New Year, make me a partner in creation. During this time of forgiveness and experiencing Your shelter, help me to see blessings in my life. Help me to see potential and renewal. Help me see the holiness in the world around me and in myself. Be with me, God. Watch over me. Hear my prayer.

You can remain here for a few moments and offer your own prayers for the New Year.

Whenever you are ready, slowly return to your body. Start to notice the room around you. You can wiggle your feet or your hands and then move your body gently.

As you move back into your day, remember and keep those lights safely inside of you. And May you have a sweet New Year!