

MENTAL HEALTH HIGH HOLIDAY SHOFAR BLASTS

We believe Jewish prayers and rituals can help to strengthen our mental well-being, resilience, and recovery in the same way **middot**, or Jewish values, can promote them. Faith is an important part of healing for many, and Jewish thinkers and leaders historically have brought the two together.

These Shofar blasts can be used on Rosh Hashanah to connect to breaking the silence around talking about mental health and addiction and on Kol Nidre to invite the community to make a new vow to talk about mental health and substance abuse in the new year.

If you offer your own version of a mental health shofar blast and are open to sharing it as a communal resource, please email a copy to info@thebluedovefoundation.org.

Liturgical Selection 1: Shofar

The texts of Jewish tradition have indicated that the sound of the Shofar is intended to rouse us from our sleep, to jolt us awake and into action. On Rosh Hashanah, as we dedicate this sacred moment to considering the year that has passed and the year still to be, we do so with hearts made heavy by missed opportunities. The liturgy calls us to reflect upon those moments where we fell short, where we could have done more, and the Shofar challenges us to dedicate ourselves anew to those important tasks.

We have done important work in responding to the needs of others. But as we engage these final calls of the Shofar, with the final blast of Tekiah Gedolah as the clarion call to action, may we find ourselves attuned to the deafening cries of mental illness and addiction which have been obstructed; while some have been screaming, many of us have heard nothing but silence. The shofar calls us to offer renewed attention to those struggling in our midst; the Shofar calls us to answer their cries with “Hineni” – here I am.

Liturgical Selection 2: Mi Chamocha

Mi Chamocha, the text we will soon encounter as a community on this yuntiff morning, is a piece found in the Book of Shemot, recited just as the people emerged from slavery to freedom. “Who is like You, God, among all that is worshipped?” Indeed, God is awesome in power and splendor, and those miracles that were worked in the days of our ancestors remain the legends we offer today.

We know that slavery can come in many forms, and we encounter far too many in our friendship and family circles who have been, or are presently, enslaved by habit and addiction. May we dedicate ourselves to being God’s hands to work miracles in those lives as well, offering support and encouragement as they move through the journey of recovery. As our ancestor Nachshon displayed bravery in taking that first step into the Sea, may we celebrate the courage of first steps that our friends and family members take toward recovery. And to those whose journey to recovery has not yet begun, may you embark during this year to come on the trek through the wilderness of healing and wholeness...and may you never feel as if you are walking alone.