



Rabbi Goren blows the shofar at the newly liberated Western Wall on June 7th, 1967



**T**his fascinating new exhibition at the BLMJ reveals little known facts about the shofar and traces its use and symbolism through history from the ancient world to modern times in an exceptional display of artifacts and multi-media.

From presidential inaugurations to the poignant closing of the prayer at the end of Yom Kippur, the sound of the shofar plays an integral role in the history and religious ritual of the Jewish people in its continuum. Crossing all cultural and geographical boundaries, shofars continue to be blown in every synagogue and Jewish community around the world.

As a universal institution for visitors of all faiths, the Bible Lands Museum presents exhibitions and catalogs that enrich the understanding and appreciation of our heritage. The priceless collection of artifacts that comprises the main exhibition of the Museum dates from the beginning of civilization and serves as a true witness to the history of the lands of the Bible, the Ancient Near East. With the presentation of "Sound the Shofar – A Witness to History," visitors leap from the ancient to the present, proving the relevance of our ancient history in the 21st century.

## SOUND THE SHOFAR

The shofar shares its stories of the tumultuous history of the Jewish people in the new exhibition "Sound the Shofar – A Witness to History" at the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem. The exhibition will be on display in time for the High Holidays, from September 2011 through February 2012 / Dan Zeller

### Throughout history

Nothing compares to the power and haunting quality of the sound of a shofar. Uniquely recognizable, its evocative call has unified the Jewish people for more than 3,000 years, instilling a sense of pride and galvanizing our independence and freedom of religion.

Visitors to this exhibition will discover many little known facts about shofars and their origins, as well as see examples of shofars that range from the simple to the elaborate. A number of depictions of shofars can be seen on artifacts dating to the Byzantine period.





The Rothschild Miscellany

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THE EXHIBITION INCLUDES ARTIFACTS ON LOAN FROM MUSEUMS AND INSTITUTIONS, AS WELL AS FROM PRIVATE COLLECTIONS, MANY OF WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN ON DISPLAY BEFORE.



Also on display are shofars that were blown at critically important times in the recent history of the Jewish people. The exhibition begins by looking at how a shofar is created and which animal horns can be used, and provides a glimpse into the secret process of transforming the raw natural horn into a powerful symbol of Jewish celebration. The exhibition delves into the iconography and function of the shofar from its earliest attestation to the present day.

The shofar is among the earliest musical instruments played by mankind. It is one of the oldest and most recognizable symbols of Judaism, and has been in continual use for more than 3,000 years. Throughout the millennia, the shofar has been a powerful witness to the turbulent history of the Jewish people in both times of rejoicing and triumph, as well as sorrow and devastation, as evidenced in many comparative events throughout Jewish history.

According to the Bible, the shofar was sounded by Israelite priests when the walls of Jericho fell more than 3,000 years ago, and was sounded again on June 7th, 1967 by Rabbi Goren when the Western Wall was liberated and Jerusalem united. It was also sounded at the coronation ceremonies of the kings of Israel, including King Solomon, and that tradition is echoed today as an integral part of the inauguration ceremony of the presidents of Israel, including that of President Shimon Peres on July 15th, 2007. Throughout Jewish history, the shofar has been sounded to proclaim a *herem* (expulsion) against a fellow Jew, yet it has also been blown at weddings to celebrate new and joyous beginnings.

Under the British Mandate it was forbidden to blow the shofar at the Kotel (Western Wall) in Jerusalem. Courageous young men knowingly volunteered to perform this sacred act on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement in the Jewish faith, and in doing so were arrested and imprisoned in the Old City of Jerusalem. The shofar blowers were granted special permission

to break their fast prior to blowing the shofarot so they would not suffer unreasonably when caught.

### A unique exhibition

The new exhibition at the Bible Lands Museum, which was curated by Dr. Filip Vukosavovic, displays a wide variety of shofars and their depictions on a range of objects from ancient times to the present. Among the highlights of the exhibition is a two-sided carved synagogue chancel screen depicting a menorah, shofar, lulav and ethrog from Ashkelon (4th-7th centuries CE); a facsimile of the Rothschild Miscellany manuscript showing a shofar blower in front of Jewish worshippers (15th century CE, Italy); a unique shofar used to proclaim a *herem* against a fellow Jew (ca. 17th century CE, Western Europe); and a shofar recovered from the Gyimes labor camp during the Holocaust, secretly used by Jews on the Jewish New Year and on Yom Kippur. Also on display for the first time is the famous shofar blown by Rabbi Shlomo Goren at the Western Wall on June 7th, 1967 after the liberation and unification of Jerusalem.

The exhibition includes artifacts on loan from museums and institutions, as well as from private collections, many of which have never been on display before. On loan from Yad Vashem are two shofars that lay witness to the struggle to remain free in spirit and religious observance under the worst of all imaginable conditions. These are a mere sampling of the many pivotal events and unforgettable stories that have surfaced in the preparation of this exhibition.

The exhibition is accompanied by a 72-page color catalog featuring articles by Prof. Shalom Sabar, Dr. Guy Stiebel and Dr. Filip Vukosavovic, addressing topics such as the zoo-biology of Bovidae horns, as well as covering the history of the shofar and its uses from its Mesopotamian origins in the 3rd millennium BCE to modern times. ❧

For further details about the exhibition or about the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem: 02-5611066, www.blmj.org/en.