

Hear the Call, Heed the Call



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

“It will be a day of sounding for you – *Yom Teruah yih’yeh la-chem*,” our liturgy reads.

At this High Holiday season, we sound the *shofar*, the ram’s horn, to awaken our hearts and minds to the work of these days – the work of reflection, of atonement, of renewal.

The *shofar’s* plaintive wailing and piercing cries ask us to pay attention to those who live at the margins: the world’s nearly 80 million displaced people.

We hear the *shofar* calling us to our most deeply held values: to compassion, to welcome, to justice.

But it is not enough to merely hear the *shofar*. The Psalmist tells us that we are to know the sound of the *shofar*. To know the sound of the *shofar* is to heed its invitation to act on our values.

We heed the *shofar’s* call when we take action for the world’s refugees and asylum seekers, those whose lives are in danger for being who they are.

We heed the *shofar’s* call when we ensure that refugees and asylum seekers have pathways and resources to rebuild their lives in safety and with dignity.

We heed the *shofar’s* call when we speak out against anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment, standing in solidarity with the oppressed – neighbor and stranger alike.

That is what it means to know the *shofar’s* call – not only to hear it but also to heed it.

We move from *tekiyah* – the first call of the *shofar* – to *tekiyah gedolah* – the great, final blast – by joining our voices, demanding that fear and racism are replaced with understanding and righteousness.

Like the twists and curves of the ram’s horn, the path forward is winding and sometimes uncertain. However the path unfolds, though, the sound of the *shofar* is clear as it stirs our souls.

Yom Teruah yih’yeh lanu – it is a day of sounding for us. May the sound of the *shofar* and the sound of our voices lifted together announce to all those seeking refuge that they are respected, protected, and welcomed.