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### Shafarot

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## Shafarot

Thank you for speaking to the dialogue with God, Michael, which also informs all I'll say.

Shafarot speaks to the call of the shofar, which is also a calling to live with greater awareness and purpose, to examine what we need to change or release or summon our courage and strength to do, and to be more of a mensch. I ended up, no surprise given the subject matter and how I grapple with things, writing this poem.

### The Call of the Shofar

It is not just the old call in the bones  
and quiet of memory, the temple  
falling, the exiles returning,  
the temple rebuilding itself  
through our hands and acts, the readying  
of whatever clearing—right outside  
our front door on a hot September afternoon  
—welcomes the presence of what  
we cannot name but names us.

The call of the shofar is a question,  
staccato as cicadas or long-necked arching  
into the sunset tonight. *What is here?*  
It asks. *Who?* We might answer,  
or just as misguided, *Why?*

But all such music—part animal,  
part wind, part invisible, part visible  
even if we miss it—is always  
a conversation. *Did you hear that?*

Each inhalation a slip of sound  
we finally grasp, Each exhalation a surrender  
to how little we know, especially about  
the confluences of our own voices so far  
behind us, around old bends that shape  
our hours now, so far ahead of us into  
the chatter of babies or birds, the rush  
of storms through the fields of the future,  
the sound of the shofar running  
or stilling itself like water,  
like this river of life.

Lightning maybe. Thunder.  
A flash of clear blue again. Quiet.  
Then the call and response we are made for:

*Let your old temples fall.  
Raise your eyes. Return.  
Listen. Listen Listen.*

We recall the time that G-d revealed Himself on Mt. Sinai and gave us the Torah.

“The whole world trembled at Your Presence, Creation shook in awe before You, when You, our King, did reveal Yourself on Mt. Sinai to give to Your People the Torah and its Commandments, letting them hear your majestic voice, your holy words out of flashes of fire. Amid thunder and lightening did You reveal Yourself to them, amid the sound of the Shofar did you appear to them.”

Finally, we come to the most provocative section, Shofarot (Revelation), which looks to our future as a people. In Judaism, we recognize that while God was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, that event did not represent the end of our relationship. In fact, God’s revelation continues each day. It attests to the brilliance and durability of our tradition that each successive generation has not only the ability but in fact the responsibility to interpret and internalize what it means to be Jewish. The Torah famously tells us in Deuteronomy 30:12: *lo bashamayim hee*, our law is not in heaven, but rather here on earth where the sacred words of our ancient texts may continually be interpreted and shaped.

What time of year could be more appropriate than the High Holidays to look anew at our connection to God and to Judaism? Yes, the sound of the shofar calls for us to pray and reflect, but even more vital is the message to grow and change. Judaism is the path upon which we stand. It’s up to each generation to decide where that path leads.