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### A tool of remembrance: the shofar in modern music, literature and art

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## 5. Conclusions

### Space, Time, Authority

The motto of *A Tool of Remembrance* is a verse from Geoffrey Hartman's *Elegy at the Bodensee*: "I had never heard the Shofar applauded, God have mercy[.]"<sup>1</sup> To Hartman's poetic subject, the shofar is a sacred instrument for the synagogue instead of a musical instrument for the concert hall and therefore, he is pained by the applause of the audience. On the other hand, the composer Judith Shatin states: "Some people think that it's inappropriate to use it for a setting outside of the High Holy Days - for its use in concert music. I have not been able to track down any place in the Torah that leads me to think that there's anything inappropriate about it, . . . I view it as a way of creating a connection to the tradition."<sup>2</sup>

There is no happy medium between these two standpoints. Only one of the discussed compositions, Berlinski's *Shofar Service*, fits equally well in a concert setting and a synagogue service, though there will be a great difference between the two performances. In a synagogue, the musicians play on behalf of the congregation, of which they may be members; in a concert hall, however, the musicians are contracted by the management and they do not play on behalf of the audience but before the audience, which is anonymous, heterogeneous, and not exclusively Jewish. The audience will need an explanation in order to understand the words and the meaning of the shofar blasts in the composition. They applaud the musicians for the performance and leave the concert hall to turn to the order of the day. The ba'al teki'ah in the synagogue should be a man of irreproachable conduct; in contrast, the shofar blower in the concert hall is judged only on his artistic performance on the shofar. The former is an amateur, even if he were a qualified musician, whereas the latter is a professional. Mutatis mutandis, all authors of works of art with a shofar do a professional job; their audiences pay them directly or indirectly for their work and, whereas the shofar prayers and blasts in the Bible and the prayer books are the spiritual property of the faithful, works of art with a shofar are the intellectual property of the author, and possibly the publisher.

In the arts, three connections of the shofar with religious tradition are broken. First, the connection with synagogal space. As an artistic instrument, the shofar does not appear on the bimah in the synagogue, but on the stages in public, secular spaces like the concert hall, the theater, the museum, and the street, as well as in private homes. Mass-produced books, pictures, and portable media overcome limitations of space. And whereas the ba'al teki'ah in the synagogue blows in the direction of Jerusalem, away from the congregation, the performing artist faces his audience. He can play a game with this spatial change, just as S. Anski and Shulamit Ran did, when they staged a synagogue ritual with a shofar in a play and an opera respectively.

Second, the connection with liturgical time. In the synagogue, the shofar is connected with certain days: the month of Elul and the High Holy Days Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 4.46.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 4.55.

Kippur. In the arts, its connection with the Jewish liturgical year is no longer self-evident. A work of art can be inspired by other prayers than those of the High Holy Days or based on a unorthodox interpretation. Whereas the shofar prayers and blasts have to be repeated each year on the High Holy Days, a work of art with a shofar can be presented at any moment, independent of the liturgical cycle. Moreover, as a result of recording technique, listening is separated in time from recording the shofar.

Third, the connection with halakhah, rabbinical authority and the traditional interpretation of texts from the Bible and the prayer books. In Bakhtinian terms: the authoritative discourse of the shofar in the traditional religious texts turns into an internally persuasive discourse in the works of art, in which both the voice of tradition and the voice of modernity sound. The shofar blasts in the works of art are not meant to direct the lives of the listeners, readers, or viewers, but to stir their imagination. In contrast to the Bible, those who do not listen to the shofar will not be punished; they only miss the experience of a new, surprising interpretation of shofar tradition.

Despite these three breaks with tradition, every artist who is inspired by the shofar and creates a work of art in the Present enters into a dialogue with these texts from the Past. As discussed in Chapter 1.1, three points of departure are possible, though the point of departure in a section of a work can differ from that in the work as a whole.

In the first point of departure, “the Present is directed by the Past.”<sup>3</sup> The artist is inspired by verses, whether or not with a shofar, from the Bible, prayer books or other traditional religious texts, or by the shofar blasts themselves, the shofar timbre or the system of shofar blasts from the Rosh Ha-Shanah service.

A second point of departure is another work of art, whether or not inspired by traditional religious texts; here, “the Present is indirectly directed by the Past.”

A third point of departure is, to give a Bakhtinian view, the artist’s “own question,” an artistic, psychological, social or political question, issue or problem. Many traditional religious texts from the Past do not offer ready-made answers for the Present, but they do offer illustrations, comparisons, analogies, arguments, counter-arguments, or simply comfort. Sometimes this third point comes close to the first point of departure, since finding inspiration in traditional religious texts presupposes an interest in them. The classification depends on the primacy in time or importance—or both—of the traditional text in the first point of departure, versus the primacy of the artist’s own question in the third point of departure. Even though the traditional verses and blasts do not change, after the creation of the work of art they will never be interpreted in exactly the same way as before. Therefore, T.S. Eliot argues that “the Past is altered by the Present” and Bakhtin states that the cultures from the Present and the Past both retain their own unity and open totality, while they are mutually enriched.<sup>4</sup> Below, the points of departure of the artists in the seventy discussed works will be explained.

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<sup>3</sup> Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> Bakhtin, “Response to a Question” 7.

## 1. The Present is directed by the Past

### The Bible: Verses with a Shofar

The Bible contains two different kinds of shofarot: the “great” shofar, blown by God, and the ordinary shofar, blown by man. The theophany on Mount Sinai, announced by the great shofar, is described in Exod. 19, and very freely rendered by Thomas Mann in his novella *The Tables of the Law*. An echo of the great shofar can be heard in Arnold Schoenberg’s opera *Moses und Aron*, when Moses descends from Mount Sinai and discovers the idolatry of the golden calf. In Yechiel Granatstein’s biographical chapter *Rosh haShanah in Skarżysko*, one of the survivors from the concentration camp makes a daring comparison between God’s great shofar on Mount Sinai and the shofar blown by Rabbi Yitskhak Finkler in the camp. In response to this event, the philosopher Emil Fackenheim distinguishes three key moments in history, when the shofar announces a judgment of humanity: the shofar of the theophany on Mount Sinai, the shofar of Rabbi Finkler in the concentration camp, and the shofar on Mount Sinai, that will announce the end of times. To a lesser degree, this element of judgment is present in many of the discussed works of art.

The majority of the more than seventy scriptural passages with a shofar have a military background. The best-known of them is Josh. 6 about the conquest of Jericho; Jordi Savall considered this story as historical, and on the basis of a problematic argumentation, he composed his spectacular *Fanfare of Jericho, 1200 B.C.*

In several scriptural passages, the shofar, whether or not with other instruments, accompanies a religious procession or ceremony. In 1 Chron. 13, David brings the Ark to Jerusalem, which inspired Ben Shahn to his painting *Third Allegory*, in which Ps. 150 plays a part as well. Ps. 81 is a song of praise to God with reminiscences of the exodus from Egypt and God’s commandment to blow the shofar at new moon; Ofer Ben-Amots took this text as a point of departure in his cantata *Psalm 81*.

### The Bible: Verses without a Shofar

Some artists took a scriptural passage without a shofar as their point of departure. Though the ram’s horn is absent from these verses, they all testify to God as a lawgiver, judge, king, or liberator, and these functions are marked by shofar blowing elsewhere in the Bible. Yehuda Amichai’s poem *The Real Hero* refers to Gen. 22 on the origin of the shofar: the ram, caught in the thicket by its horns and sacrificed by Abraham as a substitute for Isaac. Amichai turns this biblical story upside down: the hero of his poem is the innocent ram, whose horns are made into shofarot to sound battle cries, and the poem is implicitly connected with the Israeli-Lebanese War of 1982.

Exod. 20 on the Ten Commandments, in particular the prohibition of images, and Exod. 32 on the violation of this prohibition in the idolatry of the golden calf, are the subject of Schoenberg’s opera *Moses und Aron*, which differs from the biblical example, because Moses suffers a defeat in his defense of the prohibition of images against Aron. A powerful French horn blast symbolizes Moses’ wrath about the violation of the Law.

The shofar refers to God’s guidance of Israel in Ernest Bloch’s composition *Psalm 114*

about the exodus from Egypt and in Marc Chagall's etching *The Deliverance of Jerusalem*, inspired by the prophecy of Isa. 52. God's guidance of the prophets is expressed in the shofar blasts of two works: Judith Shatin's electro-acoustic composition *Elijah's Chariot* about the prophet's love for children and the story of his ascent to heaven in 2 Kings 2; and Henry Brant's *Prophets*, in which passages from Ezek. 10, Joel 2, Jonah 2, and Job 28 about the four elements and the four directions of the wind are chanted by four ḥazzanim at the same time and preceded by shofar blasts.

Stylized shofar blasts announce divine judgment in Bloch's composition *Schelomo*, which alludes to three scriptural passages directly or indirectly connected with Solomon: Deut. 17 on the ideal image of a king; 1 Kings 1-11 about Solomon's kingship and his worship of foreign gods; and the pessimism of Eccl. 1-2. Divine judgment, expressed by shofar blasts, is also present in Bob Gluck's electronic composition *Jonah under the Sea*, an attempt to render Jonah's thoughts and feelings during his drowning in the sea.

Messianic connotations of the shofar blasts are prominently present in Edward Elgar's oratorio *The Apostles*, in which the Watchers on the Temple roof sing Ps. 92, a song of praise; here, the rising sun is the bringer of light and at the same time, the symbol of the Christian Messiah Jesus. Elgar's second point of departure is Luke 6 from the New Testament on Jesus's prayer on the mountain and his calling of the apostles.

### **Archaeological Find**

The archaeological find of a stone from the Temple wall with an inscription referring to the place of the shofar blowing inspired Paul Celan to his poem *The Shofar Place*, which in its turn inspired Berio's composition *Shofar*, and therefore the latter is indirectly directed by the Past.

### **Halakhah, Mishnah, Talmud**

Few artists took halakhic texts as their point of departure, perhaps because these texts have always remained the intellectual property of the rabbinical elite, whereas the Bible has become a popular text. The two discussed works about the shofar in halakhah, however, are quite popular and humorous in character. A chapter on the shofar from the Mishnah tractate Rosh Ha-Shanah provides the words for Yehezkiel Braun's cantata *Festive Horns*. Eliyahu Sidi uses a part of this chapter in his painting *From Tractate Rosh Ha-Shanah* and in addition, mishnayot from Mishnah Zevahim on animal sacrifices and Mishnah Kinnim on bird sacrifices. The humor in both works springs either from very literal interpretations or anachronistic illustrations of the mishnaic texts. With regard to the Talmud, Edward Elgar took the unusual step of choosing a passage about recruiting day laborers as a point of departure in his Christian oratorio *The Apostles*, where it concerns Jesus' calling of the apostles.

### **Prayer Books: Shofar Prayers**

The U-Netanneh Tokef prayer from the Rosh Ha-Shanah service was the point of departure for Uriel Birnbaum's drawing *A Great Shofar Sounds*, in which the angel who blows the shofar and announces the judgment appears in the hybrid context of a modern city

next to an ancient desert. Of all the discussed works, Herman Berlinski's cantata *Shofar Service* is the only one that fits into the synagogal liturgy; it consists of the Malkhuyot, Zikhronot and Shofarot sections from the Reform Rosh Ha-Shanah service, and a unique feature is the addition of two trumpets, representing the biblical ḥazozrot.

The teki'ah gedolah at the end of the Yom Kippur service also concludes H. Leyvik's poem *The Wolf: A Chronicle* about the founding of a new Jewish congregation in a ruined shtetl after a murderous pogrom. As soon as the new ba'al teki'ah blows the shofar, the werewolf storms into the synagogue, where his howling blends with the blast of the ram's horn. After being hit by the congregation, the dying werewolf turns into the rabbi of the shtetl from before the pogrom.

### Prayer Books: Shofar Blasts

The most obvious way of integrating the shofar into a work of art is to quote the traditional blasts, which of course is only possible in a composition, a film, or a play. The traditional shofar blasts are blown in two plays: in an Jewish exorcist ritual in S. Anski's *The Dybbuk*, and in an informal, non-traditional setting in Else Lasker-Schüler's *Arthur Aronymus and His Ancestors*. Unchanged shofar blasts appear in a number of compositions. Henry Brant uses them in *Prophets* to announce prophetic texts, chanted by several ḥazzanim at the same time. *Elijah's Chariot* by Judith Shatin features the four traditional blasts, repeated by a string quartet, which imitates their pitch, rhythm and timbre. Two shofar blasts announce the birth of Jesus in Miklós Rózsa's music to the film *Ben-Hur*. In Osvaldo Golijov's *Tekyah*, the film version of which was performed on location in the concentration camp Auschwitz, the shofar blasts are blown in unison by a large group, enhancing the impression of unity in mourning. In Tsippi Fleischer's *Symphony No. 5 "Israeli-Jewish Collage"*, another group of shofar blowers appears, and their non-unison blowing might symbolize the disruption in Israeli society. Non-unison blowing has a different meaning in Jordi Savall's *Fanfare of Jericho, 1200 B.C.*: the group of shofar blowers seems larger and is more likely to impress the enemy. In Shulamit Ran's opera *Between Two Worlds*, the shofar blasts are played by the alternating shofarot and orchestral brass, an effective musical expression of the cooperation of two rabbis in an exorcism ritual. In all these compositions, the shofar is not accompanied, and thus coordination problems with modern instruments are avoided. Intonation problems occur in the first orchestral composition with a real shofar, Edward Elgar's oratorio *The Apostles*, in which the primitive ram's horn is embedded in a modern symphony orchestra.

In a number of compositions the traditional blasts are transformed, sometimes by means of electronic technology, thus expressing the unusual, violent or supernatural character of an event. In Judith Shatin's *Elijah's Chariot*, this is Elijah's ascension to heaven and in Bob Gluck's *Jonah under the Sea*, Jonah's drowning in the sea and his captivity in the fish; the shofar notes in this composition are very similar to whale calls. Three other compositions continue a biblical tradition by associating the shofar with war and terror. In Alvin Curran's *Crystal Psalms*, realistic shofar blasts sound like emergency cries as in *Kristallnacht*; a dense texture of shofar blasts is the "sound signature" of Judaism in Robert Normandeau's *Chorus: To the Victims of September 11th, 2001*, where the shofar is being

confronted with the church bell and the call of the muezzin as the sound signatures of Christianity and Islam respectively. Though the shofar sounds in Andy Haas' *Humanitarian War* are easier to recognize, they are at the same time more abstract, expressing general aggression and fear.

Shofar blasts are often performed on other instruments. Nearly undistorted blasts are blown on brass instruments in Alexander Goehr's *Sonata about Jerusalem*, Luciano Berio's *Shofar*, and Jeff Hamburg's *Tekiah*. More distorted, but with both their characteristic rising 4th or 5th and tone repetition, are the blasts in *Festive Horns* by Yehezkiel Braun and Ernest Bloch's *Psalm 114* and *Schelomo*. They appear in woodwind or string instruments in Judith Shatin's *Elijah's Chariot*, Aaron Copland's *Vitebsk* and Babette Koblenz's *Shofar*. Ofer Ben-Amots's *Psalm 81* is a special case, as the choir sings the word *tik'u* ("blow") on the characteristic upward 4th leap, thus referring to the shofar in two different ways.

Shofar blasts appear as onomatopoeias in three literary works. In Israel Zangwill's poem "Our Own": *A Cry across the Atlantic* as a subtle, repeated allusion to the shofar blast; in Sholem Aleykhem's short story *Mister Grinn Gotta Job* as an onomatopoeia which at the same time is the name of the blast; and in Yehuda Haim Perahia's poem *A Little Light* in the form of a general onomatopoeic term for brass fanfares.

Three poems simply refer to shofar blasts. The blasts in Geoffrey Hartman's *Elegy at the Bodensee* are real blasts in a concert setting, those in Avrom Sutskever's *Resurrection* are imaginary blasts in a poetic nightmare, and those in Nelly Sachs' *Someone Blew the Shofar* are abstract blasts as structure-defining elements in the text; in all three poems, the shofar blasts are symbols of the will to live after the Shoah.

Some composers imitate the timbre of the shofar with other means. In Bob Gluck's *Jonah under the Sea*, this is the whale call, and in Giulio Castagnoli's *Shofar*, the highest register of the bassoon, whereas Babette Koblenz's *Shofar* only suggests the shofar's roughness of timbre and attack.

The system of shofar blasts from the Rosh Ha-Shanah service is used in some works as a structure-determining element. Stefan Heucke uses the complete system in his opera *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz*, in which every blast creates a moment of reflection in the midst of terror. Herman Berlinski's cantata *Shofar Service* is based on a Reform prayer book, which reduced the 100 blasts to 10. In Avraham Loewenthal's painting *100 Sounds of the Shofar* the system is represented by colored triangles and interpreted in a kabbalistic way as a striving for wholeness and goodness.

## 2. The Present is indirectly directed by the Past

### Adaptation of Other Works

In a number of works, the artist's point of departure is another work of art. Some source works were adapted in the target works, where they provide the text to an illustration, the words to a play or a cantata, or the melody to a composition, whereas other source works only provided a moment of inspiration for the target works.

Fragments from 12th-century texts are used in the libretto for the music theater piece *Sonata about Jerusalem* by Alexander Goehr. Its protagonists are the oppressed Jews of

12th-century Baghdad, who are misled by a false prophet and believe that they will fly to Jerusalem; triumphant and later caricatural shofar blasts play an important part in this composition. The folk song *Eliyahu Ha-Navi* (“The Prophet Elijah”) provides a part of the musical material for Judith Shatin’s *Elijah’s Chariot* for shofar, string quartet and electronics. This song about Elijah as the protector of children determines the atmosphere in the intimate passages of the composition, whereas the shofar sounds in the grandiose event of Elijah’s ascent to heaven. The successful novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1880) by Lew Wallace is set in the 1st century CE and confronts three characters and their milieus: the Jew Ben-Hur, the Roman Messala and Jesus, the prophet of a new religion. In Miklós Rózsa’s music to William Wyler’s film of the same name (1959), Jesus’ birth is proclaimed by a shepherd, who blows the shofar twice, first for Bethlehem and then for the world. In 1900, Moris Rozenfeld wrote a poem about God’s creation of man. To control him, God and His Senate decide not to give wings to man, with only one exception: the creative poet. The English translation of Rozenfeld’s naive Yiddish poem, *The Creation of Man* (1902), was given a completely different turn by Ephraim Moses Lilien’s illustration, which pictures the new man in the company of Theodor Herzl and a shofar blower, represented as classical, nude heroes. Although the above-mentioned source works do not contain a shofar, the ram’s horn is prominently present in the target works, where it expresses messianic hope.

S. Anski’s play *Between Two Worlds (The Dybbuk)* (1919) was adapted by Shulamit Ran into an opera: *Between Two Worlds* (1998). Inspired by the same play, Aaron Copland composed the piano trio *Vitebsk* (1929), in which he used elements from the play: the Ḥasidic song *Why, oh why did the soul descend* and the shofar blasts of the exorcism ritual, played in a strongly stylized form by the violin, cello and piano.

Paul Celan’s poem *The Shofar Place* (1969), inspired by the archaeological find of a stone from the Temple Mount with an inscription for the shofar blower, became in turn the source of inspiration for Luciano Berio’s *Shofar* (1995), a composition for choir and orchestra, in which the hermetic character of the poem is further enhanced by the stammering singing of the choir before the divine mystery, evocated by the powerful shofar blasts of the brass.

### **Inspiration from Other Works**

In Primo Levi’s memoirs *If This Is a Man* (1947), the inspiration from the source work is short and intense as a flash of lightning; when Levi recites verses from Dante’s *Divina Commedia* (14th century) for a fellow prisoner in the concentration camp, Dante’s words about human dignity hit him like a trumpet blast, like the voice of God. This trumpet could be connected both to God’s great shofar on Mount Sinai and the trumpets in the book Revelation from the New Testament. Claudio Monteverdi’s cantata *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* from the *Vespers* (1610) with its alternating vocal and instrumental sections provided the musical structure for Alexander Goehr’s music theater piece *Sonata about Jerusalem* (1970), whereas the shofar and other Jewish elements were provided by the above-mentioned 12-century Jewish texts.

Two plays from different periods provided inspiration for Robert Normandeau's electronic composition about the terror attack on the Twin Towers, *Chorus: To the Victims of September 11th, 2001* (2002). Sophocles' *Antigone* (441 BCE) reveals the consequences of religious-inspired violence, whereas Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1779) compares the three religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, propagating mutual respect. The shofar, which is not present in the source texts, serves as the "sound signature" of Judaism in Normandeau's composition.

Gustav Schwab's ballad *Der Reiter und der Bodensee* ("The Horseman and Lake Constance," 1826) must have been the source of inspiration for Geoffrey Hartman's poem *Elegy at the Bodensee* (1984). In both poems, the antagonist escapes death, which he realizes only afterwards; Schwab's ballad is about a horseman who crosses the ice and snow-covered Lake Constance, believing that it is land, while the poetic subject of Hartman's poem survived the Shoah and is terror-stricken during a concert in Germany with Jewish music and the shofar.

### 3. The Past is altered by the Present

#### Tradition and Modernization

To the shofar tradition, 20th-century modernization has been both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, shofar tradition has suffered from the weakening of many religious communities; on the other hand, it has received a new impulse from modern technology, which expands the technical and artistic possibilities of the ram's horn as well as the dissemination of shofar-inspired works of art.

In Yitskhok Leybush Perets' short story *The Shofar*, which is set in the Pale of Settlement around 1900, shofar tradition is threatened from the outside by anti-Semitism and from the inside by stale routine in Jewish religious practice. In Abel Herzberg's autobiographical story *The History of My Shofar*, however, the shofar's status increases: Herzberg's ram's horn evolves from a sentimental marker, a heirloom from his father, into an ethnic marker of the Jews in the concentration camp, and eventually into a religious marker of Jewish faith. Moris Rozenfeld's poem *Sephirah* is an example of lachrymose history, depicting the Jews as the eternal victims, whose only musical instrument is the "dry, withered" shofar. A protest against resignation and fatalism is found in Israel Zangwill's poem "Our Own": *A Cry across the Atlantic*, which is not only a call to support the European Jews in the aftermath of World War I, but also a literary echo of the system of shofar blasts from the Rosh Ha-Shanah service.

In his comment on his composition *Shofar der Zeit*, Alvin Curran breaks taboos by ridiculing fossilized shofar traditions, while he manipulates and amplifies the sounds of the shofar in the composition itself. Much milder is the opposition against tradition in Sarah Lindsay's poem *Zucchini Shofar*, in which the temporality of man is accepted and a shofar is made of a perishable zucchini. In Richard Chess' poem "With a Blast of the Ram's Horn" and Felix Nussbaum's painting *Entombment (Organ-Grinders)*, the shofar is an imaginary weapon against authority in the persons of an uninspiring teacher and established, older artists respectively.

Although the shofar had not changed since biblical times, three composers provided the instrument with digital technology around the turn of the 21st century. In Alvin Curran's *Shofar der Zeit*, Bob Gluck's *Jonah under the Sea* and Andy Haas' *Humanitarian War*, the shofar itself remains unchanged, whereas its sound is manipulated by means of computer technology. Bob Gluck goes a step further in *Shofaralong* by attaching digital devices to the shofar and playing it by means of a glove with sensors. In a very different way, technology determines Yizhak Oren's fantasy story *The Monument of the Resurrection*, in which the coming of the Messiah, announced by a shofar like a siren, is conducted as a secret military operation.

The protagonists of Sholem Aleykhem's short story *Mister Grinn Gotta Job* and Bruno Schulz's *The Night of the Great Season* are confronted with modern business; the former adapts himself to the American way of life by earning a living as a freelance shofar blower, whereas the latter does not adapt and blows the shofar in an attempt to keep the pushing crowd of customers off him.

### The Shoah

19 out of the 70 discussed works of art are in some way connected to the Shoah. Some works only allude to the Shoah, whereas other works report about Kristallnacht and life and death in concentration camps; a third category is about liberation after World War II, and a fourth category about commemoration of the Shoah. Some works originate from the 1930s and 1940s, whereas others were created much later, by the second post-war generation.

The immediate cause of Israel Zangwill's poem "*Our Own*": *A Cry across the Atlantic* (1920) was the plan of an influential Pole to exterminate the Jewish minority in Poland. Else Lasker-Schüler's play *Arthur Aronymus and His Ancestors* is a reaction to the growing anti-Semitism on the eve of the Third Reich, though the play is set in 19th-century Germany. Kurt Weill's oratorio *The Eternal Road* is also set during a pogrom, whereas Alvin Curran's electro-acoustic composition *Crystal Psalms* commemorates Kristallnacht. In Zangwill's poem, the system of shofar blasts from the Rosh Ha-Shanah service determines the structure of the poem, whereas the shofar in Weill's oratorio announces the deliverance of the Jewish congregation. Thomas Mann's novella *The Tables of the Law* (1943) about the theophany on Mount Sinai is part of a series of ten novellas by different authors as a protest against Hitler's violation of the Ten Commandments.

Two documentary literary works, Yechiel Granatstein's *One Jew's Power* and Abel Herzberg's *The History of My Shofar*, reveal how shofar tradition strengthens the self-respect of Jews in concentration camps. In Stefan Heucke's opera *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz*, the shofar blasts create moments of reflection in the middle of death and destruction, and in Osvaldo Golijov's instrumental composition *Tekyah*, shofar blasts turn the wood of Auschwitz into a virtual synagogue. Drawing strength from belief is the point of departure in four works; in Arnold Schoenberg's cantata *A Survivor from Warsaw*, the shofar is the antagonist of the German military bugle; in the chapter *Rosh haShanah in Skarżysko* in the above-mentioned book by Yechiel Granatstein, the blowing of the shofar gives the prisoners new hope; in Abel Herzberg's *The History of My Shofar*, the ram's horn

in the concentration camp is personified as a prophet and veteran fighter; and in Nelly Sachs' poem *Someone Blew the Shofar*, it is the symbol of continuity in Jewish history.

The subject matter of the poems *A Little Light* by Yehuda Haim Perahia and *Resurrection* by Avrom Sutskever is the psychological depression of Jews after the liberation and their confrontation with the consequences of the Shoah. In both poems, shofar blasts express the Jews' unspeakable sorrow and their longing for redemption.

The Shoah is commemorated in two compositions. The above-mentioned *Tekyah* by Osvaldo Golijov was written as a commission for a BBC film about Auschwitz. Luciano Berio's *Hör (Shofar)* was a commission for the Europäisches Musikfest Stuttgart, in which fourteen composers each wrote a part of the *Requiem of Reconciliation*. Herman Wald's *Memorial to the Six Million* is a monument with six enormous shofarot around a stylized flame with the commandment "You shall not murder." *The Memorial Synagogue* in the chapter of the same name in Paul Goodman's novel *The Break-Up of Our Camp* is a virtual one, whereas Manuel Herz's synagogue *Meor Hagola - Beth Knesset Magenza* is real; this building in the form of a stylized shofar replaces the destroyed synagogue in the German city of Mainz.

### Violence

With the same point of departure: a comment on the Six-Day War of 1967, Naomi Shemer and Yehuda Amichai arrive at contrary conclusions. In Shemer's song *Jerusalem of Gold*, the triumphant shofar sounds in the conquered Old City of Jerusalem, which is said to belong to the Jewish people since biblical times. In Amichai's cycle *Jerusalem, 1967*, however, the annexation of the Palestinian part of Jerusalem causes fear and doubt, and the only bright spot is poem 21 of the cycle, which represents the Temple Mount with the shofar as the dynamic chronotope of a ship with a horn. After the Lebanon War of 1982, Yehuda Amichai wrote another anti-war poem, *The Real Hero*, with a reversal of Abraham's sacrifice. In this the innocent ram, whose horns are used to sound battle cries, is the real hero. The horrors of terrorism are the subject of Andy Haas' music album *Humanitarian War* and Robert Normandeau's electronic composition *Chorus: To the Victims of September 11th, 2001*, in which shofar sounds are heavily distorted. Whereas the shofar in Shemer's song proclaims peace for one nation, this concept is problematized in Amichai's *Jerusalem, 1967*, and the shofar in Normandeau's composition proclaims a humanistic and international ideal of peace.

### Religious Confrontations

In some works, the shofar plays a part in internal religious confrontations in Judaism, centering on transgression of the Law or secularism; in other works, there are external confrontations of the Jewish religion and other religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and nature religions. An example of the latter is created in a poem from Shaul Tshernikhovski's cycle *To the Sun*, where the shofar blower worships the rising sun as the bringer of life.

Apart from confrontations of the Jewish religion and nature religions, nature and especially animals play an important part in many of the discussed works of art. The

greatness of nature is revealed in the chanted verses from the Prophets in Henry Brant's composition *Prophets*, announced by shofar blasts, whereas God's great shofar is accompanied by an earthquake in Thomas Mann's novella *The Tables of the Law*. In Yitskhok Leybush Perets' short story *The Shofar*, the old shofar blower is inspired by his memories of the beautiful nature around the village of his youth, which contrasts with the modern urban environment; and in Tsippi Fleischer's *Symphony No. 5 "Israeli-Jewish Collage"*, love of nature is the only thing which unifies the opposing groups in Israeli society, and their love of nature is confirmed by a shofar blast. The rising sun, accompanied by a shofar blast, is a symbol of Christian, messianic redemption in Edward Elgar's oratorio *The Apostles* and a socialist symbol of a better future in Yoysef Tshaykov's drawing *Dawn*; in the above-mentioned poem by Shaul Tshernikhovski, the sun is even a deity, worshipped by the shofar blower and all other creatures. The shofar blower in Ephraim Moses Lilien's drawing *The Creation of Man* walks in a lush vegetation with poppies as symbols of resurrection, whereas a plant provides an alternative, vegetable shofar in Sarah Lindsay's poem *Zucchini Shofar*. Animals figure prominently in a number of works; the ram is pictured in Eliyahu Sidi's painting *From Tractate Rosh Ha-Shanah* and instead of Abraham, figures as *The Real Hero* in Yehuda Amichai's poem of the same name. The shofar blower who longs for redemption is compared to a drinking deer in Nelly Sachs' poem *Someone Blew the Shofar*, and even to an eagle and a lion in Yitskhok Leybush Perets' short story *The Shofar*. The lion as protector of the shofar blower can be seen in Ben Shahn's painting *Third Allegory*, whereas a werewolf attacks the shofar blower in H. Leyvik's poem *The Wolf: A Chronicle*. To conclude, Bob Gluck reveals the similarities between shofar blasts and whale calls in his electronic composition *Jonah under the Sea*. In most of these works, man is not seen as opposed to nature, but as an integral part of nature and God's creation.

Two works confront Judaism with Christianity in statu nascendi. In Miklós Rózsa's music to William Wyler's film *Ben-Hur*, a shepherd blows two blasts to proclaim Jesus' birth, the first for the Jewish town of Bethlehem and the second for the whole world. In Edward Elgar's oratorio *The Apostles*, the shofar proclaims the rising sun as the symbol of the Messiah Jesus. The subject of Else Lasker-Schüler's play *Arthur Aronymus and His Ancestors* (1932) is the hostile attitude of the Christians in a 19th-century German village towards the Jewish minority; the shofar is blown by the half-Jewish night watchman, who is able to blow both "Jewish" and "Catholic." Luciano Berio was one of the fourteen composers of the *Requiem of Reconciliation*, that was meant to commemorate the victims of the Shoah; contrary to the commission, he used a German poem by the Jewish poet Paul Celan, and his contribution was eventually added as a prelude to the Latin mass. The only work with Islam beside Judaism and Christianity is Robert Normandeau's *Chorus: To the Victims of September 11th, 2001*, in which the three religions are represented by the muzzin, the shofar, and the church bell respectively.

The violation of codes of conduct is the subject of four works. Amir Gilboa uses the shofar as a phallic symbol in his poem *Raḥav* about sexual initiation. In Der Nister's novel *The Family Mashber*, the banker's family business goes bankrupt; in a nightmare, the banker is excommunicated from the Jewish community by his father in a ḥerem with shofar blasts. In Anski's play *Between Two Worlds (The Dybbuk)*, the shofar ritual concerns

the exorcism of a dybbuk from the body of his beloved. Another kind of metamorphosis is found in H. Leyvik's poem *The Wolf: A Chronicle* about a rabbi, who turns into a werewolf after a pogrom, and threatens the newly founded Jewish community; during the Yom Kippur service, he enters the synagogue, where his howling blends with the teki'ah gedolah of the shofar; the congregation beats him to death and dying, he again turns into a rabbi.

The subject of three works is the antithesis between religiosity and secularity in a Jewish context. In an attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of socialism and religion among the Jewish minority in Ukraine, in his drawing *Dawn*, Yoysef Tshaykov pictures a man who is both a traditional Jew with peyes and a shofar and a modern, clean-shaven Jew. In Avrom Sutskever's poem *Resurrection*, the persona blows the shofar to revive his friends, murdered in the Shoah. However, they prefer death to the horror of life, and even God has lost His power and implores the shofar blower to redeem Him. In Tsippi Fleischer's *Symphony No. 5 "Israeli-Jewish Collage,"* a teki'ah gedolah on the shofar, comparable to the blast at the end of the Yom Kippur service, is the symbol of reconciliation between hostile groups in Israeli society.

Finally, in Kenneth Fearing's poem *Afternoon of a Pawnbroker*, a secular pawnbroker is confronted with unusual customers bringing mythological objects, and one of them is a certain Mr. Gabriel with a shofar.

### A Better World

In many works, the point of departure is the either Jewish or universal longing or striving for a better world; what such a world looks like and how it can be obtained, remains controversial. Paul Goodman's parable *The Messiah-Blower* is a modern variant on traditional messianic fantasies, whereas Kenneth Fearing's poem *Afternoon of a Pawnbroker* reveals the gap between the modern business world, personified by the pawnbroker, and the world of miracles, personified by Mr. Gabriel and his shofar. In his both tragic and ironic poem *And it shall be when the days grow long...*, Ḥayyim Naḥman Bialik hints that the Messiah will not come. In Kurt Weill's oratorio *The Eternal Road* and Yizḥak Oren's short story *The Monument of the Resurrection*, however, the Messiah does come, announced by a shofar; in the former work, he delivers the Jews from pogromists, and in the latter, his coming was prepared in a secret operation. The Messiah does not come in Alexander Goehr's music theater piece *Sonata about Jerusalem*, as the Jews of medieval Baghdad are misled by a false messiah. A particular case is Avrom Sutskever's poem *Resurrection*, in which the poet himself acts as the Messiah and tries to revive his dead friends, who refuse to return to the foul world, destroyed by the war. The ram's horn's announcing of the Christian Messiah in Edward Elgar's oratorio *The Apostles* is an indication of a gradual shift of the shofar from a Jewish to a more universal symbol.

The longing or striving for a better world according to Zionist ideals determines Ephraim Moses Lilien's drawing *The Creation of Man*, in which Theodor Herzl is pictured as King David, preceded by a herald angel with a shofar. Naomi Shemer's song *Jerusalem of Gold* is a Zionist reaction to the conquest of Jerusalem's Old City in 1967; in contrast, Yehuda Amichai's poem *Jerusalem is a port city* is a sceptical reaction to the same event.

Socialist ideas inspired Yitskhok Leybush Perets in his short story *Bontshe Shvayg* (1894) and Yoysef Tshaykov in his drawing *Dawn* (1919). The tragicomic short story, in which the timid protagonist is welcomed in heaven with shofar blasts, mocks the passive attitude of many Jews facing exploitation and oppression, whereas the drawing, created a generation later, pictures a revolutionary Jew with a shofar, who takes his fate in his own hands.

An element of environmentalism is present in Yehuda Amichai's poem *The Real Hero*, which criticizes the slaughter of the ram in order to use its horns for battle cries. More conventional environmental ideas about a better, greener world can be found in Sarah Lindsay's poem *Zucchini Shofar*, in which no animal is harmed because the shofar is made of a zucchini.

Respect as the characteristic of a better world plays an explicit role in Tsippi Fleischer's *Symphony No. 5 "Israeli-Jewish Collage"* and Robert Normandeau's *Chorus: To the Victims of September 11th, 2001*; whereas the former strives for the unity of the conflicting groups in Israeli society, the latter propagates respect between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Implicitly, respect is present in Jordi Savall's composition *Fanfare of Jericho, 1200 B.C.*; although the conquest of Jericho is not an example of respect, Savall's production *Jerusalem, City of Two Peaces* propagates the equality of all cultures in Jerusalem.

In none of the discussed works of art is the technical primitiveness of the ram's horn considered a disadvantage, because unlike the modern trumpet or horn, the shofar is not judged according to normal musical standards. It is above all a tool of remembrance with inherent Jewish-religious connotations. In all discussed works of art with a shofar, however, there are tensions between religion and art, as well as between tradition and modernity. Some more traditionally-orientated works of art resemble a midrash, bringing hidden meanings of religious texts to the surface, whereas other, radically modern works resemble a secular polemic against religious traditions. Prohibitions on certain beliefs and actions, which are fundamental to every religion, do not apply to the arts, in which everything is allowed except breaking civil or common law and boring the audience. There are artists with unorthodox views on fundamental biblical stories like Abraham's sacrifice or the conquest of Jericho, and artists who contest the halakhic laws concerning the shofar. Each discussed work of art has an independent character and is more than the mere reproduction or confirmation of a verse from the Bible or a prayer book.

Three qualities of the shofar seem to have been the main sources of inspiration for modern artists. First, the instrument's profusion of religious, universal, and even almost humanistic connotations, which nevertheless concentrate on existential themes of life, death, and deliverance, which are many artists' "own questions" as well. Second, the rough tone quality of the animal horn, which contrasts with the polished tone quality of modern, standardized musical instruments. Third, the simplicity of the four traditional shofar blasts and of the tripartite structure of the system of shofar blasts, which represents usable material to composers, writers and artists in a great diversity of styles.

Though all arts have contributed to the artistic turn of the shofar, there has been no synchronous development, since music was often well behind literature and art. On the

one hand, this could be accounted for by the fact that many composers departed from a literary work; on the other hand, the performance of a composition was often complicated and expensive, or simply impossible in the dramatic Jewish history of the first half of the 20th century.

Despite the fact that *A Tool of Remembrance* is not intended as a historical analysis of the shofar in the arts, two historical tendencies should be mentioned here. First, half of the 70 discussed works were created in Europe, about one third in the United States—two of them by Israeli-born artists—whereas only ten works were created in the State of Israel. One reason might be that the large social groups of secular and Ultra-Orthodox Israelis have relatively little interest—for different reasons—in secular art inspired by the Bible or Jewish liturgy. Some Israeli artists became interested in this dialogue only after having left their country, as the composer Ofer Ben-Amots stated.<sup>5</sup>

Second, in many cases, the reflection in art on historical events, especially the Shoah, comes relatively late, even only after two generations; this fact, together with the general growth of interest in religious art since the 1970s, has led to an unprecedented flowering of shofar-inspired art at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries.

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 4.48.