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## Blowing shofar on behalf of women

**Question:** After davening on Rosh Hashana, I often blow the shofar for women who couldn't make it to shul for health or family reasons. Are there any special guidelines for such a situation or issues of which I should be aware?

**Answer:** Women are exempt from hearing shofar blowing.<sup>1</sup> Although it is forbidden to blow a shofar on Yom Tov not in the context of the mitzva, the optional mitzva for women provides sufficient justification to blow.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Maharil points out that for centuries, women have treated the mitzva as if it were obligatory. Although women may blow for themselves or for each other, a man also may blow for them, as is customary.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, your practice is very praiseworthy.

The minhag is to blow thirty KOLOT (sounds), three of each set (TASHRAT, TASHAT, TARAT). In general, there is much debate whether SH'VARIM-T'RU'AH should be done in one breath or two. Therefore, in order to fulfill both opinions, one alternates between the two methods when blowing 100 kolot. Here, when blowing thirty kolot, one should do them in one breath.

There is a specific problem regarding the b'rachot. As you know, one of the b'rachot includes the phrase "and commanded us to hear the sound of the shofar." The Rishonim disagree whether women may recite such b'rachot on mitzvot about which they, personally, are not commanded (Rabbeinu Tam) or not (Rambam). While S'fardic women do not make the b'rachot, the Rama reluctantly confirms the minhag of Ashkenazic women to make the b'rachot.<sup>4</sup> Thus, an Ashkenazic woman may herself make the b'rachot. However, a man who already fulfilled his mitzva should not say the b'rachot for them.<sup>5</sup> The reason for this is that one can make a b'racha for someone else only when one of them is obligated.<sup>6</sup> Since the man fulfilled his mitzva and the women are exempt, he may not say

<sup>1</sup> *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 589:3.

<sup>2</sup> *Tur, Orach Chayim* 589 in the name of the *Ra'avya* and *Rosh*.

<sup>3</sup> *Shulchan Aruch* *ibid.*:6.

<sup>4</sup> See *Beit Yosef* and *Darchei Moshe, Orach Chayim* 17 and 589.

<sup>5</sup> *Rama, Orach Chayim* 589:6.

<sup>6</sup> *Rashi, Rosh Hashana* 29.

the b'rachot. Rather, one of the women should make the b'rachot for herself and have in mind to include the others.

