

## ***Do women have the same obligation as men regarding the Mitzvah of Shofar?***

Men are obligated to listen to the Shofar from the Torah, while for women it is a matter of Minhag. In practical terms, however, there is virtually no difference between the two. Because, although women are formally exempted from every positive Mitzvah which is time bounded, our tradition is that women are very strict to come to Synagogue on Rosh haShana to hear the voice of the Shofar. Let's remember that besides the formal Mitzvah involved, listening to the Shofar, as Maimonides explains, "wakes us up from our spiritual lethargy" and help us to repent and improve our actions. It is therefore highly meritorious for women to attend Synagogue and listen to the sound of the Shofar, which will inspire all to repent and do Teshuba.

Regarding the recitation of the Berakha, once in Synagogue, the Tokea (the man that blows the Shofar) says the Berakha ASHER KIDESHANU BEMITZVOATAV VETZIVANU LISHMOA KOL SHOFAR for all the community, so women should feel included in that Berakha. The only practical difference between men and women would be the case where a woman was not able to attend synagogue. In that case, somebody could blow the Shofar for her, without a Berakha being said while in the case of a man that could not attend Synagogue, he or the Tokea should say the Berakha.

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