Blowing the Shofar After Ma’ariv Following Yom Kippur

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This responsum was approved by the CJLS with twelve votes in its favor. The names of the voting members are unavailable.

שאלה

Is it proper to postpone the blowing of the shofar on Yom Kippur from the conclusion of מתעיב ניצֶלה until after מתעיב מז’רמ?  

תשובה

In the Hagahot to Rambam, Sefer Zemanim, chapter 3 we find the following:

The custom of blowing shofar at the end of Yom Kippur comes from the midrash which says that at the end of Yom Kippur a heavenly voice goes forth saying ‘Go eat your bread in joy.’ And they who say that [blowing shofar] is a commemoration of the Jubilee are mistaken, for if so, we should blow only during a Jubilee year or Yom Kippur itself. And the custom is originally to blow the entire תקנית order. And so wrote Rabbi Paltoi Gaon in his responsum and Rav Amram. But we are accustomed to blow only one תקנית because blowing the shofar is a skill, and not a [prohibited] labor. Furthermore, the day is [by that point] over, and there is no need for me to expand on this point.

The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly provides guidance in matters of halakhah for the Conservative movement. The individual rabbi, however, is the authority for the interpretation and application of all matters of halakhah.
The relevant passage in Shulhan Arukh *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* section 623:6 reads as follows:

At the end of the *selihot* we say, ‘The Lord is God’ seven times and blow the *kāḥot*, *shā‘īm*, *rō‘ā‘ot*, *kāḥot*...and such is the custom in these lands. And they blow after having said *kārī‘,* after *nē’ilah*. And in some places the custom is to blow shofar before *kārī‘,*.

The commentary *Be’er Hetev* ad loc. adds:

‘And they blow.’ This is a sign of the *šē‘īnāt*’s ascent to heaven. As it says, ‘God ascends with the *šē‘īnāt*.’ And it is commemorative of the shofar blast of the jubilee, which was on Yom Kippur... Even though they have not yet said *lā-midrē‘* in the *Amidah*, nevertheless since the day has already passed, and blowing shofar is a skill and not a labor, they were not stringent (Tur).

In most traditional congregations these rules have governed the time and the notes of the blowing of the shofar.

In *Maḥzor Vitry* section 356:4 we find the following text:

I have heard that in Israel they blow shofar at the end of Yom Kippur: *kāḥot*, *shā‘īm*, *rō‘ā‘ot*, *kāḥot*. After the weekday [*matōr‘*] service, for they have already said *hē‘rā‘im* in the *Amidah*. And in our diaspora the custom is to blow only one *kāḥot* as a general commemoration. A commemoration of the jubilee. And in the city of Cologne the people’s custom was *kāḥot*, *shā‘īm*, *rō‘ā‘ot*, *kāḥot*. And the *mē‘ru* says and the people reply, ‘The Lord is God’ seven times. Because [God’s presence] ascends a bit to the seven spheres of heaven after this prayer. And thus it is improper to say [The Lord is
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God] until after the evening prayer for there are places which say it after the נללה prayer. And it is not right to accompany the נללה [away] when they still have to pray.

CONCLUSION

In light of the text in Mahzor Vitry, it seems that not only is it permissible to blow the shofar after מעריב, but it is more proper to do so.