ה. כוס של ברכה ימלאנה שתהיה מלאה על כל גדותיה. [רמ"א ס"ב]. והוא למצוה לכתחלה ואינו מעכב, ובלבד שיש ביין שיעור רביעית. [משנ"ב ס"ק ט, כה"ח סי' רעא ס"ק ע]

ו. צריך לחזר אחר כוס שלם. [ש"ע ס"ג]. ולכן לא יהיה הכוס שבור, ולא פגום בשפתו אפילו חסרון מועט. [משנ"ב ס"ק יא, כה"ח ס"ק טז]. וגם לא יהיה סדוק, אפילו שאין בו חסרון כלל, ואפילו אין היין נוטף דרך הסדק. [שעה"צ ס"ק יא]. ואפילו רק בסיסו נשבר גם כן יש להקפיד, ואפילו יכול לעמוד על בסיסו. [משנ"ב שם, כה"ח ס"ק טז]

Up to the rim

5) To fulfill this mitzvah in the best way, one should fill the *kos shel berakha* up to the cup's rim.[171] The bare minimum is to have *revi'it* of wine in the cup.

Cracked or broken cup

6) It is important that the cup used for *kos shel berakha* not be broken, cracked or chipped at all.[172] A crack disqualifies a cup even if none of its material is missing and nothing leaks through the crack.[173] Furthermore, any cup with a broken base is disqualified even if the cup can still stand without support.

"It is recommended to pour the wine from the barrel for the sake of this mitzvah." Accordingly, this is recommended but not imperative.

The *Magen Avraham* (183:3) wrote that nowadays people do not store barrels of wine in their homes. Therefore, he instructed us to send someone to the store to purchase wine from a barrel just before reciting *Birkat Hamazon* in order to fulfill the halakha of *hai*. The *Peri Megadim*, cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:9), commented that it is perfectly acceptable to purchase the wine in advance as long as the bottle remains corked until just before *Birkat Hamazon*. The *Halakha Berura* (footnote on page 338) noted that in contemporary circles wine is marketed in individual bottles. Therefore, one should make sure to keep the bottle shut until it is time for *Birkat Hamazon* and certainly not to dilute it before *Birkat Hamazon*.

171. Our Sages taught (*Berakhot* 51a): Whoever recites *Birkat Hamazon* over a *full* cup will be granted endless bounty and he will be privileged to two worlds – this world and the World to Come."

The definition of "full"

Rama wrote that one should fill the cup all the way up to the rim, and the *Magen Avraham* explained that this is in contrast to the *Poskim* who interpreted the halakha of *itur* to mean that one should fill the cup not quite up to the rim so that the rim "crowns" the wine inside the cup. The *Mishna Berura* (183:9) commented that although it is likely that some of the wine will spill while the person holds it since it is so full, that is alright.

Nonetheless, the *Piske Teshuvot* (page 578) testified that a number of prominent Torah leaders had the practice of not filling the cup to its rim. The *Ture Zahav* (183:4) likewise testified that many people do not fill the cup to the rim since filling the cup all the way will result in some wine being spilled and wasted. He explained that although the cup is not filled to its rim it can still be considered full. The *Ben Ish Hai* as well (*parashat Shelah* halakha 18) stated that, "once he dilutes the wine with water while reciting the second blessing, the cup will be full. It is not necessary to fill it so high that the wine spills over its edges." See the *Mishna Berura* and *Sha'ar Hatziyun*, the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:13) and the *Halakha Berura* (page 339, #5).

If someone has *revi'it* of wine but not enough to fill his cup, he may add an ice cube or a small fruit to the wine to raise its level to the cup's rim. Alternatively, he may transfer the wine to a smaller cup. See above in the footnote to *Siman* 182:11. If none of these options are possible, he may recite *Birkat Hamazon* over his half-filled cup and still fulfill the mitzvah. Some *Poskim*, however, ruled that the cup must be more than half-filled. The *Halakha Berura* (page 340) stated this is the opinion of Mahara"l and the *Bayit Hadash*.

172. The Tosafot (*Berakhot* 50b) interpreted the term *hai* as referring to the cup rather than the wine. A broken cup is considered a "dead" cup, as our Sages taught in *Bava Kama* (54a). The *Arba'a Turim* and Maran in the *Bet Yosef* cited this Tosafot.

173. Cracked cups

Any cup that has a crack through which the wine will leak is disqualified for this mitzvah. It is no different than a cup that has a hole and cannot hold *revi'it* of wine. If the cup is cracked but does not leak, it should not be used but if someone uses it he fulfills the mitzvah. These rules appear in

וכל זה הוא רק לכתחילה, אבל אין זה מעכב, ולכן אם אין לו כוס אחר אלא זה, רשאי לברך עליו. [משנ"ב ס"ק י וס"ק יא, כה"ח ס"ק טז]. ובלבד שיכול להחזיק רביעית יין, אבל אם יש נקב בכוס שעל ידי זה אינו יכול להחזיק רביעית יין, אין על זה שם כוס כלל, ולא יברך על כוס זו, אפילו בשעת הדחק שאין לו כוס אחר. [שעה"צ ס"ק יד]

ז. כלי שעשוי מפלסטיק או מנייר עב, כשר לקדש בו קידוש היום, [וכן כשר לכוס של ברכה]. ומיהו משום "זה אלי ואנוהו" התנאה לפני במצוות, טוב לקדש על כוס של כסף וכיו"ב. [חזו"ע שבת ח"ב עמ' נד]

Although this is important, if someone has no better cup than a broken one, he may use it for *Birkat Hamazon* as long as it holds *revi'it* of wine.[174] If a cup has a hole [or crack] in it and it cannot hold *revi'it* of wine, it is not considered a cup at all and it may not be used for this mitzvah even if no other cup is available.[175]

Plastic cup

7) A cup made of plastic or stiff cardboard may be used for the mitzvah of kiddush or for *kos shel berakha*. Nevertheless, it is recommended to use a silver goblet or another expensive cup to beautify this mitzvah.[176]

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the *Mishna Berura* 183:11) and the *Sha'ar Hatziyun*. The *Hesed La'alafim* (183:4) and the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Shelah* halakha 23) ruled stringently in this matter.

174. The *Mishna Berura* (183:10) explained that this appears to be the intent of Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh* (183:3) since he wrote that "One must try to find an unbroken cup." The *Eliya Rabba* and the *Peri Megadim*, cited in *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:16) concurred with this, unlike the *Shiyure Kenesset Hagedola*. See the *Halakha Berura* (page 342). The *Hesed La'alafim* and the *Ben Ish Hai* cited this debate and wrote, "Some *Poskim* ruled that such a cup is altogether disqualified."

If the only cup available has a broken base

Certainly, a cup may be used for the mitzvah if it is able to stand on its own without support even though its base is broken. The *Mishna Berura* (*Sha'ar Hatziyun* 183:13) states that it is questionable whether it is possible to use a cup whose base is broken and it can no longer stand without support. It could be that this is no longer considered a container by halakhic standards. Regarding the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim* it is definitely disqualified, as stated above in *Siman* 159:10. The *Olat Tamid* ruled leniently about this if no other cup is available, but still the *Sha'ar Hatziyun* remains undecided. The *Halakha Berura* (page 343) discussed this as well and did not come to a definite conclusion.

Pot covers

The *Eliya Rabba* (183:5, cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 183:17 and the *Mishna Berura* 183:11) wrote that it is possible to use an inverted pot cover as a makeshift cup for *kos shel berakha* even though a pot cover is disqualified for *netillat yadayim*, as explained above in the footnote to *Siman* 159:10. Regarding *netillat yadayim*, it is necessary to use a utensil that was made to serve as a container, but that is not necessary for this mitzvah. Nevertheless, if another utensil is available one should not use a pot cover.

175. The *Mishna Berura* (*Sha'ar Hatziyun* 183:14) suggested a proof for this ruling from Rambam. The responsa *Shevet Halevi* (Vol. IX, #41) disagreed with this and ruled that as long as the wine has not leaked out and *revi'it* of wine remained in the cup while the person recited *Birkat Hamazon*, he has fulfilled the mitzvah.

176. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Hazon Ovadya* Vol. II, page 54) ruled that a disposable cup may be used for kiddush. We may assume that the same applies to *kos shel berakha*. The halakhic discussion on this subject appears at length above in *Siman* 159:2. In short, the responsa *Igrot Moshe* (Vol. III, #39) and the *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 314) ruled that one must not use a disposable cup for kiddush, while the responsa *Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. XII, #23) and Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (cited in *Shemirat Shabbat Kehilkhetah* Vol. II, chapter 47, footnote 70) ruled that one may. The *Be'er Moshe*, the *Mishne Halakhot*, Harav Hayim Pinehas Scheinberg (*Hiddushe Batra*), Harav Shemuel Wosner (*Kovetz Mibet Levi* Vol. III, page 70) and Harav Nissim Karelitz (*Hut Hashani* on *Shabbat* Vol. IV, page 95) all ruled leniently as well. Maran the Rishon Letziyon concurred with the latter opinion but

ח. צריך שימסור לו הכוס אדם אחר כשאוחזו בשתי ידיו, וכן הוא יקבלנו בשתי ידיו. וקודם שיאמר וידבר אלי זה השלחן וגו', אז יקבל הכוס בשתי ידיו, ואחר שיקבל אותו בשתי ידיו יאחוז אותו ביד ימין בלבד, ואז יאמר וידבר אלי זה השלחן וגו', ויתחיל לעשות זימון ולברך. [באו"ח פ' שלח הט"ז, כה"ח סק"כ]

Procedure for picking up the cup

8) Someone other than the person leading the *zimun* should pick up the filled cup of wine and hand it to the leader while holding it with both his hands. The leader should take the cup from him with both hands as well. After receiving the cup, the leader should take hold of the cup with his right hand only, recite the verse of וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלַי זֶה הַשֻּׁלְחָן אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי ה' and begin the *zimun* introducing *Birkat Hamazon*.[177]

added that one should always try to beautify the mitzvah by using a silver goblet or the like.

Above in a footnote to *Siman* 159 it was suggested that if someone needs to use a disposable cup for *netillat yadayim* he should have intentions to use the cup a number of times. In this way, it gains the status of a permanent utensil instead of a disposable one and it will be acceptable according to all *Poskim*. The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 91) likewise ruled that if someone decides to use the cup repeatedly it is definitely fit for use for mitzvot. The responsa *Minhat Yitzhak* (Vol. X, #23) concurred with this.

On the other hand, the responsa *Az Nidberu* (Vol. VI, page 155) ventured to say that it is forbidden to use a used disposable cup. No one would offer a guest a used disposable cup, so it must be an insult to the mitzvah to use it. The *Or Letziyon*'s solution would nevertheless be acceptable if the cup is used first for the mitzvah while intending to use it again afterward.

Silver, glass and porcelain

The *Mekor Hayim* (*Kitzur Halakhot* #183) wrote that a silver cup is preferable to a glass cup for this mitzvah. he wondered, however, whether or not a glass cup is better if the wine has a handsome complexion. Harav Yaakov of Emden (*Siddur Amude Shamayim*, Unit *Kise Shen* #35) testified that his father, Hakham Tzevi Ashkenazi, always chose a glass cup even though silver is more expensive since it is important to see the wine while reciting *Birkat Hamazon*. Furthermore, a clear glass cup enables one to notice any extraneous material floating in the wine.

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (472:11) countered that a silver cup is preferable according to the Kabbalah, since silver counters the forces of strict judgment. For the same reason, one must never use a gold cup. Although Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Hazon Ovadya*) wrote that one should a silver or gold cup, that is the ruling without taking the Kabbalah into account.

According to this discussion, a porcelain cup is a poor choice for this mitzvah since it does not have the advantages of either silver or glass cups.

177. This is the ruling of the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Shelah* halakha 16). The source for the rule that someone must hand the cup to the leader using both hands is the holy *Zohar* (*parashat Teruma* 150b), as explained by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:19). Rabbenu Menahem Hame'iri (commentary to *Berakhot* 51a), however, wrote that the leader picks up the cup from the table. Harav Yaakov of Emden likewise wrote that the Talmud does not mention anything about someone using both hands to give the cup to the leader of the *zimun* and he added that there is no clear indication for this in the *Zohar* either. Nevertheless, he personally observed this practice since it causes no harm.

The *Ture Zahav* (183:2) explained, citing his father, that by receiving the cup with both hands one displays his enthusiasm and fondness for this mitzvah. After receiving it, one holds the cup with one hand to display that one does not consider this mitzvah to be a burden. By holding it in one's right hand, one displays that it is an important thing.

Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, cited in *sefer Shabbat Beshabbat* (page 363), stated that even when no one else hands the cup to the leader he should pick it up with both hands to show that he considers it something important.

The *sefer Hakane* (commentary to *parashat Behar*) wrote a sharp criticism of those who ignore these halakhot. "Be aware," he srote, "that if someone is offered the *kos shel berakha* and he does not take it with both hands and afterward hold it in his right hand, he displays that he has no love for the King. The King is liable to destroy those who hate Him and He will cast them away. There is a hint for this in the Talmud."