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."

וישאר הכוס ביד ימין בלבד בכל הברכה כולה. [באו"ח שם הי"ח]. והיינו שיאחז המברך עצמו את הכוס מהתחלת ברכת המזון ועד סופה, ועד שיברך בורא פרי הגפן. [כה"ח ס"ק יט].

ט. כשאוחז הכוס בימין, לא יסייע בשמאל [ש"ע ס"ג] באופן שהשמאל נוגעת בכוס [רמ"א], ולכן אין לאחוז הכוס ביד ימינו באמצע הכוס, וביד שמאל לאחוז מתחתיו [משנ"ב ס"ק יג]. ואף לא יסייע ביד שמאל, לתתה תחת יד הימין לסומכה. [משנ"ב ס"ק טו, כה"ח ס"ק כב]

The leader should continue to hold the cup in his right hand until he completes *Birkat Hamazon* and recites the blessing of *bore peri hagefen* over the wine. [178]

Hold cup with right hand

9) The *kos shel berakha* must be held with the right hand alone; one may not use the left hand to assist in holding it. For example, one may not grasp the cup with one's right hand and support its bottom with one's left hand. In fact, one must not even use the left hand to hold up one's right hand.

178. The wording of the *Ben Ish Hai* and the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:19) suggests that it is necessary to hold the cup in one's right hand continuously until one recites the blessing of *bore peri hagefen*. Other *Poskim* ruled that one may put the cup down while reciting the passages of *haraha-man*. See the *Arukh Hashulhan* (190:7), the responsa *Shemen Sasson* (#26) and the *Ketzot Hashulhan* (*Badde Hashulhan* 46:21).

Wedding celebrations

The *Halakha Berura* (page 348) ruled that when reciting *Birkat Hamazon* after a wedding meal, it is proper for the leader of the *zimun* to continue holding the cup in his right hand throughout the time that the seven wedding blessings are being recited. His source for this is the Tosafot (*Berakhot* 51b) who explained the Talmud's query whether or not one may support his right hand with his left is pertinent when the leader of the *zimun* is forced to hold the cup aloft for an extra long time, such as at a wedding celebration. The extra time is while the wedding blessings are recited.

The responsa *Shevet Halevi* (Vol. IX, #270:2, cited in responsa *Rivevot Efrayim* Vol. I, #150:4 and *Piske Teshuvot* page 581) ruled that the leader of the *zimun* must hold up the cup until he finishes *Birkat Hamazon* but then he may put it down while the seven wedding blessings are recited, picking it up again when he needs to recite the blessing of *bore peri hagefen*. This ruling is based on that of the *Bet Shemuel* (*E.H.* 62:2). See more about this below in the footnote to halakha 17.

Regarding the proof that the *Halakha Berura* brought from the Tosafot, we can say that the Tosafot was speaking about a case when the leader of the *zimun* recites all seven wedding blessings himself. Since he must hold the cup aloft the entire time, his hand might tire and so he might wish to support it with his left hand. Even if he puts down the first cup and picks up the second cup for the wedding blessings, his hand might still tire from having to hold it up for such a long time. If others would be given the honor of reciting the wedding blessings, Tosafot might agree that the leader of the *zimun* may put down his cup while they recite those blessings.

May someone else hold the cup?

The *Hakham Tzevi*, cited in *Be'er Hetev*, ruled that it must be the leader of the *zimun* who holds the *kos shel berakha*. Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef* 298:4) ruled that if someone else holds the cup aloft for the leader of the *zimun*, they have fulfilled the mitzvah of *kos shel berakha*. Harav Zalman (190:3) is even more lenient, ruling that one fulfills the mitzvah even if one leaves the cup on the table while reciting *Birkat Hamazon*. See the *Halakha Berura* (pages 348 and 349).