טו. משגר כוס ברכה לאשתו כדי שתשתה ממנו. [ש"ע ס"ד]. כי על ידי הכוס של ברכה מתברכת האשה. אפילו לא אכלה עמהם. [משנ"ב ס"ק יט]. והמנהג שלא ישתה אדם אחר בין איש לאשתו. [פרישה, כה"ח ס"ק כו] **ואם** יש עוד אורחים אצלו, יתן גם להם לטעום מהכוס של ברכה. [משנ"ב שם]

Sharing wine with one's wife

15) After the leader of the *zimun* recites the blessing of *bore peri hagefen* and drinks some of the wine in the cup, he should give the *kos shel berakha* to his wife for her to drink. She will be blessed through this cup of wine even if she had not participated in the meal.[184] If others are present [besides his immediate family] he should enable them to taste some of the wine as well. According to custom, no one else drinks from the cup until the leader's wife has done so.

184. Our Sages taught (*Berakhot* 51a) that a woman will be blessed with fertility through the *kos shel berakha*. The *She'iltot* (#96) explains that through presenting the cup to his wife, he promotes marital harmony. The incident of Rav Nahman and his wife Yalta suggests this.

Rav Nahman and Yalta

Once, Ula was a guest of Rav Nahman. They ate a meal and Ula led the *zimun* for *Birkat Hamazon*. Afterward he handed the *kos shel berakha* to Rav Nahman for him to drink, but Rav Nahman refused to drink, explaining that he wished to present the cup to his wife, Yalta. Ula countered that Ribbi Yohanan taught that a woman is blessed with fertility through her husband's drinking the *kos shel berakha*. When Yalta heard this [and saw that Rav Nahman drank the wine without giving it to her] she became infuriated. She ascended to where the wine was stored and smashed four hundred barrels of wine. Rav Nahman then suggested appeasing her by refilling the cup and offering it to her, explaining that the blessing still exists since this wine comes from the same barrel as the first cupful. Yalta remained unimpressed, arguing that he had no basis to make such a claim.

The *Magen Avraham* (183:8) deduced from this story that one should give the *kos shel berakha* to his wife even if she had not participated in the meal. The *Hokhmat Shelomo* Kluger pointed out that we can deduce this from the meal that Avraham Avinu served to the three angels. Our Sages taught (*Bava Metzi'a* 87a) that the angels told Avraham to give the *kos shel berakha* to Sarah.

If the woman is *nidda*

Maran ruled in the *Shulhan Arukh* (*Y.D.* 195:13): "It is forbidden to give [one's wife who is] *nidda* a cup of wine, whether it is *kos shel berakha* or otherwise, as long as it is given directly from him to her. If other people drink from the cup, she may drink from it afterward freely."

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Tahorat Habayit* Vol. II, page 191) remarked that although it appears that the woman may drink from her husband's cup only if others drank from it before her, it may be that it is not necessary to be in this order [and as long as he puts it down and she picks it up herself she may drink it before the others]. He did not come to a conclusion about this, although he showed that Rabbenu Menahem Hame'iri, the *Perisha*, the *Yosef Ometz* Yuzpa and the *Tif'eret Tzevi* all ruled leniently.

The *Halakha Berura* (page 355) ruled that there is a broad basis to be lenient in this matter, and the woman may drink from the cup immediately after her husband before the others drink from it. Her husband may not hand it to her, but he may put it down in front of her and she can take it. Alternatively, he may tell someone else to hand her the cup. This ruling, however, runs counter to the simple reading of the *Shulhan Arukh*.

The *Yafe Lalev*, cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:28), suggested that we can learn from Avraham Avinu and Sarah Imenu that it is permissible for a man to send the *kos shel berakha* to his wife after drinking from it even when she is *nidda*, since Sarah had become *nidda* that day while preparing the meal for the angels. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Tahorat Habayit* Vol. II, page 194) countered that it was the angel who had led the *zimun* and who sent the cup of wine to Sarah, not Avraham. If Avraham Avinu drank from the cup, he would not have been permitted to send it on to Sarah.

An elderly woman

Harav Yaakov of Emden (*She'elat Ya'abetz* Vol. I, #126) ruled that there is no advantage in presenting the *kos shel berakha* to an elderly woman since she can no longer bear children. The responsa *Igrot Moshe* (Vol. IV, #48), in contrast, ruled that *kos shel berakha* brings blessings to elderly women as well. If fertility is no longer possible, it will still help to bring her health and wealth. For this reason, Ula argued that the woman can be blessed through her husband drinking the wine.

טז. אף שמעיקר הדין אין חיוב ללבוש כובע וחליפה בעת שמברך, מכל מקום ירא שמים לא יברך על הכוס בכיפה לבד, אלא ישים הכובע על ראשו, ויתעטף בבגד עליון. [ב"ח ומג"א]. ונכון לדקדק בזה בכל ברכת המזון אף כשאינו מברך על הכוס, שיניח הכובע בראשו, ויתעטף בבגד עליון, כדי שיהא מורא שמים עליו ויעורר הכוונה. [באר היטב ס"ק יא, קצוש"ע, חסד לאלפים, אור לציון]

Wearing hat and jacket

16) Technically, it is permissible to recite *Birkat Hamazon* without wearing a hat and jacket. Someone who possesses genuine fear of Heaven will make sure to wear them while reciting *Birkat Hamazon* over a cup of wine. He will not suffice with a simple yarmulke. It is best to observe these practices whenever reciting *Birkat Hamazon*, whether or not one recites it over *kos shel berakha*. By donning a hat and suit jacket, he enhances his awareness of God's Presence and he will concentrate better on the words of *Birkat Hamazon*.[185]

Wine from the bottle

We can learn from the incident of Rav Nahman and Yalta that any of the wine in the bottle on the table can bring the blessing to a woman. This is the ruling of the *Roke'ah*, cited by the *Eliya Rabba* (182:9). The *sefer Orhot Rabbenu* (Vol. I, page 85) likewise states that the entire bottle from which the *kos shel berakha* is filled has the status of *kos shel berakha*.

It could be, however, that the wine in the bottle does not have the same status as the wine of the *kos shel berakha* and for this reason Yalta was not appeased with a second cup. Rabbenu Menahem Hame'iri (commentary to *Berakhot* 51a) stated that the host should give his wife to drink from the cup over which he recited *Birkat Hamazon*, adding, "In case he drank the entire cupful, he should refill the cup from the barrel and give it to her." Apparently, the first cupful, over which *Birkat Hamazon* was recited, is more beneficial.

A guest giving the *kos shel berakha*

The *Mishna Berura* (*Sha'ar Hatziyun* 183:19) debated whether or not a guest who was honored with leading the *zimun* is supposed to send the *kos shel berakha* to his host's wife. Although Ula did not send the cup directly to Yalta, this was because he was of the opinion that Yalta would receive the same blessing if Rav Nahman would drink the wine himself. In any event, our Sages taught (*Kalla*, chapter 1) that a guest may not offer wine to the host's wife without the host's permission. If he does, he is liable to receive the death penalty. Maran cited this passage in the *Bet Yosef* (*Y.D,* 195).

185. *Ituf*

As explained in the preface to this *Siman*, Maran ruled according to the opinion of Tosafot, requiring eight of the ten halakhot pertaining to *kos shel berakha*. The two that are not required are *itur* and *ituf*. Regarding *ituf*, the Talmud testifies that Rav Papa always wrapped himself in his *tallit* before sitting down to recite *Birkat Hamazon*, while Rav Ashi covered his head with his headdress.

The *Bayit Hadash* commented that since the Tosafot, Rabbenu Asher, the *Arba'a Turim* and Rabbenu Yeruham all commented that they personally wore a headdress in honor of *Birkat Hamazon*, it is fitting for anyone who is truly God-fearing to make sure to wear a [suit] jacket and hat while reciting it. He should not recite it while wearing only a small yarmulke on his head, even when reciting *Birkat Hamazon* by himself.

The *Aharonim* (*Shiyure Kenesset Hagedola* 183:5, *Magen Avraham* 183:5, *Mishna Berura* 183:10, *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 183:2) cited this passage of the *Bayit Hadash*.

Since Maran did not mention the rules of *itur* or *ituf* in the *Shulhan Arukh*, it seems that it is unnecessary to wear a hat or suit jacket when reciting *Birkat Hamazon* even when using *kos shel berakha*. Since all the *Aharonim* mentioned the value of these practices, however, it is highly recommended to observe them and wear a hat and suit jacket. The *Bayit Hadash* considered a hat to be equal to the headdress worn in the Talmudic era, as explained by the *Levushe Serad* (183:3).

Is it obligatory?

The *Bayit Hadash* recommended these practices in honor of *kos shel berakha*. If someone recites *Birkat Hamazon* without a cup of wine, he did not insist on them. The *Mishna Berura* (183:11) states that the custom in our time is to always wear a hat when reciting *Birkat Hamazon*, even when reciting it alone without *kos shel berakha*. He did not say that it is an obligation, only that this is the common custom.

This is actually a well-established practice. The *Shene Luhot Haberit* (Unit *Ha'otiyot*, entry *Kedusha*) stated that those who are careful to perform mitzvot correctly make