יט. אין נותנין כוס של ברכה אלא לטוב עין [רמ"א ס"ז] שהוא שונא בצע וגומל חסד בממונו, שנאמר טוב עין הוא יבורך, אל תקרי יבורך אלא יברך. [משנ"ב ס"ק כט, ראה סוטה לח ע"ב, וברש"י שם]

גם אין נותנין כוס של ברכה אלא למי שיש לו קול נעים חכם ופייטן, אע"פ שאינו כהן ובפני כהן. וגם לכתחילה יתנו לברך למי שקולו חזק, שישמעו כל המסובים, דברוב עם הדרת מלך. [כה"ח ס"ק מב]. וראה עוד לקמן סימן ר"א.

ומי שאומר דבר תורה על השולחן, הוא צריך ליקח הכוס של ברכה ולברך. [כה"ח סי' רא ס"ק ט, וע"ע פתה"ד שם]

עוד בדיני שתיית כוס של ברכה, ראה לקמן בסימן ק"צ.

Day 17

Blessing with a good eye

19) The mitzvah of *kos shel berakha* should be given only to a person who enjoys to see others prosper, someone who despises dishonesty and who gives his money freely for acts of *hesed*. Our Sages (*Sota* 38b) derived this from the verse (*Mishle* 22:9), "He who possesses a good eye will be blessed," explaining that the verse can mean, "He who possesses a good eye will bless."

The mitzvah of *kos shel berakha* should be given to someone who has a pleasant and melodic voice. He should have a loud voice so that everyone can hear him clearly, enhancing the mitzvah. He does not have to be a *kohen*. Even if a *kohen* is present, it may be given to someone else.[190] See below in *Siman* 201.

If someone taught a Torah discourse during the meal, he is the prime candidate to lead the *zimun* with a cup of wine. See more about *kos shel berakha* above in *Siman* 190.

190. This is the ruling of the *Yafe Lalev* (183:7), cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:42), based on the passage in *Pesahim* 119b that in the future King David will be chosen to lead the *zimun* over all other Biblical figures since he possesses a melodic voice. This matches the Midrash (*Kohelet Rabba* 7:4): Ten tzaddikim wished to author the book of *Tehillim*. The Blessed Holy One told them, "You are all pious and worthy of singing My praises, but David is the person I choose since his voice is the most melodic, as the verse describes him (*Shemuel II*, 23:1), 'Sweet singer of Yisrael'."

The *Magen Avraham* (193:4) recommended choosing someone with a voice strong enough for everyone to hear.

Preface *Birkat Hamazon*

One of the 613 mitzvot of the Torah is to bless God after eating bread. The Torah states (*Devarim* 8:10), "You will eat and be satisfied, and you will bless God your Master for the good land that He has given you."

Three Blessing From the Torah; One From our Sages

Our Sages taught (*Berakhot* 48b): Rav Nahman said, "Moshe instituted the blessing of *hazan* when the manna fell from Heaven for the people. Yehoshua instituted the blessing of the Land when the people entered it. David and Shelomo each took part in instituting the blessing of the construction of Yerushalayim; King David instituted the prayer for 'Yisrael Your nation and Yerushalayim Your city' while King Shelomo instituted the prayer for 'the great and sacred building.' The Sages of Yavne instituted the blessing of *hatov vehametiv* after the miracle that occurred for the victims of the Biter massacre.

When Unsure Whether or Not One has Recited *Birkat Hamazon*

There is a practical halakhic difference *Birkat Hamazon* and all other blessings. Since *Birkat Hamazon* is a mitzvah of the Torah, if someone is unsure whether or not he has recited it after eating a meal, he must recite it now to resolve his doubt, following the principle of *safek de'Orayta lehumra*. Regarding all other blessings, if someone is unsure whether or not he has recited one of them when necessary he is not to recite it. We then rely on the cardinal halakhic principle of *safek berakhot lehakel*.

As explained above, the Torah obligates us to recite the first three blessings of *Birkat Hamazon*. The fourth blessing – *hatov vehametiv* – is an institution of our Sages. Therefore, in a case of doubt one must recite the first three blessings but not that of *hatov vehametiv*. See below in *Siman* 184:10.

When Does One Become Obligated to Recite *Birkat Hamazon*?

Our Sages debated this issue in *Berakhot* 44a. Rabban Gamliel ruled that whenever someone eats a food made from any of the seven fruits with which the Land of Yisrael is praised (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates,

olives and dates) he is required by the Torah to recite *Birkat Hamazon*. Ribbi Akiva ruled that it does not matter what a person eats; after eating any food at all the Torah requires him to recite *Birkat Hamazon*. The majority of the Sages, however, ruled that the Torah requires it only after someone has eaten bread. The halakha follows their opinion.

Concentrating on the Words' Meaning When Reciting *Birkat Hamazon*

Our Sages spoke in glowing terms in many places about the importance of the mitzvah of *Birkat Hamazon*. The reward for it increases manifold when someone concentrates on the meaning of its words. Below in halakhot 24-27, many passages from our Sages are cited extolling the merit one gains through fulfilling this mitzvah properly, especially how it is the key to success in earning a livelihood.

Harav Yosef Ya'abetz (*sefer Hasde Hashem* page 49) complained that people do not fulfill the mitzvah of *Birkat Hamazon* properly, explaining, ''Some mitzvot have had good luck. Everyone performs them properly and with joy, such as the mitzvot of Purim, burning the *hametz* and separating meat and dairy. Other mitzvot are not so lucky. Take the mitzvah of *Birkat Hamazon*, for example. Everyone fulfills the verse stating, ''You will eat and become full,'' but few are those who fulfill the rest of the verse – ''You will bless God your Master.'' People commonly eat a full meal contentedly, but afterward they mutter *Birkat Hamazon* hastily in a low whisper, slurring the words and letters while not bothering to concentrate at all on the words' meaning.''

The *sefer Haberit* (Vol. II, Essay 12, Unit *Hakodesh* chapter 9) states: ''You should consider those mitzvot that you perform on a daily basis, such as *Birkat Hamazon*, equal in importance to the mitzvot that you perform only once in a great while such as those of *lulav* or matzo. Be smart and always make sure to fulfill those mitzvot that others neglect. Otherwise, the neglected mitzvot will complain to God and arouse His anger.''

The *sefer Hassidim* (46) relates that a person who had died while still young appeared in a dream a year later to a relative who asked him how he fares in the next world. The man answered that he is punished every single day since he did not take care to recite his blessings before and after eating while concentrating on the words. The angels administering the punishment would rebuke him, ''You had only your own pleasure in mind.''

The person dreaming asked, ''We learned that the wicked are punished for no more than twelve months. You passed away more than a year ago, so why are they still punishing you?''

The man replied, ''During the first twelve months my punishments were much harsher than they are now.''