ואף ביינות שלנו שאינם חזקים כל כך, צריך למזוג היין במעט יין. וכן דעת המקובלים. [ראה ב"י, כה"ח ס"ק ו].
ויטיל בכוס ג' טיפות בזה אחר זה. [ראה פתה"ד אות א', בא"ח שלח הכ"א, כה"ח שם]

ג. אף אם היה היין חזק, שצריך הרבה מים למוזגו, ימזגנו בברכת הארץ. ואף על פי שצריך היין מים הרבה, ומוכרח שיהיה [הכוס] חסר בתחלת הברכה חסרון הניכר לעין, לית לן בה, מאחר שבברכת הארץ מוזגו ונעשה מלא, מיהו על כל פנים צריך שיהיה בו בתחלת הברכה שיעור רביעית. [בא"ח פ' שלח הכ"א, כה"ח ס"ק יא]

ואם רצה למוזגו תחלה קודם ברכת המזון [כדי שיהיה מלא], ושוב חוזר ומוזגו בברכת הארץ [במעט מים], הרשות בידו. [הליכו"ע ח"ב עמ' מז]

The wines we use nowadays are not too strong to be imbibed without diluting them. Even so, one should add a bit of water to it for the sake of the mitzvah as taught by the kabbalists. One should pour three drops of water into the wine, one after the other.

Add water while reciting 2nd blessing

3) Even if it will be necessary to add a considerable amount of water to the wine since it has such a strong flavor, one should add the water only while reciting the second blessing of *Birkat Hamazon*. Although the cup remains only half full or even two-thirds empty until the water is added, this is the proper way to fulfill this mitzvah as long as the cup contains at least *revi'it* of wine when one begins the second blessing. The cup needs to be full only after reciting the second blessing.

Alternatively, one may dilute the wine before beginning *Birkat Hamazon* and then add a few drops of water while reciting the second blessing. Yet another option is to fill the cup entirely with undiluted wine and while reciting the second blessing to pour out some

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this moment we demonstrate that the wine produced in the Land of Yisrael is special and needs to be diluted. Harav Zalman and the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:7) both cited this passage.

When reciting the word *et*

Rabbenu Yona, cited in the *Bet Yosef*, ruled that one should dilute the wine when beginning to describe the richness of the Land of Yisrael so that one demonstrates its richness. Rabbenu Yona cited his father claiming that those people who dilute the wine only at the end of the blessing have no basis upon which to rely. It appears that Rambam concurred with this ruling to dilute the wine when starting the second blessing, and this is the ruling of the *Mishna Berura* (183:5).

The Arizal (*Sha'ar Hamitzvot*), however, taught that one must dilute the wine when reaching the word *et* at the end of the second blessing, explaining that this corresponds to a deep kabbalistic teaching. This is the ruling of the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Shelah* halakha 21) and the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (183:6). Harav Avraham Azulai (comment on *Levush* 183:3) claimed that the Arizal taught that one should dilute the wine when reciting the words *eretz hemda* near the beginning of the blessing. Nevertheless, the common custom is as stated by the *Ben Ish Hai* and *Kaf Hahayim*. This is likewise the ruling of the *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 109).

Looking at the water

The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Shelah* halakha 22) taught that one should look directly at the water being poured into the wine to dilute it, following the instructions of the Arizal in *Sha'ar Ta'ame Hamitzvot* (*parashat Ekev*).

ויש אופן שבו יוכל לצאת ידי חובת כל הדעות והוא, שלפני ברכת המזון ימלא את הכוס ביין חי, ובברכת הארץ ישפוך חלק מן היין, וימזגנו במים, ובזה ירויח שבירך על כוס מלא וגם בירך על כוס חי. [אור לציון ח"ב עמ' קט] **וראה בהערה.**

ד. מצוה מן המובחר שיתן היין מן הבקבוק לכוס לשם ברכה. ולא יוציאנו מקודם וישתהא בכלי, שלא **יפוג טעמו.** [ראה רמ"א ומהריק"ש בס"ב, ומשנ"ב ס"ק ח ושעה"צ סק"ז]

of the wine and to add water in its place. In this way, one has gained the factor of reciting *Birkat Hamazon* over a full cup from the beginning and also the factor of reciting *Birkat Hamazon* with a cup of undiluted wine.[169]

Just before *Birkat Hamazon*

4) In honor of this mitzvah, it is best to fill the cup from the bottle just before reciting *Birkat Hamazon*. If the cup is filled earlier and left waiting until the end of the meal, it could affect the freshness of the wine.[170]

169. The *Hesed La'alafim* (183:3) wrote that if the wine is so strong that it is necessary to dilute it with a large percentage of water, it is undesirable to begin reciting *Birkat Hamazon* with a cup that is obviously part empty. Therefore, one should dilute the wine already before beginning *Birkat Hamazon* so that the cup will be full. Upon reaching the latter part of the second blessing, one should add a bit more water.

The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Shelah* halakha 21) complained that this procedure fails to comply with the *Poskim* who ruled that the cup used for *Birkat Hamazon* must be filled at first with undiluted wine. Since the *Zohar* (*Ra'ya Mehimna*) seems to agree with this opinion, it is important to observe it and not to add any water until the end of the second blessing. It is better, he concluded, to leave the cup half empty until reaching the end of the second blessing and to add the water at that time. The main thing is that it be full during the balance of *Birkat Hamazon*. In any case, one must pour at least *revi'it* of wine into the cup before beginning *Birkat Hamazon*.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. II, page 47) commented that the debate between the *Hesed La'alafim* and the *Ben Ish Hai* is actually a debate between Rabbenu Yitzhak Alfasi and Rabbenu Tam. Therefore both options are legitimate, especially since Rambam concurs with the opinion of the *Ben Ish Hai*. This is the basis of the halakha as it appears above. The third option mentioned here is offered by the *Or Letziyon*, who claimed that in this way one can satisfy both opinions. There may be a different problem with following his advice, however, since it appears dishonorable to the *kos shel berakha* to pour out the wine from the cup while in the midst of fulfilling the mitzvah.

This entire discussion applies to very strong wine that must be diluted with a considerable amount of water. When using regular wine, it is necessary only to add several drops of water to fulfill the kabbalistic aspect of diluting the pure wine. Therefore, it is easy enough to fill the cup to the rim in the first place and afterward add a few drops of water.

170. Rashi (comment to *Berakhot* 51a) explained the term *hai* in two ways. His second interpretation is that the wine must be poured from the barrel expressly for the purpose of being used as *kos shel berakha*. Other *Rishonim* also demanded that the wine be poured from the barrel just before reciting *Birkat Hamazon* so that it will be fresh for the honor of the mitzvah. It appears from the *Mishna Berura* (*Sha'ar Letziyon*) that this procedure is recommended as the best way to perform the mitzvah but that if one does not observe this recommendation one still fulfills the mitzvah. This is likewise the opinion of the *Halakha Berura* (page 337). The *Piske Teshuvot* (page 578), however, ruled that it is absolutely necessary to pour the wine specifically for the sake of *kos shel berakha*, whether or not one pours it just before *Birkat Hamazon* or long before it. This appears to be the opinion of the *Magen Avraham* (183:9) who ruled that if someone has a cup of wine that is *pagum*, he should rectify it by adding more wine and then he should empty the cup into the bottle. This way, he can now fill the *kos shel berakha* for the sake of this mitzvah.

Nevertheless, there is no proof from the *Magen Avraham*. It could be that this procedure is also the recommended way to do it but that if someone simply rectified the cup by refilling it and then used it as *kos shel berakha* he has fulfilled the mitzvah. In fact, Harav Yaakov Castro wrote,

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