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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן קפ"ג סעיף א'-ד'

Halacha Highlight

Holding the kos shel beracha

Shulchan Aruch Siman 183 Seif 4

מקבלו בשתי ידיו

One should receive it with his two hands.

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ד') describes the proper manner that one should take and hold the kos for birkas hamazon. He explains that one should take the kos with both of his hands and when he begins to recite the beracha he should hold it in his right hand and his left hand should not assist at all in supporting the kos. The reason one should take the kos with two hands is that it demonstrates how dear the mitzvah is. When one begins to recite the berachos he should hold it in one hand so that it does not appear as though the kos is burdensome. The reason it should be held in one's right hand is that one's right hand demonstrates more honor for the mitzvah (מ"ב ס"ק י"ב). Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ה') cites an opinion that maintains that one who is a lefty should hold the kos in his left hand since that is his stronger hand. Mishnah Berurah (סק"כ) adds that one who is ambidextrous should hold the kos in his right hand.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ט"ו) writes in the name of Shelah that according to Kabbalah the kos should rest on the palm of one's right hand and his fingers should be extended upwards around the kos. Magen Avrohom (סק"ו) cites Shelah's understanding of this halacha and notes that it is not evident that his interpretation is correct. He suggests that it is acceptable for one to hold the kos on the side with his fingers wrapped around the sides. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סעי' ז') also references Shelahs opinion and explains that the kos should rest on one's palm and one's fingers should extend upwards around the kos but should not come in contact with the kos. He then mentions that in the opinion of some authorities the kos should rest on one's fingers rather than one's palm (חיי משה).

Stories to Share

Tempering the Wine

ש"ע, ס' קפ"ג, ב': "עד שמגיע בברכת הארץ ואז מוזגו להודיע שבח הארץ..."

Rav Dovid Baharan was known for his penetrating understanding of halachah.

Rav Dovid would always bentch on a cup of wine, both during the week and on Shabbos. For this reason when he attended to bris milah of his grandson and was asked to lead the bentching, the lamdanim of Yerushalayim were very happy. They would finally see whether Rav Dovid added water to the wine in the middle of birchas hamazon as we find on today's amud. Although this is the halachah from the gemara, the Rema comments that our wine is not strong enough to add water so the custom is not to add anything at all. What would Rav Dovid do?

Sure enough, when it was time to add the water, Rav Dovid paused in his bentching and reached out to take a bottle which was close by. To the surprise of all, the bottle he chose was not a bottle of water, but of wine.

When asked about this after the simchah he explained. "It is true that our sages say to add water, yet it is not clear that doing so would fulfill the purpose since our wine is so weak. One should therefore fulfill the opinion of the Rishonim who hold that one should add wine instead of water."

ארח לדוד, מ"ה-מ"ו

Overview

Siman 183 Seif 1:

The kos shel beracha should be washed inside and rinsed on the outside. If it is clean and does not have food remnants it need not be washed and rinsed.

- Wiping it with a cloth is also effective. (M.B. 1)
- It is proper to wash it even if there are no food remnants unless it is truly clean. (M.B. 3)

Siman 183 Seif 2:

One should pour wine into the kos without diluting it. When one reaches the beracha of ברכת הארץ one should add water to demonstrate praise of the land of Israel. Some maintain that if the wine is not strong it is unnecessary to dilute it and this is the custom in our countries. The wine should be removed from the barrel for the sake of the beracha. It seems that since we do not have an abundance of wine it is sufficient to pour the wine from the bottle for the sake of the beracha and it is not necessary to pour from the barrel for the beracha. This is the custom in our countries. The kos shel beracha should be filled so that it overflows over the sides.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to the beginning of the beracha. (M.B. 5)
- Bais Yosef writes that in his country the custom was to dilute the wine slightly even though the wine is not strong. (M.B. 6)
- In other words one should take the wine out of the barrel for the sake of the beracha right before the beracha. This is a preferred manner of performing the mitzvah. (M.B. 8)
- It is acceptable if some of the wine spills out. Some do not fill the cup to the top for this reason but still consider the cup full. Filling the cup to the top is a mitzvah l'chatchila but not essential as long as one has a revi'is of wine. (M.B. 9)

Siman 183 Seif 3:

One should try and obtain a complete cup.

- The wording indicates that this is just l'chatchila but not essential. (M.B. 10)
- The cup should not be broken nor may there be a notch in the lip of the cup. One should not use a cup if the cup is intact but the base is broken and consequently cannot support the cup unless one has no alternative. (M.B. 11)
- Magen Avrohom in the name of Bach writes that one who fears Hashem will place a hat on his head and wrap himself in his outer garment. This is the custom for the recitation of birkas hamazon, i.e. to wear a hat even if one recites birkas hamazon alone without a kos. (M.B. 11)

Siman 183 Seif 4:

One should take the kos with two hands and when he starts to recite the beracha he should hold it in his right hand without the assistance of his left hand. He should make sure that his left hand does not touch the kos but it is acceptable if he places his left hand under his right hand to support it. **One should lift the cup off the ground a tefach if he is sitting on the ground and if he is reclining by a table he should lift it off the table a tefach. He should look into the cup so that he does not become distracted.** For this reason one should not use a narrow cup called גלאז גלוק for the beracha. **One should send it to his wife so that she could drink from it.**

- Taz explains that taking the cup with two hands shows its importance and holding it with one hand shows that it is not a burden. It should be held in one's right hand to demonstrate that what one is doing is important. (M.B. 12)
- Shela writes that according to kabbalah the cup should be held in the palm of one's hand with his fingers pointing upwards. (M.B. 15)
- This should be done so that all the people could see the cup and gaze in it. (M.B. 16)
- One need not be particular about this if one can not easily obtain another cup. (M.B. 18)
- A woman is blessed from kos shel beracha even if she did not eat with them. If there are other guests he should send them the wine as well. If a guest recites the beracha on the cup he should give some to the ba'al habayis to drink so that he should be blessed. (M.B. 19)