

## Arba'ah Kosot

# The Four Cups of Wine

## of the Passover Seder

### Pesachim 108b

Jews worldwide drink four cups of wine at their Pesach (Passover) Seder.

In this *Thinking Gemara* shiur, we will take an insider's look at this popular mitzvah by learning several Talmudic discussions relating to it. We will approach this analysis by asking some fundamental practical questions about how to properly fulfill the mitzvah of drinking the Four Cups. Examining these questions – with the help of some major Talmudic thinkers – will help us uncover the conceptual foundations of this mitzvah.

Our hope is that familiarizing ourselves with key sources about the Four Cups and the ideas underlying them will enrich our Seder night experience.

The following are some of the key questions this shiur will deal with:

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#### KEY QUESTIONS

- Why do we drink four cups of wine on Passover night?
- What is the relationship between the Four Cups and the rest of Seder night?
- Who must drink the cups?
- How much must be drunk?
- Can you fulfill your obligation by drinking four cups of grape juice?

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#### CLASS OUTLINE

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**Note:** This shiur is not intended as a source of practical *halachic* (legal) rulings. For matters of halachah, please consult a qualified *posek* (rabbi).



## SECTION I Who Drinks the *Arba'ah Kosot*, the Four Cups?

### Case 1. Distributing Pesach Food to Chicago's Jewish Poor

*Amy is one of five decision-makers on the board of Project Tikva, a new organization geared at addressing the needs of Chicago's seriously impoverished Jewish families. Adam, of the planning staff, handed her a document for approval, listing the contents of each family's Seder Night package. She started to make some calculations to make sure that the supplies allotted to each family were sufficient.*

*Everything checked out – matzah, charoset, bitter herbs, etc. But when she took a second glance, something caught her eye. Every box included one 375 ml. bottle of wine (roughly 12.7 ounces). If, she figured, the minimal amount for each cup of wine is three ounces, four cups come to twelve ounces. “Adam,” she said, “Did you plan on each family getting four cups of wine?”*

*“Yes, exactly – and the 375 ml. bottles work out just right,” replied Adam.*

*“This is not so simple; we have some families with five, six, seven, or eight members. Even one couple would need twenty-four ounces of wine, two bottles.”*

*“Oh, I just figured that each family needs the four cups. We should probably consult with Rabbi Margolis on this one.”*

*Before we hear from Rabbi Margolis – what do you think?*

*How many cups of wine must an entire family drink on Pesach night? **Does one family member drink the four cups on behalf of everyone, or does each person drink his own four cups?***

*Can you back up your approach with a rationale?*

#### 1. Mishnah Pesachim 99b

Even a poor Israelite should not eat without reclining. And they should not [give] him less than four cups of wine, even [coming] from the community food distribution.

וְאִפְלוּ עָנִי שְׂבִי שְׂרָאֵל לֹא יֵאָכֵל עַד שְׁסֻבָּה. וְלֹא יִפְחָתוּ לוֹ מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל יַיִן, וְאִפְלוּ מִן הַתְּמַחֵי.

#### 2. Tosafot Pesachim 99b “*Lo Yifchitu Lo Me'arba Kosot*”

The text of the Mishnah seems somewhat to imply that we do not give to the poor man's children and household – only to him [assuming that the Mishnah's “give him” refers to the one family representative], and through his drinking they all fulfill their obligation. This makes sense **logically**: For what is the difference between the Four Cups and Kiddush the rest of the year where one person makes Kiddush on behalf of everyone?...

מִתּוֹךְ הַלְשׁוֹן מִשְׁמַע קִצָּת שְׂאִין נוֹתְנִין לְבָנָיו וְלִבְנֵי בֵּיתוֹ כִּי אִם לְעֶצְמוֹ וְהוּא מוֹצִיא אֶת כּוֹלָם בְּשֵׁלוֹ. וְסִבְרָא הוּא: דְּמֵאֵי שְׁנָא אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת מְקַדּוּשׁ דְּכָל הַשְּׁנָה שְׂאִיחָד מוֹצִיא אֶת כּוֹלָם ...

Nevertheless, there is a passage in the Gemara (Pesachim 108b) implying that every individual needs four cups, for we learn: “Everyone is obligated in these four cups, both women and children.” Said Rabbi Yehudah, ‘What use do children have with wine?’ This source implies that according to the first opinion [the rabbis that Rabbi Yehudah differs with], even children need [their own] cups. You could defer this proof by saying that when it says they are obligated it means that they must hear the blessing over the four cups, because of mitzvah education. Yet, it seems proper to act stringently and require four cups for each person.

ומיהו בגמרא משמע שצריך  
כל אחד ארבע כוסות, דקתני  
(פסחים קח:) “הכל חייבין  
בארבע כוסות אחד נשים  
ואחד תינוקות.” אמר רבי  
יהודה, ‘מה תועלת לתינוקות  
בין?’ “משמע דלתנא קמא  
צריך כוס אף לתינוקות.  
ויש לדחות דחייבין לשמוע  
ברכת ארבע כוסות קאמר,  
ומשום חנוף. ונראה להחמיר  
ולהצריך ארבע כוסות לכל  
אחד.

### 3. Rambam (Maimonides), Mishneh Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:7

Therefore when a person eats the meal of this night, he must eat and drink reclining in the manner of free men. And each and every person, whether man or woman, is obligated to drink on this night four cups of wine – no less. Even a poor person subsisting on charity must drink no less than four cups – each one measuring a quarter log (three oz., or eighty-six ml.).

לפיכך כשסועד אדם בלילה הזה,  
צריך לאכל ולשתות והוא מסב  
דרה חרות. וכל אחד ואחד, בין  
אנשים בין נשים, חייב לשתות  
בלילה הזה, ארבעה כוסות של  
יין--אין פוחתין מהן; ואפלו עני  
המתפרנס מן הצדקה, לא יפחתו  
לו מארבעה כוסות: שעור כל כוס  
מהן, רביעית.

### 4. The Steinsaltz Reference Guide, p. 203

כוס של ברכה Lit. a cup of blessing. The cup of wine on which blessings, e.g. Kiddush, Grace after Meals (ברכת המזון) or the marriage blessings (ברכת חתנים) are recited. This cup must contain at least a רביעית (3 or 5 oz.\*) of wine. Among the regulations applying to this cup are that it must be rinsed before use and that it must be full. It is customary for those present to drink from this wine after the blessings are recited.

\*Opinions about the modern equivalent of the Talmud's revi'it – literally, a quarter (of a log measure) - range from 86 ml (the custom of Yerushalayim, roughly three ounces) to 150 ml (the Chazon Ish's approach, roughly five ounces).

### 5. She'iltot deRav Achai Gaon, Section 54

What is the reason for saying it (Kiddush) over wine? It is because Rabbi Shmuel son of Nachmani quoted Rabbi Yonatan as follows: What is the source that [the Levites] only sing their praises

ומנלן דעל היין? דאמר רבי  
שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי י  
ונתן: מנין שאין אומר שירה  
אלא על היין? שנאמר



during the wine [libation in the Temple]? For it says, “And the grape vine said to them, ‘I have withheld my wine, that brings joy to God and men.’” (Shoftim/Judges 9:13) We can understand that wine brings joy to men, who drink it, but how does it bring joy to God? It is through song. Based on this they said, “They only sing praise over wine.” What song is this? – that sung during the libations.

(שופטים ט:יג) “וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַגֶּפֶן הַחֲדַלְתִּי אֶת תִּירוֹשֵׁי הַמְּשִׁמָּח אֱלֹקִים וְאֲנָשִׁים.” אִם אֲנָשִׁים מְשַׁמְּחֵי דַשְׁתּוֹ לֵיהֶ, אֱלֹקִים בְּמָה מְשַׁמְּחֵי? הֲוֵי אוֹמֵר בְּשִׁירָה. מִיָּכֹן אָמְרוּ, שְׂאִין אוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה אֲלָא עַל הַיַּיִן. וַיִּמָּאֵי הִיא? הִיא שִׁירָה דְנִסְכִּים.

## 6. Levush, Orach Chaim 182:1

You already know that for most of the blessings the Sages instituted, they also enacted that they be recited over a cup [of wine]. For it is honorable and praiseworthy for the Blessed One’s praise and blessing to be said with a cup of wine in hand. This is as the verse says (Tehillim/Psalms 116:13): “I lift up the cup of salvations, and I call out in the name of God.” Also, based on the Kabbalah there is a great secret in this matter.

כָּפֹר יִדְעַתָּ שְׁבָרוֹב הַבְּרָכוֹת שֶׁתִּקְנֶנּוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ זְכוּרֵנוֹם לְבָרְכָה תִקְנוּם לְסִדְרָם עַל הַכּוֹס, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא דֶרֶךְ כְּבוֹד וְשִׁבְחָ נֶאֱמָר לְסִדְרָ בֵּן שִׁבְחוֹ וּבְרָכְתּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ עִם הַכּוֹס שֶׁבִידּוֹ, וְכִמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר הַפְּתוּב [תְּהִלִּים קטז, יג] “כּוֹס יִשְׁוֵעוֹת אֲשָׁא וּבְשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא.” גַּם עַל פִּי הַקַּבָּלָה יֵשׁ בּוֹ סוֹד גְּדוֹל.

## 7. Rambam, Mishnah Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:10

One makes a separate blessing (*borei pri hagafen*) over each of these Four Cups. And over the first cup we say Kiddush; over the second we read the Haggadah; over the third cup we recite Birkat Hamazon; over the fourth cup we finish the Hallel and make the *Birkat Hashir*.

כָּל כּוֹס וְכוֹס מֵאַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת הָאֱלוֹ, מְבָרַךְ עָלָיו בְּרָכָה בְּפִנֵּי עֲצָמוֹ. וְכוֹס רִאשׁוֹן, אוֹמֵר עָלָיו קִדּוּשׁ הַיּוֹם; כּוֹס שֵׁנִי, קוֹרֵא עָלָיו אֶת הַהַגְדָּה; כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁי, מְבָרַךְ עָלָיו בְּרַכַּת הַמְּזוֹן; כּוֹס רְבִיעִי, גּוֹמֵר עָלָיו אֶת הַהֲלֵל, וּמְבָרַךְ עָלָיו בְּרַכַּת הַשִּׁיר.

## 8. Mishnah and Gemara, Pesachim 117b

Mishnah: [After they have] poured him a third cup, he makes a blessing over his meal (Birkat Hamazon). [They pour him] a fourth, and he finishes the Hallel over it and says over it the Blessing of the Song [the Gemara later identifies this blessing]...Gemara: Said Rav Chanan to Rava, “[Can we] conclude from here that Birkat Hamazon [in general, not just on Pesach Night] must be followed with a cup of wine?” He replied, “The rabbis decreed four cups as an expression of freedom. We do a mitzvah together with each one [of the cups].”

משנה: מְזוּגוּ לוֹ כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁי, מְבָרַךְ עַל מְזוּנוֹ. רְבִיעִי, גּוֹמֵר עָלָיו אֶת הַהֲלֵל, וְאוֹמֵר עָלָיו בְּרַכַּת הַשִּׁיר ... גְּמָרָא: אָמַר לֵיהֶ רַב חֲנַן לְרַבָּא, “שְׁמַע מִיָּנָה בְּרַכַּת הַמְּזוֹן טְעוּנָה כּוֹס.” אָמַר לֵיהֶ, “אַרְבַּע כְּסֵי תִקְנוּ רַבְּנָן דֶּרֶךְ חִירוֹת. כָּל חַד וְחַד נַעֲבִיד בֵּיהֶ מִצְוָה.”

## 9. Talmud Yerushalmi, Pesachim 10:1

From where [in Tanach] do we find an allusion to the Four Cups [that the Sages enacted]?

**Rabbi Yochanan** said, quoting Rabbi Benayah, that they correspond to the four stages of redemption: “Therefore tell the Children of Israel I am God and I took you out...and I saved you... and redeemed you...and took you to me as a nation” (Shemot/Exodus 6:6-7).

מַנִּיין לְאַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת?

רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בְּשֵׁם ר' ר' בְּנֵיָה כְּנֻגַד אַרְבַּע גְּאוּלוֹת: "לֵכֵן אָמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם ... וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם..." (שְׁמוֹת ו:ו-ז) וְהוֹצֵאתִי וְהַצֵּלְתִּי וְגִאֲלְתִּי וְלִקְחֹתִי.

## SECTION II How Must the Four Cups Be Drunk?

We must precede our next case with a comment about Talmudic methodology. In order to understand the fundamental concepts of a halachah, the Talmud often inquires about a case that highlights the particular issue at hand – even if the case occurs only rarely. Sometimes a ruling in an extreme case, specially crafted to test different understandings of a halachah, can reveal its key principles. The following is an example of an unusual case, which can serve to sharpen our understanding of the mitzvah of the Four Cups.

**How do you think the Tosafot and the Rambam (based on the Brisker Rav's analysis as presented above) would each rule about the following case?**

### Case 2. Four Cups in a Row

*What if someone sat down on Seder Night and just drank four cups of wine, one after the other? Does he fulfill the mitzvah of the Four Cups?*

*Who would do such a thing? It could be a person who wanted to do something significant in honor of the Seder Night but did not have a Haggadah – so he decided to eat some matzah and drink four cups of wine. It could also be someone with limited time that evening but wanted to fulfill the mitzvot of the Seder in a minimal way – for instance, someone caring for an ailing relative or dealing with emergency situations (a policeman, ambulance driver, soldier, surgeon in an emergency room, etc.).*

## 10. Pesachim 108b

If someone drank them all at once: Rav said that he has fulfilled [the requirement of] “wine,” but has not fulfilled the requirement of Four Cups.

נִשְׁתָּאן בְּבֵית אַחַת: רַב אָמַר יְדֵי יַיִן יֵצֵא יְדֵי אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת לֹא יֵצֵא.

### 11. Tosafot Pesachim 108b “Yedei Yayin Yatza”

“He has fulfilled the requirement of ‘wine.’”  
The explanation of this is that he fulfills the requirement of being joyous on the holiday. [The reason this needed to be emphasized is that] you might have mistakenly thought that you do not fulfill the requirement of being joyous on the holiday unless you did it in the context of the Four Cups.

יְדֵי יַיִן יָצָא - פִּירוּשׁ: יְדֵי שְׂמֵחַת  
יוֹם טוֹב. דִּסְלֻקָּא דְעֵתָהּ הוּאִיל  
וְתִקְנֵהּ ד' כּוֹסוֹת, לֹא נִפְיֵק מִיְדֵי  
שְׂמֵחַת יוֹם טוֹב אֶלָּא אִם כּוֹס יָצָא  
יְדֵי אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת:

### 12. Pesachim 109a

The Rabbis learned: A person is obligated to bring joy to his children and household on the holiday, for it is said (Devarim/Deuteronomy 16:14), “You should rejoice on your holiday.” By which means should he bring them joy? Through wine. Rabbi Yehudah says: Men [should rejoice] with that which is appropriate to them, and women with that which is appropriate to them. Men with that which is appropriate to them: with wine. With what should women rejoice? Rav Yosef quoted a teaching: In Babylonia women should rejoice with colorful garments, and in the Land of Israel with well-ironed linen garments. We learn: Rabbi Yehudah son of Beteira says, “In the times when the Temple stood, joy was only attained through the meat [of sacrifices], for it says (Devarim 27:7), ‘Slaughter peace offerings and eat them there, and rejoice before Hashem your God.’ Now that the Temple is not standing, rejoicing is only with wine, for it says (Tehillim 104:16), ‘Wine brings joy to the heart of man.’”

תִּנּוּ רַבְנָנ: חַיִּיב אָדָם לְשִׂמְחָה  
בְּנֵיו וּבְנֵי בֵיתוֹ בְּרִגְלָהּ, שְׂנַאֲמַר  
(דְּבָרִים טז:יד), “וְשִׂמְחֵתָ  
בְּחֻגְךָ.” בְּמָה מְשִׂמְחֵם? בַּיַּיִן.  
רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר אֲנָשִׁים  
בְּרֵאוּי לָהֶם, וְנָשִׁים בְּרֵאוּי  
לָהֶן. אֲנָשִׁים בְּרֵאוּי לָהֶם:  
בַּיַּיִן. וְנָשִׁים בְּמָאִי? תַּנִּי רַב  
יוֹסֵף: בְּבָבֶל בְּבִגְדֵי צְבָעוֹנוֹן,  
בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּבִגְדֵי פְשֵׁתוֹן  
מְגוּהָצִין. תַּנִּיא: רַבִּי יְהוּדָה  
כּוֹס בְּתֵירָא אוֹמֵר, בְּזִמְנֵי שְׂבִית  
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיִים אִין שְׂמֵחָה  
אֶלָּא בְּבִשּׂוֹר, שְׂנַאֲמַר (דְּבָרִים  
כז:ז), “וְזָבַחְתָּ שְׁלָמִים  
וְאָכַלְתָּ שֶׁם וְשִׂמְחֵתָ לִפְנֵי ה'  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְעָכְשִׁיו, שְׂאִין בֵּית  
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיִים, אִין שְׂמֵחָה  
אֶלָּא בַּיַּיִן שְׂנַאֲמַר (תְּהִלִּים  
קד:טז), “וַיַּיִן יִשְׂמַח לִבִּב  
אֲנוּשׁ.”

### 13. Rambam, Mishnah Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9

If someone drank four cups poured at once, he fulfilled the requirement of [expressing] “Freedom,” but did not fulfill the requirement of “Four Cups.”

שָׂתָה אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת מְזוּגִין  
בְּבֵת אַחַת - יָצָא יְדֵי חֵרוּת,  
וְלֹא יָצָא יְדֵי אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת.

### SECTION III How much of the Four Cups must be drunk?

Another issue, which has a very important practical implication, will deepen our analysis of the dispute still further. The question is: **How much** wine do you have to drink from each cup? Imagine the following:

#### Case 3. Great-Great-Grandfather's Giant Goblet

*A historic Kiddush cup has graced the tables of the Rappaport family for nine generations. Judaica experts have confirmed that it was crafted in the 1830s and is made of solid silver. The goblet is extremely large, holding **nine** ounces.*

**What do you think?** How much wine does Howie (Chaim) Rappaport, the present holder of the Kiddush cup, have to drink for each of the four cups?

#### 14. Pesachim 108b

If one gave to his children and household to drink, he has fulfilled his obligation. Rav Nachman son of Yitzchak said: This is providing that he drank most of the cup.

הַשְּׂקָה מֵהוּן לְבָנָיו וְלִבְנֵי בֵיתוֹ יֵצֵא:  
אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן בְּרַי יִצְחָק וְהוּא  
דְּאִשְׁתֵּי רוּבָא דְכָסָא.

#### 15. Rambam, Mishneh Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9

If one drank from each of the cups the majority [of its contents] he has fulfilled his obligation.

וְאִם שָׁתָה מִכֹּל כּוֹס מֵהוּן רַבּוֹ,  
יֵצֵא.

#### 16. Tosafot Pesachim 108b “*Ruba Dekasa*”

Most of the cup – that is, a cheekful...However, ideally he should drink a quarter of a *log* (about three ounces or 86 ml).

רוּבָא דְכָסָא - הֵיִינוּ כְּמֵלֵא  
לוּגְמִיו ... וּמִיָּהוּ, לְכַתְחֵלָה צְרִידָה  
לְשִׁתוֹת רַבִּיעִית.

#### 17. Chidushei Maran Riz Halevi al HaRambam, Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9

I heard from my father, my master and teacher, the great scholar and saint, of blessed memory... that according to **Tosafot** even for the Four Cups, the main mitzvah is not drinking the cups, but the blessings over the cups. It is exactly like the Kiddush of all year round and other “cups of blessing”...So too, for the Four Cups, according to the letter of the law the amount that needs to be drunk is a cheekful, just like the cup of Kiddush...The same is true for all “cups of blessing”...

שָׁמַעְתִּי מֵאָבִי אֲדוֹנָי מוֹרֵי וְרַבִּי  
הַגָּאֹן זָכָר צְדִיק לְבָרָכָה ... דְּסִבְרָא  
לִיָּה לְהַתּוֹסְפוֹת דְּגַם אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת  
אִין עֵיקָר הַמְצָוָה בְּשִׁתִּית הַכּוֹסוֹת,  
רַק בְּהַבְרָכוֹת שְׁעַל הַכּוֹסוֹת וְהֵי  
מְמַשׁ הַדּוּגְמָת קִידוּשׁ דְּכֹל הַשְּׁנָה  
וְכֹל כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל בְּרָכָה ... גַּם גְּבִי  
אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת עֵיקָר שִׁיעוֹר הַשְּׁתִּיָּה  
מִדִּינָא הוּא מְלֵא לוּגְמִיו כְּמוֹ גְּבִי  
כּוֹס שֶׁל קִידוּשׁ ... וְהוּא הַדִּין בְּכֹל  
כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל בְּרָכָה ...

However, the **Rambam**...maintains that the

אוֹלָם הָרַמְבַּם ... סִבְרָא לִיָּה דְרַק



amount of a cheekful is specific to Kiddush (and to other “cups of blessing”). But with regards to the Four Cups, one must drink the actual majority of a cup, and not just a cheekful. This is also the approach of the Ramban (Nachmanides), quoted in the Beit Yosef and Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 472:9, who rules that even if the cup is large and holds a number of *revi'it* measures, one must drink the majority of that cup.

גְּבִי קִידּוּשׁ הוּא הַהֵי שִׁיעוּר  
טְעִימָתוֹ מְלֵא לִוְגָמִי, אֲכַל גְּבִי  
אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת בְּעֵינֵי דְּוָקָא רוּבָא  
דְּקָסָא וְלֹא מְלֵא לִוְגָמִי, וְכֵן הוּא  
גַּם שְׂיִטַּת הַרְמַבֵּן הוּבָאָה בְּבֵית  
יוֹסֵף וְשִׁלְחוֹ עָרוּף: אִוְרַח חַיִּים סִימָן  
תַּע"ב סְעִיף ט' דְּגַם אִם הַכּוֹס גְּדוֹל  
וּמְחֻזָּק כְּמָה רְבִיעִיּוֹת צָרִיף  
לְשִׁתּוֹת דְּוָקָא רוּב הַכּוֹס.

## SECTION IV Which Beverage is Drunk for the Four Cups?

The Brisker Rav discusses an additional practical ramification that might arise from the conceptual dispute between Tosafot and the Rambam. The issue relates to the types of beverages that qualify for the Four Cups on Pesach night. This is the subject of Section IV.

### Case 4. A Pre-Passover Trip to a Jerusalem Boutique Wine Store

*Five of the PIE (Passover in Israel Experience) participants went on a pre-Passover expedition to Jerusalem's Pri Hagafen boutique wine store. They gathered an impressive array of high-end Israeli wines – reds, whites, some dessert wines – and even a bottle of Kosher French Champagne.*

*On their way out of the store, Sharie said: “Wait a second, we need to get a few bottles of grape juice! I want to be able to stay up the whole Seder Night – I bet a lot of us would. And I know Simon does not drink any wine at all.”*

*“This is not so simple,” said Miriam, “Who says you can drink anything other than wine for the Four Cups?”*

*Jason texted Rabbi Yanovitz: “G juice OK 4 4 cups?”*

*Rabbi Yanovitz: “Buy - long story – explain later.”*

*Before we hear what Rabbi Yanovitz said, think: Based on what we have learned until now, could you drink four cups of grape juice on the Seder Night and fulfill the mitzvah?*

### 18. Mishnah Pesachim 99b

And they should not [give] him less than four cups of **wine**, even [coming] from the community food distribution.

וְלֹא יִפְחָתוּ לוֹ מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל  
יַיִן, וְאַפְלוּ מִן הַתְּמַחְוִי.

**19. Bava Batra 97b**

Said Rava: One can squeeze a cluster of grapes and say Kiddush over [the juice].

אמר רבא: סוחט אדם אשכול של ענבים ואומר עליו קידוש היום.

**20. Pesachim 107a**

Mar Yanuka and Mar Kashisha son of Rav Chisda said to Rav Ashi: Once Ameimar visited our place and we did not have wine [for Havdalah after Shabbat]. We brought him beer, but he did not make Havdalah over it, and he went to sleep without eating [for it is forbidden to eat after Shabbat until making Havdalah]. The next day we made efforts and brought him wine, and he made Havdalah and then ate something. A year later he visited again, and once again we did not have wine. We brought before him beer, and he said, "If that is the case, this is the equivalent of wine in this country." He then made Havdalah over it and ate something.

אמרי ליה מר ינוקא ומר קשישא בריה דרב חסדא לרב אשי: זימנא חדא איקלע אמימר לאתרין ולא הוה לן חמרא. אייתנא ליה שיכרא ולא אבדיל ובת טוות. למחר טרחנא ואיתנא ליה חמרא ואבדיל וטעם מידי. לשנה, תו איקלע לאתרין לא הוה לן חמרא. אייתנא שיכרא. אמר: אי הכי חמר מדינה הוא אבדיל וטעים מידי.

**21. Pesachim 108b**

Said Rav Yehudah quoting Shmuel: These four cups must be well diluted. If he drank them undiluted, he has fulfilled his obligation...Rava said, "He has fulfilled his obligation of 'wine,' but not that of 'freedom.'"

אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: ארבעה כוסות הללו צרידי שיהא בהן כדי מזיגת כוס יפה. שתאן חי יצא... אמר רבא ידי יין יצא, ידי חירות לא יצא.

**22. Tosafot Pesachim 108b "Sheta'an Chai Yatza"**

If one drinks it undiluted he fulfills his obligation – It seems [from here] that ideally one is required to dilute [the wine]. Similarly, in the Seventh Chapter of Berachot (50b), we find that all agree that one should not make a blessing over a "cup of blessing" until water is added.

שתאן חי יצא: משמע דלכתחלה בעי מזיגה וכו' בפרק שלשה שאכלו (ברכות נ:): אמרינו הכל מודים בכוס של ברכה שאין מברכין עליו עד שיתן לתוכו מים.

**23. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9**

These four cups must be diluted so they are pleasant to drink, depending on the specific wine and the taste of the person drinking it. A person should not have less than one revi'it (see Source 4

ארבעה כוסות האלו-- צרידי למזג אותן, כדי שתהיה שתיה ערבה: הכל לפי היין, ולפי דעת השותה; ולא יפחת

above) of undiluted wine for all the cups together [the standard proportion of wine to water was one part wine to three parts water]. If he drank undiluted wine for these four cups, he has fulfilled the obligation of Four Cups but not that of “freedom.” If, however, he drank four well-diluted cups all at once, he has fulfilled “freedom” but not Four Cups. And if he drank the majority of each of the cups, he has fulfilled his obligation.

בְּאַרְבַּעֶתָּן מְרַבֵּיעֵית יַיִן חֵי.  
שְׁתֵּה אַרְבַּעַה כּוֹסוֹת אֱלוֹ מִיַּיִן  
שְׂאִינוּ מְזוּוג--יֵצֵא יָדֵי אַרְבַּעַה  
כוֹסוֹת, וְלֹא יֵצֵא יָדֵי חֲרוּת;  
שְׁתֵּה אַרְבַּעַה כּוֹסוֹת מְזוּוגִין  
בְּבֵת אַחַת--יֵצֵא יָדֵי חֲרוּת,  
וְלֹא יֵצֵא יָדֵי אַרְבַּעַה כּוֹסוֹת.  
וְאִם שְׁתֵּה מִכָּל כּוֹס מִיְהוּן רַבּוֹ,  
יֵצֵא.

#### 24. Chidushei Maran Riz Halevi al HaRambam, Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9

It seems possible to say that although *chamar medinah* (non-wine alcoholic beverage) is kosher for Havdalah (Pesachim 107), and therefore also for other “cups of blessing,” this might apply only to “cups of blessing,” since other beverages can also be defined as a “cup.” But on Pesach night, when the essence of the mitzvah is to drink wine in the way of free men – as we quoted the Rambam’s formulation that each and every person is obligated to drink on this night four cups of wine – the mitzvah might be limited specifically to wine. With regards to **drinking** we do not find that *chamar medinah* is considered wine, only with regards to the definition of “cups of blessing.” In this respect, *chamar medinah* will be parallel to drinking undiluted wine.

וְלִכְאוּרָה הִיָּה אֶפְשָׁר לֹאמַר דְּאִף עַל  
גַּב דְּאִמְרִינָן בְּפִסְחִים דְּף ק”ז דְּגַם  
חֲמֵר מְדִינָה כְּשֵׁר לְהַבְדִּילָהּ, וּמִמֵּילָא  
דְּהוּא הִדִּין בְּכָל כּוֹסוֹת שְׁל בְּרַכָּה,  
אֲבָל כָּל זֶה רַק לְעֵנֵן דִּין כּוֹס שְׁל  
בְּרַכָּה, דְּגַם חֲמֵר מְדִינָה מְקַרֵי כּוֹס.  
אֲבָל בְּלִיל פְּסַח, דְּעֵיקָר הַמִּצְוָה הִיא  
בְּשִׁתִּית יַיִן דְּרַדְּךָ חֲרוּת וּכְמוֹ שֶׁהֲבֵאֵנוּ  
מְלִשׁוֹן הַרְמַב”ם דְּכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד  
חַיִּיב לְשִׁתּוֹת בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה אַרְבַּעַה  
כוֹסוֹת שְׁל יַיִן, וּבְזֶה יֵשׁ לֹאמַר  
שֶׁהַמִּצְוָה הִיא יַיִן דְּוָקָא. דְּלְעֵנֵן  
מִצְוֹת הַשְׁתִּיָּה לֹא מִשְׁכַּחֲנֵן דְּחֲמֵר  
מְדִינָה יְהֵא נְחָשֵׁב כִּיַּיִן לְעֵנֵן זֶה רַק  
לְעֵנֵן דִּין כּוֹס שְׁל בְּרַכָּה בְּלִבְד, וְהוּי  
כְּאִילוֹ שְׁתָּאֵן חֵי ...

#### HALACHIC

#### Halachic Conclusions

#### CONCLUSIONS

### WHO DRINKS THE FOUR CUPS?

#### 25. Shulchan Aruch 472:14-15

14. Even women (who in general are not obligated in time-bound mitzvot) are obligated in the Four Cups and all the mitzvot of the night.

(יד) גַּם הַנְּשִׂיִם חַיְבוֹת בְּאַרְבַּע  
כוֹסוֹת וּבְכָל מִצְוֹת הַנּוֹהֲגוֹת  
בְּאוֹתוֹ לַיְלָה:

15. It is a mitzvah to give a cup to children who have reached the age at which they can be educated in mitzvah performance.

(טו) תִּינוּקוֹת שֶׁהִגִּיעוּ לְחִינוּף  
מִצְוָה לִיתֵן לְכָל אֶחָד כּוֹס  
לְפָנָיו:

**26. Shulchan Aruch Harav 472:22**

Even household members who hear Kiddush and Haggadah from the head of the household are nonetheless obligated to drink the Four Cups in the manner of a free man.

אף בְּנֵי הַבַּיִת שֶׁהֵן שׁוֹמְעִין  
הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְהַהֲגָדָה מִבַּעַל הַבַּיִת  
אֵף עַל פִּי כֵן חַיִּב כָּל אֶחָד  
וְאֶחָד לְשִׁתּוֹת ד' כּוֹסוֹת הָרֶגֶד  
חִירוֹת:

**27. Haseder Ha'aruch 41:3**

When they [charity distributors] give wine to a poor person for the Four Cups, they should also give for [the members of] his household, for they do not fulfill their obligation through the head of the household's drinking.

כְּשֶׁנוֹתְנִים לְעֵנִי יוֹן לְד' כּוֹסוֹת,  
רְאוּי לִיתֵן לוֹ יוֹן גַּם לְבְנֵי בֵיתוֹ,  
שֶׁכֵּן אֵין הֵם יּוֹצְאִים יְדֵי חוֹבָה  
בְּשִׁתְּוֹת שֶׁל בַּעַל הַבַּיִת.

**DRINKING FOUR CUPS CONSECUTIVELY****28. Shulchan Aruch 472:8**

One needs to drink the Four Cups according to the order [they appear over the Seder Night], and if one drank them one after the other, not according to their order, he does not fulfill his obligation.

צָרִיךְ לְשִׁתּוֹת אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת עַל  
הַסֵּדֶר, וְאִם שִׁתָּאן זֶה אַחֵר זֶה  
שֶׁלֹא כְּסֵדֶר לֹא יֵצֵא:

**HOW MUCH WINE IS DRUNK FOR EACH CUP?****29. Shulchan Aruch 472:9**

The [proper] size of the cup is a *revi'it* (3-5 oz, 86-150 ml; see Source 4 above) after it is mixed (if he mixes water with the wine). He should drink all of it, or (at least) most of it. If the cup [is large enough to] contain many *revi'iot*, the amount of people that can drink from it is the amount of *revi'iot* it contains (five people can drink from a cup containing five *revi'iot*). Some say that one must drink most of the cup, even if it holds a number of *revi'iot*.

שִׁיעוֹר הַכּוֹס רְבִיעִית לְאַחַר  
שִׁימְזִיגְנוּ (אִם רָצָה לְמִזְגוֹ).  
וְיִשְׁתֶּה כּוֹלוֹ אוֹ רוֹבּוֹ. וְאִם יֵשׁ  
בּוֹ הֶרְבֵּה רְבִיעִיּוֹת שׁוֹתִין מִמֶּנּוּ  
כָּל כֶּד בְּנֵי אָדָם כְּמִנְיֵן רְבִיעִיּוֹת  
שָׁבוּ. וְיֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים שֶׁצָּרִיךְ  
לְשִׁתּוֹת רוֹב הַכּוֹס אֲפִילוֹ  
מִחֲזִיק כְּמִה רְבִיעִיּוֹת ....

**WHAT ABOUT DRINKING GRAPE JUICE?****30. Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Weingarten, Haseder Ha'aruch 14:7**

7. One who finds it difficult to drink wine can fulfill his obligation of the Four Cups by means of

ז. מִי שֶׁקָּשָׁה לוֹ לְשִׁתּוֹת יוֹן,  
יּוֹצֵא יְדֵי חוֹבַת אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת



grape juice, and it is preferable to raisin wine and cooked wine...

8. Ideally one should make the effort to get wine with alcohol content, because it “brings joy to the heart of man” (based on Tehillim 104:15), and for the Four Cups, wine that brings joy is required.

בְּמִיץ עֲנָבִים, וְהוּא עֲדִיף מִיַּיִן צְמוּקִים אוֹ מִיַּיִן שְׁנֵיתֵי בִשָּׁל ...

ח. לְכַתְּחִלָּה יֵשׁ לְטָרוּחַ לְהַשִּׁיג יַיִן שְׂיֵישׁ בּוֹ אֶלְכוֹהוֹל, לְפִי שֶׁהוּא “מְשַׂמֵּחַ לְבַב אָנוּשׁ” (עַל פִּי תְהִלִּים קד:טו), וְלִדְּ פּוֹסוֹת צָרִיד לְשִׂתוֹת יַיִן הַמְשַׂמֵּחַ.

### Biblical Hints for the Four Cups

Even though the mitzvah of the Four Cups is Rabbinic in origin, the Talmud Yerushalmi supplies four hints from the Tanach that enrich our understanding of the mitzvah.

#### 31. Talmud Yerushalmi, Pesachim 10:1

From where in Tanach do we find an allusion to the Four Cups [that the Sages enacted]?

**Rabbi Yochanan** said, quoting Rabbi Benayah, that they correspond to the four stages of redemption: “Therefore tell the Children of Israel I am God and I took you out...and I saved you...and redeemed you...and took you to me as a nation” (Shemot 6:6-7).

**Rabbi Yehoshua son of Levi** said that they correspond to the four cups of Pharaoh [in the dream that the butler told over to Yosef (Joseph) in prison]: “Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand...I squeezed them (the grapes) into Pharaoh’s cup... and I placed Pharaoh’s cup in his hand...and you will place Pharaoh’s cup in his hand.” (Bereishit/ Genesis 40:11-12).

**Rabbi Levi** said that they correspond to the four kingdoms [that subjugated Israel].

**The Rabbis** said that they correspond to the four cups of punishment that the Holy One, blessed be He, will in the future give the nations of the world to drink: “For thus said Hashem, God of Israel, to me, “Take this cup of wrath ...” (Yirmiyahu/ Jeremiah 25:16); “The gold cup of Babylonia is in God’s hand” (Yirmiyahu 51:7); “For there is a cup

מִיַּיִן לְאַרְבָּעָה פּוֹסוֹת?

רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בְּשֵׁם ר' ר' בְּנֵיָה פְּנִיָה אַרְבַּע גְּאוּלוֹת: “לֵכֵן אָמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם ... וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם...” (שְׁמוֹת ו:ו-ז) וְהוֹצֵאתִי וְהִצַּלְתִּי וְגִאֲלֹתִי וְלִקְחֹתִי.

רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי אָמַר כְּנִגְדַּי אַרְבָּעָה פּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל פְּרָעָה: “וְכֹס פְּרָעָה בְּיָדִי ... וְאֶשְׁחַט אֹתָם אֶל כּוֹס פְּרָעָה ... וְאֶתְּן אֶת הַכּוֹס עַל כַּף פְּרָעָה ... וְנִתְּתָ כּוֹס פְּרָעָה בְּיָדוֹ ...” (בְּרֵאשִׁית מ:יא-יב)

רַבִּי לֵוִי אָמַר כְּנִגְדַּי אַרְבָּעָה מַלְכוּוֹת.

וְרַבָּנָן אָמְרִי כְּנִגְדַּי ד' פּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל פְּרָעָה וְשֶׁהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲתִיד לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת אוֹמוֹת הָעוֹלָם: “כִּי כֹה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲלֵי קַח אֶת כּוֹס הַיַּיִן הַחֲמָה ...” (יְרֵמְיָה כה:טו), “כּוֹס זָהָב בְּכַף בְּיָד ה'...”

in God's hand" (Tehillim 75:9); "And he will rain fire and sulfur on the evildoers..." (Tehillim 11:6).

(ירמיה נא:ז), "כִּי כּוֹס בְּיַד ה' ... (תהילים עה:ט), "יִמְטֵר עַל רְשָׁעִים פָּחִים אֵשׁ וְגַפְרִית [וְרוּחַ זִלְעָפוֹת מִנֶּת כּוֹסִים] (תהילים יא:ו).

Corresponding to them, the Holy One, blessed be He, will in the future give Israel to drink the four cups of consolation: "God is my portion and my cup" (Tehillim 16:5); "You poured oil over my head and my cup is overflowing" (Tehillim 23:5); and [the verse] "I lift up the cup of salvations" (Tehillim 116:13) counts as two (because "salvations" is plural).

וּכְנַגְדָּן עֲתִיד הַקֹּב"ה לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבַּעַה כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל נְחֻמוֹת: "ה' מִנֶּת חֶלְקִי וְכוֹסִי" (תהילים טז:ה), "דִּשְׁנַנְתָּ בְּשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רוּחַ" (תהילים כג:ה), וְהֵדִין "כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא" (תהילים קטז:יג) תְּרִיין.

Think about the following two questions:

**a. Why do you think each of these four biblical references is related to the four cups and the Seder night?**

**b. If you had to group the four approaches of the Yerushalmi into two groups, how would you divide them up?**

#### RECOM- MENDED ADDITIONAL READING

#### The Morasha Syllabus

The Pesach Seder Experience Handbook

<http://nleresources.com/nle-morasha-syllabus/jewish-calendar/the-passover-seder-experience-handbook/>

Pesach I: Slavery and the Pesach Miracles

<http://nleresources.com/nle-morasha-syllabus/jewish-calendar/pesach-slavery-miracles/>

Pesach II: Nationhood, Providence & Freedom

<http://nleresources.com/nle-morasha-syllabus/jewish-calendar/pesach-ii-nationhood-providence-freedom/>

#### Hebrew Source Material

Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef zt"l's Chazon Ovadiah Volume I includes a number of articles on the Four Cups. At the end of Chapter 6 he discusses using grape juice for Kiddush and the Four Cups.

Chapters 41-47 of Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Weingarten's Haseder Ha'Aruch deal with the Four Cups. The book is a comprehensive work on all aspects of the Seder Night, with helpful footnotes.

### **English Articles**

The Arba'ah Kosos, by Rabbi Yonasan Sacks, available online at [http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2009/moadim/rsac\\_pesach.html](http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2009/moadim/rsac_pesach.html)

Seder Night: the Mitzvah of "The Four Cups," by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt, available online at <http://www.torah.org/advanced/weekly-halacha/5760/tazria.html>

"The Nature of the Mitzvah to Drink Wine on Pesach Night," by Rabbi Mordecai Kornfeld, in the Daf Hayomi Advancement Forum's Insights into the Daily Daf, available online at <http://dafyomi.co.il/pesachim/insites/ps-dt-108.htm>

"May We Use Grape Juice for the Arba'ah Kosot?" a three part series by Rabbi Chaim Jachter. The third article and links to the previous two appear online at: [http://koltorah.org/ravj/15-27\\_May\\_We\\_Use\\_Grape\\_Juice\\_for\\_the\\_Arba\\_Kosot\\_3.htm](http://koltorah.org/ravj/15-27_May_We_Use_Grape_Juice_for_the_Arba_Kosot_3.htm)