

**Arba'ah Kosot****The Four Cups of Wine****of the Passover Seder****Pesachim 108b****Teacher's Guide**

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****Section I. Who Drinks the *Arba'ah Kosot*, the Four Cups?**

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

**Section II. How Must the Four Cups Be Drunk?**

**Case 2.** Four Cups in a Row

**Section III. How Much of the Four Cups Must Be Drunk?**

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

**Section IV. Which Beverage is Drunk for the Four Cups?**

**Case 4.** A Pre-Pesach Visit to a Jerusalem Boutique Wine Store

**Halachic Conclusions****Afterword: Biblical Hints for the Four Cups**

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

קה:

עין משפט  
נר מצוה

ב' א ב מ' פ"ו מהל'  
 מנה הלכה ט סמג  
 ע"ז מ"א (טור א"ח סתמן  
 תע"ב):  
 ב' ג ד מ' וסמג שם  
 טו"ש"ע א"ח ט' תעב  
 סעיף ח:  
 ג' ה שם סעיף טו:  
 ב' ו מ' שם הלכה ג'  
 טו"ש"ע שם סעיף טז:

[illegible]

**שְׂאֵף** הן היו באותו הנם. ואי לאו הלא טעמא לא היו מיינות משום דנשים טעויות מנולות עשה שהזמן גרמל אף ע"ג דלכרעה דכנסות דרבנן כעין דלוריתא מיקון: דרו באותו הנם. פי' רש"ס בשל דים גמלוו כן כמנולה ע"י אסתר ובמנולה ע"י יהודית וקשה דלף משמע שאלן עיקר ועוד דלוריתא גרים שאלן כן היו באותו הנם משמע שאלתה כמלה ללשכתא דלכרעה ולאכד והא דלמרין דטעויות דמנולה ע"י דלף כן היו באותו הנם כן נכנסות וסבחה הנם נעשה דלוריתא אכל נכרעה כנסות דרבנן מיקון גם לנשים כיון שהיו באותו הנם: **שְׂאֵף** הי' צא. משמע דלמנולה ע"י מוניה וכן ע"ג. שלשה שאלו (בבבס ד' ג:) אמרין הכל מודים בטוס של כרעה שאלן מנכרין מלעלו ע"י שזמן למות מים וקשה דצ"י דכרעה שאלו (ש"א) אמר י' דכרעה מלמדיה בטוס של כרעה ולכרין מ' וש"י ע"י שם דהוא דקלמארין דלכרין מ' היינו שאלתו כן בטוס כרעה מנמן מלמדיה שאלן מיונוה בטוס זה וישפון כבטוס אמר ויכרן ור"מ פי' דמי דהתם מלמדיה מיונו לא מיונו כדלמדיה סורר כ"ס וסבחה ד' (ג) אינו נעשה בן סורר כע"י ששאלה פ"י ומיונו לא כמיונו ולא מיונו לא דמשמע כמנולה (ש"א) (ש"א) ד' (ט:) שמחו כדלמי דקלמארין ד' שפוזגו ויעמד על דרעיה היינו כבכרעה הארץ דלמר דכרעה שלשה שאלו (בבבס ד' ג:) ומוסרין כבכרעה

[illegible]

אל תרא יין כי יתאדם. הכל מיימי האי קרא לחשיבות יין אדום וזה מוסר

שָׁקָהּ כִּן כִּי בָּאוּם כִּנֵּם.  
לְקִמְיֹת שִׁנְאוֹתָיִךְ הַדּוּר גִּנְלוּ  
דְּמֹשׁוֹ דִּע' אֶסְתֵּר גִּנְלוּ  
[כְּדִי מִיּוֹצֵג כּוֹס יִסֵּךְ. שִׁיּוֹר]

הַכֵּם <sup>א</sup>א"ר יְהוּדָה אִמֵּר  
הִלְלוּ צִירֶךְ שִׁיּוּהָ בָּהֶן  
שְׁתָּאֵן חִי יִצָּא שְׁתָּאֵן  
מִזֶּה לִבְנֵי וּלְבֵנֵי בִיתוֹ  
רַבָּא אִידִי יוֹן יִצָּא יְדִי  
כִּבְשָׁת אַחַת <sup>א</sup>הִרֵב אִמֵּר  
לְכָסוּת לֹא יִצָּא שְׁתָּאֵן  
יִצָּא אִמֵּר לֹא בָּהֶן נִחְמֵן  
וְכֹאֵס דְּכִסָּא מִיִּתְיִבֵי ד'  
יְהוּדָה בָּהֶן כְּדִי רִבְעִית  
חַדְשָׁא וְאַחֲרָיִי שִׁנְיֵי רַבִּי  
אֵלָּא בִּי מַעַם וּמְרֹאֲתָא יִפֵּה  
וְאֵת אִמְרֵתָא כּוֹס יִפֵּה  
שִׁיּוֹרָא הוּא יִמָּא כְּדִי  
לְכָס חַד וְחַד דְּרִיזֵי לְהוֹ  
לְבָבָא אִוּמֵר דְּרִיזֵי  
רַבָּא מִיָּא מַעְמָא דְּרִבִּי  
יָא יוֹן כִּי יִתְאַדֵּם ת"ד  
יְסוֹת הִלְלוּ אֶחָד אֲנָשִׁים  
קוּת א"ר יְהוּדָה וְכִי מַה  
בֵּינָן יֵאלָא מַחֲלָקֵי לָהֶן  
לְקוּת

מפרשין לה בנים' של חזקיהו  
 כוס יפה ורובע רביעית ולא  
 משום דעשרה דברים נאמרו  
 (ד' ס"ג) שם ששקין' של חזקיהו  
 דבגדלי מרביעית ולא כלום  
 הכל הי"נ בין בעין רביעית  
 אחד כך מירב רביע' שמה.  
 לא חשיב אלא כוס אחד  
 מרביעית אבל טפי מרביעית  
 מירובו כוס אחד שאל על  
 חסין. מכל כוס וכו' שאל  
 ששה ארבעה סוכות: דין  
 שאין חשיבות אלא בין מוגז.  
 מיה אכלו ייעוט שנו לא ידע  
 דמלחא לבקת (דף ק"ג) ועתה  
 ארבעה כוסות לא ילא. וכוון  
 ער שלשה כוסות על הרביעית  
 בכל אחד ואחד עד כדי  
 מרביעית לא חשיבא שמיא  
 (א' ואחד מוגז. ששה יין  
 יין) כולו רביעית: ואחד יין  
 אי נמי חדש יין ון עטס יין  
 יין: ופרשה. שיא ארז:  
 ואח' אמרת דרי מוגז כוס  
 אחד מלא קאמר עתאכל עד  
 נמי שחמוס כפסרים אידי ואידי  
 רביעית. מירוצא היא לומר  
 מוגז כוס יפה עד קאדמר  
 ייעמוד על רביעית כדאמר  
 דבעי עוקר. ורבינו (א"פ) כ  
 רביעית בין יין ורביעית אלא  
 נמי קאמר לכל אחד ואחד  
 שיאא ברוך ארבע לפסרו  
 מחמוד להיות רוצל כן י  
 נמי בעי דמזמור עליה  
 הם נגאלו: ובי' הם סותלים

בין מזוג אבל מים כד לא מ  
בר פירות (ב"ב ד' לו.) פי' רש"ס

דלמזריקן (מוטע דף יא): בשבר נשים  
וכן בני מקדש מביאה נמי אמתיקין הידי  
כן בני גר חטובה במסכת שבת (דף עב.)  
יין רובעין רביעיית יין שניצטוג יעמוד לז  
רביעיית לוג דהמנהל דלג דרי על חד  
תלת מיני לאו ממנה הוראם. וקא שפא  
דפעק פרי כולם קאמרי שמואל לביה  
רובע רביעיית יין: שפאן חי. שלא  
מוגו במים: בבא חפס. עירה ארבעתן  
למך כוס אחד: יי יין קא שפא ד'  
כוסות: ידי פירות לא ילא. כלומר  
אין זו מנהל שלימה: כדי רביעיית.  
בין כולן. קפא לשמואל דלמך רובע  
רביעיית דליינן כוס יפה: ה"ג מאי  
כוס יפה דקאמרי שמואל לכל חד וחד  
דסו ולי כולוה רביעיית: מאי פרא יין  
כי יסאלם. אלמא יין מאלה בני:  
קליית

שָׁחַף כִּי הָיוּ בְּאוֹתוֹ בָּנָם. דַּלְמַר בָּנָם׃  
 קוֹטֶה (ד' יא): שֶׁכֶּר שִׁשִּׁים דַּקְרוּת  
 שָׁחַף מִחֻתוֹ דְּדוֹר נִגְלָלוּ וְכִי גַבִּי  
 מִתְּרָה מִגִּילָה אֲמַר הֵיכִי שְׁמוֹס דְּבִי  
 יִדִּי אֲחֵמֶר הוּא וְכִן גַּבִּי חֲנוּכֶה בָּנָם׃  
 שֶׁמֶר (ד' ג): לָקוּן מִזְרֵי הֵלִי: אֲמַר  
 ר"י שֶׁמֶר שְׁמוֹלָר' בְּרוֹמֹס לִלְרֹן כִּלְרֹן  
 שִׁיחַ בָּנָן. כֵּל אֶחָד כְּדִי שִׁיחַ בָּנָן  
 מִיָּמִית כּוֹס יִפֶּה שֶׁל בִּזְרָה שִׁשְׁוֹרִי  
 רוֹבֵעַ רִבְעִית לֹוג דְּכֵל שִׁיחֹמֶר דִּלָּא דִּלָּא  
 עַל רִבְעִית לֹוג דְּכֵל חֲמֶרֶר דִּלָּא דִּלָּא  
 עַל עַד תֵּלֶת מִיָּח לֹאז מִמֶּרֶס הוּא הֵכִי  
 מוֹאִילִי (ד' עו): וְהִשְׁתֵּא קִסְדִּי דִּמְזִיחָה  
 דִּזְשִׁיטוֹרָה הוּא. כּוֹס יִפֶּה שֶׁל בָּנָמִי  
 בָּסֹס שֶׁל בִּזְרָה כִּי: דִּכָּא' בָּנָם: דִּכְרוֹת  
 בָּנִים יִלָּא וְכּוֹגֵן שֶׁר שֶׁל רִבְעִית לֹוג  
 הוּא דִּמִּי הֵכִי דִּמְוֹס עֲשִׂינִי רִבְעִית יִן  
 בָּנָם אֲחֵם. עִירֶה אֲרִבְעֶנָם כְּתוֹן כּוֹס  
 וְלֹא יִסְרֹא דִּלְפִי' וְלֹא הִכְרַע כִּלְרֹן אֶחָד  
 וְהִכָּא רִבְעִית יִלָּא אֲחֵם לִמְעֻטִּי פִּסּוֹת  
 כּוֹס אֶחָד חֲשׂוֹב כּוֹס אֶחָד. וְיִלָּא דִּהֵכִי  
 שֶׁרֶר שְׁמִתְמִי וְלֹא שְׁחָלֵן רִזְוִינִי: הִשְׁתֵּא  
 הִכָּא כִּלְרֹן דְּכַמְרֶסֶר לִקְמֵן: יִדִּי וְיִלָּא  
 יִירוֹם לֹא יִלָּא. כְּלוֹמֶר אִין זִי מִזְוֶה שְׁלִימָה  
 וְהֵי מִיָּי בִּיזּוֹת שְׁחָלֵן דְּרִירוֹ עַל תֵּלֶת  
 חֲמֶרֶר: יִדִּי וְיִלָּא. שְׁמוֹס שְׁמֶשֶׁת י"ט  
 מִחֻתֵּי בָּנָם: יִדִּי וְיִלָּא. שְׁמֶשֶׁת בִּינִי: אֲכַל יִדִּי  
 שְׁחָלֵן כּוֹס רִשְׁאֹן וְלֹא יִסְרֹא וְיִרְרֹן הִכָּא  
 לִרְרֹן: שִׁיחַ בָּנָן דִּי רִבְעִית. כְּלוֹמֶר  
 לֹוג: אֶחָד יִן. גִּרְרֹן רִבְעִית. דְּכִירִי  
 דִּשְׁתַּקֵּא לֵן מִכֵּל מִשְׁקֶה אֲבֵר יִסְתֵּה (וִיקָרֵא  
 וְיִבֵּעַ רִבְעִית יִן וְיִשְׁלֵטֵה רִבְעִית מִדִּי מִדִּי  
 שְׁחָלֵן ז' טַעַם יִן ז' טַעַם שֶׁל כִּסֵּה שְׁלֵט.  
 לִרְרֹן: שִׁיחַ בָּנָן ז' טַעַם יִן. לִמְעֻטִּי שֶׁרֶס  
 קִמְטִי מִיָּחֶה כִּי רִבְעִית. לֵטֵל אֶחָד  
 לִשְׁוֹן מִכֵּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד יִדִּי דִּשְׁמִי שְׁעִירִים  
 יִ רִבְעִית כְּלָשׁוֹן הִכְרִימָה: הֵכִי גִרְסִינִן  
 יִדִּי שְׁעִירֹרֶה כִּדִּי מִיָּחֶה כּוֹס יִפֶּה הֵיכִי  
 לִשְׁוֹן שְׁמוֹלָר' לִשְׁוֹן בִּרְמִיחָה אֶחָד כִּי וְכִי  
 וְאֵל הֵיכִי רוֹבֵעַ רִבְעִית יִן כִּדִּי שִׁיחֹמֶר  
 וְהִמְוִילִי (י' שֶׁמֶר ד' ע): כִּי דִּרְחֵלִשׁ שִׁטָּה  
 מִן מִשְׁקֶה אֲבֵר' דִּקְסִי' דִּשְׁמוֹמֶר אֲחֵמֶר  
 וְכִן לֵטֵל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד וְיִרְרֹן הֵגִי' דִּשְׁמוֹלָר'  
 קִשְׁוִילִי לִי הֵלֵכֵן בִּירְמִיחָה כִּמְחֵה קִמְטִי אֶחָד  
 מִן דְּכִין כְּתוֹן קִאֲמֶר: אֵל טַרַּף יִן. אֵל  
 וְאֲרֵם שְׁלֵטֵן אִין זִמִּי מִרְחֵה שֶׁרֶס וְשִׁטָּה  
 אֵל לִשְׁתַּכְרֵם בִּז' וְאֶחָד הִסְטִיקוּקֹס. שֶׁס  
 יֵשׁ לִמְעֻטִּי. הֵלֵל פִּשְׁוֹרִין מִן הִמְזוֹת:  
 לִיזוֹת

התם לא נהירא כמו שמפורש שם וסדר  
מורפס:  
והתם דמייתי לה לגרענותא ושם מפורש:  
חזן

מסורת הש"ס

(א) [שבת כג מילה ד.  
וערכך ג.] (ב) ניר לה.  
(ג) [נכריך והראש ליתא  
מיתוס רב אמר.] (ד) [מגילה  
ד.ד.] (ה) [שבת עו.]  
(ו) [מגילה ד.ד.] (ז) [דברים  
עו.] (ח) [ועיין חספוט  
מגילה ד.ד. שף קן.]  
(ט) [עך עשר.] (י) [ועי'  
חספוט ברטות:] דים  
מדיס וכו']

תורה אור השלם

1. אל תִּרְא חֵן בִּי  
וְתֹאדָם בִּי יָתֵן כְּבוֹס עֵינַי  
וְיִתְּהֶלֶךְ בְּמִישְׁרַיִם:

הַנּוֹדוֹת הַזֵּה

(א) רש"ם ד"ה ה"ג וט'  
ורבינו שלמה פי' שק'  
מקשה וט' קאמר רובע'  
רביעית ביו חלו:

## 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?*

Rabbi Margolis's answer went as follows:

This issue – whether each individual or each family needs four cups of wine – is dealt with in a classical analytical Torah essay about the Seder night, written by the “Brisker Rav,” Rabbi Yitzchak Zev (Velvel) Soloveitchik, of blessed memory (Volozhin, Lithuania 1886 – Jerusalem, Israel 1959). He dissects a similar debate to that of Adam and Amy – the dispute between two of the greatest voices in Jewish intellectual history, the Rambam and the Tosafot.

The discussion opens with a quote from the Mishnah:

#### 1. Mishnah Pesachim 99b – How much wine do we distribute to the poor for the Seder night?

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 שְׁיִסֵּב. וְלֹא יִפְחָתוּ לוֹ  
מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל יָיִן, וְאִפְלוּ מִן  
הַתְּמָחִי.

*Which of these approaches – Adam's (one set of four cups per family) or Amy's (four cups for every individual) – does this Mishnah seem to support?*

The implications of this Mishnah are not clear: Is the “poor Israelite” mentioned in the Mishnah the representative of his family (as Adam would say), or do the words “they should not give him” refer to each and every poor individual (as Amy would say)? Does each poor **family** receive four cups from the community food distribution (the *tamchuy*; see Mishnah Pe'ah 5:7), or does each **individual**?

Tosafot presents both positions; one seems more compelling logically, and the other has textual support from another passage.

## 2. Tosafot Pesachim 99b “*Lo Yifchitu Lo Me'arba Kosot*” – How many cups does each poor family receive?

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?...

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.

מתוך הלשון משמע קצת  
שאינן נותנין לבניו ולבני ביתו  
כי אם לעצמו והוא מוציא  
את כולם בשלו. וסברא הוא:  
דמאי שניא ארבע כוסות  
מקדוש דכל השנה שאחד  
מוציא את כולם ...

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 חנוך. ונראה להחמיר  
ולהצריך ארבע כוסות לכל  
אחד.

[Note: For an in-depth discussion of this passage in Tosafot see Rabbi Dovid Cohen shlita's article on the Four Cups in Yeshurun Vol. 22, pp. 628-636.]

Although Tosafot writes that one should be stringent and require four cups for each person, Tosafot's basic position is that one cup is sufficient for the entire family. Just as a single cup is enough for an entire family to fulfill the mitzvah of Kiddush, the same should be true for the Four Cups.

The Rambam clearly differs with this approach:



### 3. Rambam (Maimonides), Mishneh Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:7 – What does the mitzvah of the Four Cups entail?

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.).

לְפִיכָּהּ כְּשֹׁפָעַד אָדָם בְּלֵילָה הַזֶּה, צָרִיךְ לֵאכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְהוּא מְסַב דְּרוֹךְ חֲרוּת. וְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד, בֵּין אַנְשִׁים בֵּין נָשִׁים, חַיִּב לִשְׁתּוֹת בְּלֵילָה הַזֶּה, אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל יַיִן--אִין פּוֹחֲתִין מִהֶן; וְאֶפְלוּ עָנִי הַמִּתְפַּרְנֵס מִן הַצֶּדֶקָה, לֹא יִפְחָתוּ לוֹ מֵאַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת: שְׁעוֹר כָּל כּוֹס מִהֶן, רְבִיעִית.

According to the Rambam, the mitzvah is clearly **for each individual to drink four cups** of wine on the Seder night. Tosafot's basic approach is that all those attending can fulfill the mitzvah by means of a single cup, so that only four cups are required for the entire evening. According to the Rambam, however, a five-person Seder would require a grand total of twenty cups of wine for the evening.

#### What is at the basis of Tosafot's analogy between Kiddush and the Four Cups?

##### Does the Rambam differ?

This comment by Tosafot ("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?") probably prompted the Brisker Rav to ask a very broad but extremely basic question about the Four Cups: **"Are the Four Cups of Seder night conceptually identical to the cups of wine we drink together with other mitzvot (like a wedding or Kiddush), or are they unique?"**

Jews often say: "A wise man's question is half an answer" (an expression attributed to the great Spanish poet Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Gabirol). By asking this one key question about the Four Cups of the Seder night, the Brisker Rav unlocked the conceptual basis of a cluster of disputes between the Rambam and Tosafot.

He suggests that the Rambam and Tosafot argue about the answer to this question, and their dispute plays itself out in four separate issues – the question of who has to drink (our issue), and also the questions of *how* to drink, *how much* to drink, and *what* to drink.

#### Tosafot's Approach

In order to understand Tosafot's approach, we must first introduce the halachic concept of a "cup of blessing," *kos shel berachah*.

**When are we obligated to drink wine along with a mitzvah? List as many as you know.**

**We drink a cup of wine:**

- a. with Kiddush and Havdalah (service that concludes Shabbat);
- b. after Birkat Hamazon (blessing after meals);
- c. at a wedding when the groom betroths his bride by giving her a ring;
- d. at Sheva Berachot (the seven blessings – the blessing over wine and an additional six) said under the canopy at a wedding and at festive meals the week after a wedding;
- e. at a Brit Milah (circumcision); and
- f. at a Pidyon Haben (redemption of the first born).

Each of these cups of wine is a rabbinic decree (though there is an opinion that wine for Kiddush is of biblical origin) referred to as a *kos shel berachah*, a cup of blessing.

#### 4. The Steinsaltz Reference Guide, p. 203 – What is a “cup of blessing”?

כוס של בְּרָכָה Lit. a cup of blessing. The cup of wine on which blessings, e.g. Kiddush, Grace after Meals (בְּרַכַּת הַמֶּזֶן) or the marriage blessings (בְּרַכַּת חֲתָנִים) are recited. This cup must contain at least a רְבִיעִית (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).

In each of the above instances a cup of wine accompanies a special blessing – praising Him for Shabbat, the marriage, the brit milah, or over our meal (some recite a special blessing over wine for a pidyon haben, too).

Two reasons are given for saying these blessings over a cup of wine:

#### 5. She'iltot deRav Achai Gaon, Section 54 – Reason #1: The cup of blessing was inspired by the Levite's singing during the wine libation.

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 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.

וּמִנְהֵן דְּעַל הַיַּיִן? דָּאָמַר רַבִּי  
שְׁמוּאֵל בֶּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר  
רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן: מִנְהֵן שְׂאִין אוֹמְרִי  
שִׁירָה אֶלָּא עַל הַיַּיִן? שְׁנַאֲמַר  
(שׁוֹפְטִים ט:יג) “וְתֹאמַר לָהֶם  
הַגֶּפֶן הִחֲדִלְתִּי אֶת תִּירוֹשִׁי  
הַמְשַׁמֵּחַ אֱלֹקִים וְאֲנָשִׁים.”  
אִם אֲנָשִׁים מְשַׁמֵּחַ דְּשִׁתּוֹ לֵיהּ,  
אֱלֹקִים בְּמָה מְשַׁמֵּחַ? הָיִי אוֹמְרִי  
בְּשִׁירָה. מִיכֵן אָמְרוּ, שְׂאִין  
אוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה אֶלָּא עַל הַיַּיִן.  
וּמֵאֵי הִיא? הִיא שִׁירָה דְּנִסְכִּים.

Just as the Levites sang in the Temple during the wine libation brought as an offering, so we hold a cup of wine as we sing praises to God. (We cannot sing as we drink it, but we hold the cup during the praises, then drink immediately afterwards.)

Another reason is noted by the Levush (Orach Chaim 182:1).

**6. Levush, Orach Chaim 182:1 – Reason #2: It brings honor to God to praise him while lifting up a cup of wine.**

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.

כָּבֵד יְדַעַת שְׂבִיב הַבְּרָכוֹת  
שֶׁתִּקְנוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ זְכוּנוֹם לְבָרָכָה  
תִּקְנוֹם לְסִדְרָם עַל הַכּוֹס, מִפְּנֵי  
שֶׁהוּא דֶּרֶךְ כְּבוֹד וְשִׁבְחָ נֶאֱמָר  
לְסִידֵר כֵּן שִׁבְחוּ וּבְרָכְתוּ יִתְבָּרַךְ  
עִם הַכּוֹס שֶׁבִידּוֹ, וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר  
הַפְּתוּב [תְּהִלִּים קטז, יג] "כּוֹס  
יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׁא וּבְיָשֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא."  
גַּם עַל פִּי הַקַּבָּלָה יֵשׁ בּוֹ סוֹד גָּדוֹל.

The Brisker Rav's question is thus: "Should the Four Cups of Seder night be added to our list of 'cups of blessing'?"

Tosafot answers (according to the Brisker Rav) – "Yes!" Tosafot sees the Four Cups as "cups of blessing," and therefore compares them to other cups of blessing such as Kiddush.

To support this approach, let us take a look at our Haggadah. **When do we drink the Four Cups?**

The **first** is drunk after the blessing of Kiddush, praising God over choosing the People of Israel and giving us His holidays.

The **second** is drunk after the blessing (*Asher Ge'alanu*) that closes the Maggid section, where, after telling the story of the Exodus, we praise God for redeeming us.

The **third** is drunk after the blessing over the meal (Birkat Hamazon), praising God over the food he gives us, over the land of Israel and Jerusalem.

The **fourth** is drunk after the blessing that closes the Hallel, the chapters of Psalms recited in order to praise God for the Exodus from Egypt.

Each one of the Four Cups thus fits the classic mold of a "cup of blessing." We raise our cups as we recite these blessings of praise, and then we drink. Our Sages enacted that the four blessings of Seder Night are each accompanied by a cup of wine, just as the blessing is said with a cup of wine for Shabbat Kiddush and (though not obligatory) often after Birkat Hamazon. On Pesach night we praise God with raised cups four times.

It follows according to Tosafot that just as on every Shabbat of the year one member of the household can make Kiddush over a cup of wine by which all those present

fulfill their obligations, so the same is true for the Four Cups of Seder Night (one cup for Kiddush, and another three cups).

### The Rambam's Approach

What does the Rambam say about this? Aren't the Four Cups considered "cups of blessing," as claimed by Tosafot (according to the Brisker Rav)?

The Brisker Rav explains: The Rambam agrees that the Four Cups are **also** four cups of blessing. Yet, Rambam holds that there is a second aspect of the Four Cups – *drinking four cups of wine to celebrate our freedom*.

Just like everyone at the Seder has a mitzvah to eat matzah and marror, so they all have a mitzvah to drink four cups of wine.

### 7. Rambam, Mishnah Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:10 – Each of the Four Cups is a "cup of blessing."

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 הָאֵלוּ,  
מִבְּרָךְ עָלָיו בְּרָכָה בְּפָנֵי עֲצֻמוֹ. וְכוֹס  
רִאשׁוֹן, אוֹמֵר עָלָיו קְדוּשַׁת הַיּוֹם; כּוֹס  
שֵׁנִי, קוֹרֵא עָלָיו אֶת הַהֲגָדָה; כּוֹס  
שְׁלִישִׁי, מִבְּרָךְ עָלָיו בְּרַבְתַּת הַמָּזוֹן; כּוֹס  
רְבִיעִי, גּוֹמֵר עָלָיו אֶת הַהִלֵּל, וּמִבְּרָךְ  
עָלָיו בְּרַבְתַּת הַשִּׁיר.

According to the Rambam there are two components to the Four Cups: drinking four cups to express our freedom, and structuring our Seder over four cups of blessing. Drinking wine, just as reclining, expresses freedom; having a cup of wine present at Kiddush and the other blessings of the night is "singing a song over wine" (as modeled after the Levite song sung during the wine libations of the Temple service).

This approach has its roots in the wording of the Gemara:

### 8. Mishnah and Gemara, Pesachim 117b – The Four Cups have two functions: cups of blessing and expressions of our freedom.

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: מִזְגוּ לוֹ כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁי, מִבְּרָךְ  
עַל מִזְוֹנוֹ. רְבִיעִי, גּוֹמֵר עָלָיו אֶת  
הַלֵּל, וְאוֹמֵר עָלָיו בְּרַבְתַּת הַשִּׁיר ...  
גמרא: אָמַר לִיהִי רַב חֲנַן לְרַבָּא,  
"שִׁמְעֵי מִינֵהּ בְּרַבְתַּת הַמָּזוֹן טְעוּנָה  
כוֹס." אָמַר לִיהִי, "אַרְבַּע כָּסִי תִקְנוּ  
רַבְּנָא דְרַבָּא חִירוֹת. כָּל חַד וְחַד נַעֲבִיד  
בֵּיהּ מִצְוָה."



First of all, each of the four cups is a “cup of blessing” associated with a mitzvah: the first with Kiddush; the second with the Haggadah – telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt; the third with Birkat Hamazon; and the fourth with Hallel. Each of these mitzvot involves a blessing, and the blessing is recited over a cup of wine.

However, drinking four cups of wine is also an expression of freedom, irrespective of the blessings themselves.

This is also brought out by a passage in the Talmud Yerushalmi:

### 9. Talmud Yerushalmi, Pesachim 10:1 – What do the Four Cups hint at?

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).

מִנֵּיין לְאַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת?

רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בְּשֵׁם ר' ר' בְּנִיָּה כְּנִיד  
אַרְבַּע גְּאוּלוֹת: "לֵכֵן אָמַר לְבְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם  
... וְלָקַחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם..."  
(שְׁמוֹת ו:ו-ז) וְהוֹצֵאתִי וְהִצַּלְתִּי  
וְגָאֵלְתִּי וְלָקַחְתִּי.

To summarize, according to the Tosafot the Four Cups are essentially cups of blessing. The Rambam agrees with this, but adds that there is an additional component to the mitzvah – drinking four cups as an expression of freedom. The Brisker Rav explains that these two approaches manifest themselves in four different areas: **who** has to drink (each individual or one person on behalf of the entire household), **how** the cups must be drunk, **how much** must be drunk, and **what** must be drunk. These additional topics will be the subjects of the next three sections.

#### KEY THEMES OF SECTION I

- The mitzvah of Four Cups must be performed by all, even the poor. Communities provide special food distributions for the poor before Passover, and they include the Four Cups.
- The Rambam clearly states that **every individual** must drink four cups on the Seder Night – so every poor family would have to receive enough wine for each individual. According to the first approach of Tosafot, however, each poor family receives just four cups of wine, even if there are a number of adults in the household.
- The Brisker Rav analyzes their dispute and suggests that a major conceptual difference in their respective approaches to the Four Cups underlies the difference of opinion.
- Tosafot, he says, view the Four Cups simply as four “cups of blessing.” Cups of blessing – like the cup that accompanies Kiddush or Birkat Hamazon – enhance our praises to God; we sing out to God with a cup of wine in hand. Just as one family member can make Kiddush on a normal Shabbat and others thereby fulfill

their obligation, so, too, the entire household can fulfill their obligation of the Four Cups through one of the family members.

- The Rambam, on the other hand, holds that besides the Four Cups serving as four cups of blessing, there is an independent and unique mitzvah on Seder night of drinking four cups of wine to express our freedom. Every individual must drink four cups, just as every individual must eat matzah. This mitzvah cannot be fulfilled through anyone else.

## 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.).*

Here is a passage from the Gemara that addresses whether or not one can drink the Four Cups consecutively. We will see how the Tosafot understands the passage, and then how the Rambam records it in his Mishneh Torah.

### 10. Pesachim 108b – What if someone drinks the Four Cups one after the other?

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.

שֶׁתֵּאָן בְּבֵית אֶחָת: רַב אָמַר יָדִי יֵין  
יֵצֵא יָדִי אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת לֹא יֵצֵא.

What is the requirement of “wine” independent of the requirement of the Four Cups?

Tosafot gives an interesting explanation:

### 11. Tosafot Pesachim 108b “Yedei Yayin Yatza” – What is the requirement of “wine”?

“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 שְׂמִינָה  
יוֹם טוֹב. דִּסְלָקָא דְעֵתָהּ הוּאִיל  
וְתִקְנֵהּ ד' כּוֹסוֹת, לֹא נִפְיֵק מִיְדֵי  
שְׂמִינָה יוֹם טוֹב אֲלָא אִם כּוֹס יָצָא  
יְדֵי אַרְבַּעָה כּוֹסוֹת:

According to the Tosafot, the Gemara here teaches that someone who drinks four cups of wine one after the other does not fulfill the mitzvah of the Four Cups. However, he has enhanced his joy of the holiday through drinking wine, which is a separate mitzvah, as we see in the following source:

### 12. Pesachim 109a – Wine is an important component of rejoicing on the holidays.

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 רַבָּנֵן: חַיִּיב אָדָם לְשִׂמְחָה  
בְּיָוֵיבֵי בֵּיתוֹ בְּרֹגֶל, שְׁנֵאמַר  
(דְּבָרִים טז:יד), “וְשִׂמְחִתָּה  
בְּחֻגֶּה.” בְּמָה מְשִׂמְחֵם? בַּיַּיִן.  
רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר אֲנָשִׁים  
בְּרֹאיוֹ לָהֶם, וְנָשִׁים בְּרֹאיוֹ  
לָהֶן. אֲנָשִׁים בְּרֹאיוֹ לָהֶם:  
בַּיַּיִן. וְנָשִׁים בְּמָאִי? תַּנִּי רַב  
יוֹסֵף: בְּבִבְלָא בְּבִגְדֵי צְבָעוֹנוֹן,  
בְּאַרְצֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּבִגְדֵי פִשְׁתָּן  
מְגוּהָצִין. תַּנְיָא: רַבִּי יְהוּדָה  
כּוֹן בְּתִירָא אָמַר, בְּזִמְנֵי שְׂפִית  
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיִים אִין שְׂמִינָה  
אֲלָא בְּבִשּׁוּר, שְׁנֵאמַר (דְּבָרִים  
כז:ז), “וְזָבַחְתָּ שְׁלָמִים  
וְאָכַלְתָּ שֶׁם וְשִׂמְחִתָּה לִפְנֵי ה'  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ,” וְעִכְשָׁיו, שְׂאִין בֵּית  
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיִים, אִין שְׂמִינָה  
אֲלָא בַּיַּיִן שְׁנֵאמַר (תְּהִלִּים  
קד:טז), “וַיַּיִן יִשְׂמַח לִבָּב  
אָנוּשׁ.”

Drinking four cups of wine in a row brings joy, but, says the Gemara, it is not a fulfillment of the Four Cups. If a person has drunk four cups of wine, why do we say that he has not fulfilled his obligation of the Four Cups of Seder night? Apparently,

Tosafot maintains that the mitzvah of the Four Cups involves more than just drinking four cups of wine on Seder Night. What is this additional aspect?

The answer is connected with Tosafot's approach to the Four Cups: They have to be four cups of blessing. If each one of the cups is not attached to one of the blessings praising God on Seder night – the first cup to Kiddush, the second to the blessing after the story of the Exodus, the third to Birkat Hamazon and the fourth to Hallel – they are not four cups of blessing, and he has not fulfilled the mitzvah of the Four Cups.

What does the Rambam say about one who drank four cups one after the other?

**13. Rambam, Mishnah Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9 – Someone who drinks four consecutive cups.**

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

שָׁתָה אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת מְּזוּגִין  
בְּבֵת אֶחָת - יֵצֵא יָדֵי חֵירוֹת,  
וְלֹא יֵצֵא יָדֵי אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת.

As explained above, the Rambam holds that there is an independent component of the mitzvah of Four Cups: **to drink four cups of wine on the Seder night in order to express our freedom**. If someone drank four cups of wine one after the other, but did not attach each of them to the appropriate blessing, he succeeded in fulfilling the “freedom” component but has not fulfilled the “cups of blessing” component.

[Note: Some suggest that the actual text of the Gemara (in Source 10) that the Rambam saw was different than that of the Tosafot. According to the Rambam's text, instead of “he fulfills the requirement of ‘**wine**,’” it said “he fulfills the requirement of ‘**freedom**.’” In other words, there might be a textual base for the dispute between the Rambam and Tosafot.]

In contrast with the Rambam's approach, Tosafot holds (as we saw above in Source 11) that drinking four cups in a row merely fulfills the mitzvah of being joyous on the holiday of Pesach, but has accomplished nothing at all in connection with the Four Cups. The Four Cups are “cups of blessing.” They only have meaning when connected with the four readings and blessings of Seder Night.

Let us summarize what we have learned about Tosafot's and the Rambam's positions:

	Tosafot	Rambam
<b>How is the mitzvah of the Four Cups defined?</b>	Have four "cups of blessing" attached to four mitzvot of the Seder night.	Have four "cups of blessing" and drink four cups of wine to express our freedom.

### CASE

<b>Who needs to drink the Four Cups: the household head or each person?</b>	All might be able to fulfill their obligation through the head of the household.	Each individual must drink.
<b>What have you accomplished if you drink four cups consecutively?</b>	Rejoicing on the holiday.	Drinking four cups to express our freedom.

### KEY THEMES OF SECTION II

- The Gemara states that drinking four cups of wine one after the other is only a partial fulfillment of the mitzvah.
- Tosafot and the Rambam differ about what is accomplished by drinking four cups in a row, and what was is not.
- Tosafot maintains that by drinking four consecutive cups, one fulfills the general mitzvah of being joyous on the holiday. This is because the Four Cups are understood to be **exclusively** four "cups of blessing." The first cup is over Kiddush, the second Haggadah, the third Birkat Hamazon, and the fourth Hallel. Disconnected from their appropriate blessing and mitzvot, the cups of wine do not fulfill the mitzvah of the Four Cups at all.
- The Rambam, on the other hand, holds that there are **two** aspects to the mitzvah of the Four Cups: a. Drinking four cups to express our freedom (*derech cheirut*); and b. Organizing the Seder over four "cups of blessing." One who drinks four cups in a row fulfills the mitzvah of expressing freedom (aspect a.), but has not had four "cups of blessing" (aspect b.).



### 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?

According to the Brisker Rav, the question revolves around a textual and practical difference between the approach of Tosafot and the Rambam. They differ in their explanation of the Talmudic passage dealing with how much wine must be drunk for the Four Cups.

#### 14. Pesachim 108b – Can you give out wine to other family members?

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.

הַשָּׂקָה מֵהוּן לְבָנָיו וְלִבְנֵי בֵּיתוֹ יֵצֵא:  
אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן בֶּר יִצְחָק וְהוּא  
דְּאִשְׁתֵּי רוּבָא דְקַסָּא.

The simplest way to understand the words of the Gemara seems to be the Rambam's:

#### 15. Rambam, Mishneh Torah Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9 – How much must you drink from each cup?

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

וְאִם שָׁתָה מִכָּל כּוּס מֵהוּן רַבּוֹ,  
יֵצֵא.

According to the Rambam, Howie Rappaport must drink over four and a half ounces of wine – the majority of nine ounces – from each of his four cups. How much should one drink according to Tosafot?

#### 16. Tosafot Pesachim 108b “Ruba Dekasa” – How much of each cup does Tosafot hold one must drink?

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 דְקַסָּא - הֵיִינוּ כְּמֵלֵא  
לְיוֹגְמִיו ... וּמִיָּהוּ, לְכִתְחֻלָּה צָרִיד  
לְשִׁתוֹת רַבִּיעִית.

Tosafot understands that when the Talmud refers to the majority of the cup, it means the majority of a standard cup containing a *revi'it* – 3 ounces (according to

the majority view; see Source 4 above), which is also referred to as a “cheekful.”

Thus, we find that the Rambam and Tosafot differ as to how much wine must be drunk from each of the four cups. According to the Rambam one must drink the **majority of the cup's contents** – however large that particular cup is. But according to Tosafot a **cheekful must be drunk**.

What is the conceptual basis of this difference of opinion and these two different readings of the expression “*rubā dekasa*” (majority of the cup) in the Talmud? The Brisker Rav, in the following passage, explains:

### 17. Chidushei Maran Riz Halevi al HaRambam, Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9 – What is behind the dispute between Tosafot and the Rambam?

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”...

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

שְׁמַעְתִּי מֵאָבִי אֲדוֹנִי מוֹרֵי וְרַבִּי  
הַגָּאֹן זָכָר צְדִיק לְבָרָכָה ... דְּסִבְרָא  
לִיָּה לְהַתּוֹסְפוֹת דְּגַם אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת  
אֵין עֵיקָר הַמִּצְוָה בְּשִׁתִּיית הַכּוֹסוֹת,  
רַק בְּהִבָּרְכוֹת שֶׁעַל הַכּוֹסוֹת וְהָיָה  
מִכֹּחַ דְּוִגְמַת קִידּוּשׁ דְּכָל הַשָּׁנָה  
וְכָל כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל בְּרָכָה ... גַּם גְּבִי  
אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת עֵיקָר שִׁיעוּר הַשִּׁתִּיָּה  
מִדִּינָא הוּא מְלֵא לְוִגְמִי כְּמוֹ גְּבִי  
כּוֹס שֶׁל קִידּוּשׁ ... וְהוּא הָדִין בְּכָל  
כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל בְּרָכָה ...

אוֹלָם הָרַמְבַּם ... סִבְרָא לִיָּה דְּרַק  
גְּבִי קִידּוּשׁ הוּא דְּהָיָה שִׁיעוּר  
טְעִימָתוֹ מְלֵא לְוִגְמִי, אֲבָל גְּבִי  
אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת בְּעֵינֵי דְּוָקָא רּוּבָא  
דְּכֶסֶא וְלֹא מְלֵא לְוִגְמִי, וְכֵן הוּא  
גַּם שִׁיטַּת הָרַמְבַּם הוֹבָאָה בְּבֵית  
יוֹסֵף וְשִׁלְחוֹ עֲרוּךְ אוֹרַח חַיִּים סִימָן  
תע"ב סְעִיף ט' דְּגַם אִם הַכּוֹס גָּדוֹל  
וּמִחֲזִיק כְּפָה רְבִיעִיּוֹת צָרִיךְ  
לְשִׁתּוֹת דְּוָקָא רּוּב הַכּוֹס.

According to Tosafot, as we have seen above, the Four Cups are no more than four standard “cups of blessing.” A “cup of blessing” need only be tasted from (the main goal is to enhance the praise of God through a cup of wine, and not to drink the contents of the cup). For purposes of tasting, a cheekful is sufficient.

But according to the Rambam there is **also** a mitzvah to drink four cups of wine, thereby expressing our freedom. This demands actually drinking four entire cups of wine, and it is not enough to merely “taste” the cup. However, based on the general principle whereby the majority of a given entity can be considered as the whole

(“*rubo kechulo*”), it is sufficient to drink the majority of a cup. This must be done, even for a goblet as large as Howie Rappaport’s.

We can now add a new row to our chart:

	Tosafot	Rambam
<b>How is the mitzvah of the Four Cups defined?</b>	Have four “cups of blessing” attached to four mitzvot of the Seder night.	Have four “cups of blessing” and drink four cups of wine to express our freedom.

### CASE

<b>Who needs to drink the Four Cups: the household head or each person?</b>	All might be able to fulfill their obligation through the head of the household.	Each individual must drink.
<b>What have you accomplished if you drink four cups consecutively?</b>	Rejoicing on the holiday.	Drinking four cups to express our freedom.
<b>How much of the cup must you drink?</b>	A cheekful.	The majority of the cup.

### KEY THEMES OF SECTION III

- We saw two approaches to the Talmudic statement requiring drinking “most of the cup.”
- The Rambam takes the statement at face value, requiring that whatever size a person’s cup is, he or she must drink most of it. If his goblet was nine ounces, he must drink at least a little more than four and a half of them. This requirement – drinking the majority of each of the Four Cups – is unique in halachah, as is the obligation to drink four cups to express our freedom.
- Tosafot, consistently understanding the Four Cups exclusively as four “cups of blessing,” understands this passage in the same light. The requirement for Seder Night’s Four Cups is identical to any other “cup of blessing” – the cup must be drunk, but there is not an actual mitzvah “to drink.” For the cup to be drunk, it is sufficient to drink a cheekful (*melo lugmav*). This is approximately the majority of a *revi’it* (see Source 4 above for the size of a *revi’it*; the majority of a *revi’it* is either 44 ml or 76 ml), though varying from person to person depending on the actual size of his cheek.

## 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?*

When the group returned to their hotel, Rabbi Yanovitz called for an impromptu shiur in the lounge. Here are the contents of his shiur:

### Four Cups of Wine

First of all, let us begin by stating that the default beverage for the Four Cups is wine. It goes back to the Mishnah we opened with:

### 18. Mishnah Pesachim 99b – How much wine do we distribute to the poor for the Seder night?

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

וְלֹא יִפְחֲתוּ לוֹ מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל  
יֵין, וְאַפְלוּ מִן הַתְּמָחַי.

At first glance, this should be an open and shut case. Wine is fermented grape juice; if it is not both made of grapes and alcoholic, it should be invalid.

**However, the picture is not so simple.** Elsewhere, a Talmudic passage explicitly sanctions grape juice for Kiddush:

### 19. Bava Batra 97b – Can you use grape juice for Kiddush?

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.

The Sages were less enthusiastic about using beverages other than wine or grape juice for Kiddush, unless wine was not available:

### 20. Pesachim 107a – Are beverages other than wine valid for Havdalah?

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.

אמר ר' ליה מר ינוקא ומר קשישא בריה דרב חסדא לרב אשי: זימנא חדא איקלע אממר לאתרין ולא הוה לן חמרא. אייתינא ליה שיקרא ולא אבדיל ובת טוות. למחר טרחנא ואיתינא ליה חמרא ואבדיל וטעם מדי. לשנה, תו איקלע לאתרין לא הוה לן חמרא. אייתינא שיקרא. אמר: אי הכי חמר מדינה הוא אבדיל וטעים מדי.

Although it is not ideal, other alcoholic beverages can be used for Havdalah (and for the daytime Kiddush, both of which are rabbinic obligations); they can only be used for Shabbat night Kiddush (which is a biblical obligation) in extreme circumstances (as the Talmud proceeds to discuss).

Should the same rules apply to the Four Cups? What do you think Tosafot and the Rambam would each say – especially based on the Brisker Rav's foregoing analysis?

While the Gemara does not deal with grape juice or non-grape alcoholic beverages directly, it does discuss a related issue – drinking undiluted wine. One introductory note will help us understand the quote that opens our discussion.

Note: Diluting wine is a practice that has varied throughout history. Very few people nowadays dilute their wine before they drink it. Likewise, in biblical times, wine was not diluted (as the prophet calls out to his corrupt culture, "Your silver is full of impurities and סבאך מהול במים – your wine is diluted with water"). However, in Talmudic times, as in Greek and Roman times, wine was almost always diluted with water before drinking. There seems to have been a 180° turnabout on this issue; whereas it was then considered uncultured to drink undiluted wine, it is now considered uncultured to dilute wine. Furthermore, it is possible that during that period wine was made into an intense concentrate, and then diluted.



## 21. Pesachim 108b – What if someone drank four cups of undiluted wine?

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.

Tosafot and the Rambam, each one loyal to his conceptual side of the dispute, interpret the passage differently. Tosafot views the rule as identical to that of every other "cup of blessing."

## 22. Tosafot Pesachim 108b "*Sheta'an Chai Yatza*" – How crucial is it to dilute wine with water?

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:). אמרין הכל מודים בכוס  
של ברכה שאין מברכין עליו  
עד שיתן לתוכו מים.

According to Tosafot undiluted wine is non-ideal. Because the Four Cups are, essentially, four *kosot shel brachah*, "cups of blessing," the requirement of watering down the wine is ideal, but **non-essential**. The Talmud, according to Tosafot, refers to ideally diluted wine as "freedom." The ideal wine is the well-diluted wine that a free person would drink.

The Rambam once again differs. His approach is consistent for all three related halachot: using undiluted wine, drinking four cups at once, and drinking the majority of each cup.

## 23. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9 – The Rambam's approach to undiluted wine is consistent with his other rulings.

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 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

ארבעה כוסות האלו--צרידי  
למזג אותן, כדי שתהיה שתיה  
ערבה: הכל לפי היין, ולפי  
דעת השותה; ולא יפחת  
בארבעתן מרביעית יין חי.  
שתה ארבעה כוסות אלו מין  
שאינו מזוג--יצא ידי ארבעה  
כוסות, ולא יצא ידי חרות;  
שתה ארבעה כוסות מזוגין  
בבת אחת--יצא ידי חרות,

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.

וְלֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת.  
וְאִם שָׁתָה מִכָּל כּוֹס מֵהֶן רַבּוֹ,  
יֵצֵא.

The Brisker Rav explains that according to the Rambam, there is a special rule that the Four Cups require a well-diluted cup of wine. Remember, according to the Rambam there is a mitzvah to express our status as free men by **drinking** four cups. If they are not the well-diluted cups befitting free men, the *cheirut* aspect of the mitzvah has not been fulfilled. However, with regards to the other aspect of the mitzvah – that the Four Cups be four “cups of blessing” – watering down the wine is only ideal, but not essential. Thus, somebody who does not dilute his wine fulfills the mitzvah of “Four Cups” but not that of “Freedom.”

The Rambam's positions are consistent. The mitzvah of drinking four cups of free men's wine requires that they be well-diluted and that he drink the majority of each of the cups. The mitzvah that they should be four “cups of blessing” requires that they should not be just drunk consecutively, but spread over the four blessings and readings of the Seder Night.

The Brisker Rav is unsure about the status of alcoholic beverages other than wine for the Seder Night.

#### 24. Chidushei Maran Riz Halevi al HaRambam, Hilchot Chametz Umatzah 7:9 – What would Tosafot and the Rambam posit about other alcoholic beverages?

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 הִיא אֲפִשֶׁר לומר דאף על  
גב דאמרין בפסחים דף ק"ז דגם  
חמר מדינה כשר להבדלה, וממילא  
דהוא הדין בכל כוסות של ברכה,  
אבל כל זה רק לענין דין כוס של  
ברכה, דגם חמר מדינה מקרי כוס.  
אבל בליל פסח, דעיקר המצוה היא  
בשתיית יין דרך חרות וכמו שהבאנו  
מלשון הרמב"ם דכל אחד ואחד  
חייב לשתיית בלילה הזה ארבעה  
כוסות של יין, ובזה יש לומר  
שהמצוה היא יין דוקא. דלענין  
מצות השתייה לא משפחין דחמר  
מדינה יהא נחשב כיון לענין זה רק  
לענין דין כוס של ברכה בלבד, והוי  
כאילו שתאן חי ...

The Rema (Orach Chaim 483:1) does permit the use of *chamar medinah* (such as honey wine or plum brandy) for the Four Cups, but it is possible (says the Brisker Rav) that that is only in the absence of wine. Drinking honey wine or plum brandy (for instance) will fulfill only one aspect of the mitzvah (the aspect of “cups of blessing”), and one who does so would forfeit the other aspect of the mitzvah – drinking four cups of freedom.

**Grape Juice** (the following is based on articles by Rabbi Menachem Genack, Rabbi Chaim Jachter, and Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Weingarten)

Grape juice is only discussed by twentieth-century halachic authorities (probably because it was not marketed widely until the pasteurization process was perfected), and they seem to differ concerning its status.

It is reported that the Chazon Ish, the Tchebiner Rav, and Rav Yosef Soloveitchik, all of blessed memory, all used grape juice for the Four Cups (Rav Soloveitchik used wine for the first cup, because of the special status of Kiddush). Rav Soloveitchik actually maintained that one who does not like wine **should prefer** grape juice (so forcing himself to drink wine nowadays would be counterproductive!).

A Talmudic anecdote (Nedarim 49b) notes that the Tanna Rabbi Yehudah “had a headache until Shavuot because of the Four Cups,” which seems to indicate that one must drink specifically wine (grape juice won’t cause a headache). According to these authorities, however, the proof can be deferred, because in Talmudic times preserved grape juice around Pesach time would have been extremely hard to come by.

Yet, Rav Moshe Feinstein, of blessed memory, has been quoted as saying that grape juice is not valid for the Four Cups, and compares it to the Talmud’s *yayin chai*, undiluted wine. On the one hand, grape juice is made out of grapes, so that it can legitimately be referred to as wine. But on the other, it is not alcoholic, so that it might not have the “freedom aspect” that wine does (which, according to the Rambam, is essential, and not just ideal).

It is common custom for people – certainly for those who will find four cups of wine hard to down – to drink grape juice for the Four Cups (or to blend grape juice and wine together).

We can now summarize all the different aspects of the dispute between Tosafot and the Rambam:

	Tosafot	Rambam
<b>How is the mitzvah of the Four Cups defined?</b>	Have four “cups of blessing” attached to four mitzvot of the Seder night.	Have four “cups of blessing” <b>and</b> drink four cups of wine to express our freedom.

<b>CASE</b>	<b>Tosafot</b>	<b>Rambam</b>
<b>Who needs to drink the Four Cups: the household head or each person?</b>	All might be able to fulfill their obligation through the head of the household.	Each individual must drink.
<b>What have you accomplished if you drink four cups consecutively?</b>	Rejoicing on the holiday.	Drinking four cups to express our freedom.
<b>How much of the cup must you drink?</b>	A cheekful.	The majority of the cup.
<b>What must you drink?</b>	Even non-wine alcoholic drinks or grape juice.	Perhaps only wine.

## KEY THEMES OF SECTION II

- Tosafot and the Rambam are consistent in the positions they take concerning which beverage must be drunk for the Four Cups.
- Because the Rambam sees “drinking cups of a free man” as essential to the mitzvah of the Four Cups, undiluted wine (i.e., wine not served in its ideal state) is not valid for this aspect of the mitzvah.
- Tosafot, on the other hand, understands the Four Cups exclusively as four “cups of blessing,” and therefore diluting wine is only ideal, but not essential (just as for other “cups of blessing”).
- The Brisker Rav speculates that Tosafot and the Rambam might also differ concerning non-wine alcoholic drinks, the Rambam treating them like undiluted wine, which is valid as “cups of blessing” (except, perhaps for the nighttime Kiddush, which is a biblical obligation) but not as drinks of free men. Tosafot, on the other hand, would treat the Four Cups as identical to other “cups of blessing” and consider non-wine alcoholic drinks only as non-ideal.
- Using grape juice for the Four Cups is debated in contemporary halachic literature. Some say that it lacks the “freedom” aspect of the Four Cups that alcoholic wine has. However, grape juice is perhaps preferable for someone who does not like wine but does like grape juice, and many have the custom of using it for the Four Cups.

## HALACHIC CONCLUSIONS

We have seen how a conceptual dispute between the Rambam and Tosafot played itself out in a number of areas. The basic dispute relates to the definition of the mitzvah of Four Cups: Are these only four “cups of blessings” (Tosafot), or do they include an added element of expressing our status as free men (Rambam)?

The Tosafot's and Rambam's differing viewpoints affect out how they rule about **who** must drink the cups, **how** the cups must be drunk (spread out over Seder Night or four in a row), **how much** must be drunk (a cheekful or most of the cup), and **what** must be drunk (is alcoholic wine essential?). We now present the halachic conclusions from classic and contemporary halachic works.

### Halachic Conclusions

#### WHO DRINKS THE FOUR CUPS?

##### 25. Shulchan Aruch 472:14-15 – Women and children are also obligated to drink the Four Cups.

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) גם הנשים חייבות בארבע כוסות ובכל מצות הנוהגות באותו לילה:

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) תינוקות ששהגיעו לחינוך מצוה ליתן לכל אחד כוס לפניו:

This ruling of the Shulchan Aruch appears to follow the Rambam's approach, namely that each person must drink the four cups. The Shulchan Aruch Harav (Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, Lithuania 1745-1812) makes this crystal clear when he formulates the halachah.

##### 26. Shulchan Aruch Harav 472:22 – Every individual must drink the four cups, not just the one running the Seder.

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 בני הבית שהן שומעין הקדוש וההגדה מבצל הבית אף על פי כן חייב כל אחד ואחד לשתות ד' כוסות דרך חירות:

The Shulchan Aruch Harav thus spells out that we follow the Rambam's approach. It follows that each family member should be allocated four cups of wine, even when distributing to the poor. The approach that only one person drinks on behalf of the household (attributed by the Brisker Rav to Tosafot) is not preserved in normative halachah.



## 27. Haseder Ha'aruch 41:3 – How much wine must be distributed to a poor family?

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 לְעָנִי יַיִן לְד' כּוֹסוֹת, רָאוּי לִיתֵּן לוֹ יַיִן גַּם לְבְנֵי בֵּיתוֹ, שֶׁכֵּן אֵין הֵם יּוֹצְאִים יְדֵי חוּבָה בְּשִׁתְּתוֹ שֶׁל בֶּעַל הַבַּיִת.

## DRINKING FOUR CUPS CONSECUTIVELY

The Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 108b issues a clear ruling concerning drinking four cups of wine in a row. This is codified by the Shulchan Aruch:

## 28. Shulchan Aruch 472:8 – Can one drink four cups in a row and fulfill his obligation?

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 שְׁלֹא כְּסֵדֶר לֹא יֵצֵא:

This does not mean that the Shulchan Aruch has broken with the Rambam's approach. As we explained in Section I above, the Rambam agrees that the Four Cups must also be four "cups of blessing."

## HOW MUCH WINE IS DRUNK FOR EACH CUP?

## 29. Shulchan Aruch 472:9 – How much wine must one drink?

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 לְאַחֵר שִׁימְזִגְנוּ (אִם רָצָה לְמַזְגוֹ). וַיִּשְׁתֶּה כּוֹלוֹ אוֹ רּוּבּוֹ. וְאִם יֵשׁ בּוֹ הֶרְבֵּה רְבִיעִיּוֹת שׁוֹתִין מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל כֶּה בְּנֵי אָדָם כְּמִנְיֵן רְבִיעִיּוֹת שָׁבוּ. וַיֵּשׂ אוֹמְרִים שְׁצָרִיךְ לְשִׁתּוֹת רּוּב הַכּוֹס אֲפִילוֹ מִחֲזִיק כְּמָה רְבִיעִיּוֹת ....

This ruling of the Shulchan Aruch is once again in line with the Rambam's approach presented in Section III. Namely, the mitzvah to drink Four Cups on Seder night entails drinking most of those cups on a literal level. This goes beyond the requirement of a regular "cup of blessing," which is to taste of the cup by drinking a cheekful.

The Mishnah Berurah (472:33) writes that most later authorities rule according to the first opinion cited by the Shulchan Aruch – meaning that one need not drink the majority of a large cup that holds much more than the required measure. Yet, he advises fulfilling the second approach (drinking the majority of whatever cup he uses) by making sure the size of the cup a person uses corresponds with his wine-drinking abilities.

The Shulchan Aruch's rulings are not inconsistent, because he does preserve the approach (“some say”) of seeing the Four Cups as a unique obligation, with requirements that go beyond the standard cups of blessing.

## WHAT ABOUT DRINKING GRAPE JUICE?

### 30. Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Weingarten, Haseder Ha'aruch 14:7 – Can one use grape juice for the Four Cups?

7. One who finds it difficult to drink wine can fulfill his obligation of the Four Cups by means of grape juice, and it is preferable to raisin wine and cooked wine...

ז. מי שקשה לו לשתות יין, יוצא ידי חובת ארבע כוסות במיץ ענבים, והוא עדיף מין צמוקים או מין שנתבשל...

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.

ח. לכתחלה יש לטרוח להשיג יין שיש בו אלוהול, לפי שהוא “משמח לבב אנוש” (על פי תהלים קד:טו), ולד' כוסות צריך לשתות יין המשמח.

In footnote 12, Rabbi Weingarten quotes the various authorities who take the approach of permitting the use of grape juice. These include Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef zt”l and the Chazon Ish zt”l. The rationale is straightforward: In order to fulfill the “*derech cheirut*” (drinking in the manner of free men) aspect of the Four Cups, the drink must be pleasurable, not a difficult struggle. However, there are those who object (Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l is the most prominent authority in this camp), and, for one who does drink wine, wine with alcohol content is preferable.

[Rabbi Yisrael Belsky writes in Shulchan Halevi Vol. I, 13:4, that even wine with an alcohol content of as low as 3.5% (one-quarter of wine's standard 13-14% alcohol content) is still considered sufficiently strong and could be used without hesitation. However, someone for whom light wine is no more than juice should use wine with a higher alcohol content, as befitting his taste.

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## AFTERWORD: 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 – What do the Four Cups hint at?

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 Babylon is in God’s hand” (Yirmiyahu 51:7); “For there is a cup in God’s hand” (Tehillim 75:9); “And he will rain fire and sulfur on the evildoers...” (Tehillim 11:6).

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).

מִנֵּיין לְאַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת?

רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בְּשֵׁם ר' ר' בְּנִיָּה כְּנָגֵד  
אַרְבַּע גְּאוּלוֹת: “לָכֵן אָמַר לְבְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי ה' וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם  
... וְלִקְחָתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם...”  
(שְׁמוֹת ו:ו-ז) וְהוֹצֵאתִי וְהַצֵּלְתִּי  
וְגֵאֵלְתִּי וְלִקְחָתִי.

רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻעַ בֶּן לֵוִי אָמַר כְּנָגֵד  
אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל פַּרְעֹה:  
“וְכֹס פַּרְעֹה בְיָדִי ... וְאֶשְׁחַט  
אֹתָם אֶל כּוֹס פַּרְעֹה ... וְאֶתֵּן  
אֶת הַכּוֹס עַל כַּף פַּרְעֹה ... וְנִתְּתָה  
כּוֹס פַּרְעֹה בְיָדוֹ ...” (בְּרֵאשִׁית  
מ:יא-יב)

רַבִּי לֵוִי אָמַר כְּנָגֵד אַרְבָּעָה  
מַלְכוּתוֹת.

וְרַבָּנִן אָמְרֵי כְּנָגֵד ד' כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל  
פְּרָעֻנוֹת שֶׁהִקְדֹּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
עֲתִיד לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת אוֹמוֹת  
הָעוֹלָם: “כִּי כֹה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹהֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲלֵי קַח אֶת כּוֹס הַיַּיִן  
הַחֲמָה ...” (יִרְמְיָה כה:טו),  
“כּוֹס זָהָב בְּכֵל בְּיַד ה'...”  
(יִרְמְיָה נא:ז), “כִּי כּוֹס בְּיַד ה'  
...” (תְּהִלִּים עה:ט), “יִמָּטֵר  
עַל רָשָׁעִים פָּחִים אֵשׁ וְגִפְרִית  
[וְרוּחַ זֵלַעְפוֹת מִנֵּת כּוֹסִים]  
(תְּהִלִּים יא:ו).

וְכִנְגֵּדן עֲתִיד הַקֹּב“ה לְהַשְׁקוֹת  
אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבָּעָה כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל  
נַחֲמוֹת: “ה' מִנֵּת חֶלְקִי וְכֹסִי”  
(תְּהִלִּים טז:ה), “דִּשְׁנוֹתָ בְּשֶׁמֶן  
רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רוּחַ” (תְּהִלִּים  
כג:ה), וְהִדִּין “כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת  
אֲשָׁא” (תְּהִלִּים קטז:יג) תִּרְיִין.

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?**

The four stages of the redemption (Rabbi Yochanan): This reference is the most direct of the four. The Seder night commemorates the Exodus from Egypt, and drinking the Four Cups highlights the four-part process of redemption – physically leaving Egypt, salvation from the Egyptian army, spiritual redemption from Egypt, and, finally, becoming God's nation.

The four cups of Pharaoh in the butler's dream (Rabbi Yehoshua son of Levi): Yosef's redemption from Egyptian prison was a paradigm for the Jewish redemption from Egypt. It was Yosef's interpretation of the butler's dream and the butler's subsequent release that finally brought about Yosef's own release from prison. Thus, this reference also symbolizes freedom from captivity.

The four kingdoms that subjugated Israel (Rabbi Levi): The Egyptian exile was a precursor to four other major exiles in Jewish history (Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman). The message of the four cups is that just as we were redeemed from Egypt, so we will be redeemed from our present, seemingly endless exile.

The four cups of punishment and the four cups of consolation (the Sages): The message of the Four Cups is that there will ultimately be true justice. History's evil will not go unpunished, and Israel will eventually be consoled for its stormy and tragic history.

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

These four approaches really form two groups:

A. Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Yehoshua son of Levi focus on the redemption from Egypt (the Pnei Moshe points out that according to the Midrash, Yosef's interpretation of the butler's dream prophetically alluded to the redemption of the Jews from Egypt); whereas

B. Rabbi Levi and the Rabbis focus on the present state of exile and the future redemption.

Based on these allusions, associations, and hints, the Four Cups are similar to the aspect of Matzah emphasized in our Haggadah (the Hagaddah cites Rabban Gamliel: "Why do we eat Matzah? Because we left Egypt so suddenly, and thus there was not even time for our dough to rise"). Like Matzah, the Cups are a symbol of the redemption. Following the biblical lead of Matzah and the Pesach sacrifice, the Four Cups are a rabbinic expansion, publicizing the miracle of the redemption in a very specific way. They tell us that the redemption was a four-step process, that it had its roots in the Yosef story, and that the redemption from Egypt ought to inspire our belief in the final redemption from exile.

This final and ultimate redemption is hinted at in the fifth cup, which is poured but not drunk, prepared but not yet consumed: the cup of Eliyahu the Prophet.

## CLASS SUMMARY

### **Why do we drink four cups of wine on Passover night?**

One of the rabbinic mitzvot of the Seder night is the Four Cups. According to the Talmud Yerushalmi, these Four Cups are laden with significance, reminding us, among other things, of the four stages of the Exodus, and of the future redemption. The Four Cups also give an expression of our liberty (the Rambam emphasizes this aspect of the Four Cups as being a vehicle for being joyous on the holiday).

### **What is the relationship between the Four Cups and the rest of what we do on the Seder night?**

According to both the Rambam and Tosafot, the Four Cups function as four “cups of blessing.” The Talmudic concept of a “cup of blessing,” a *kos shel brachah*, is a way of enhancing our praises to God, giving them special importance by raising our glasses as we call out God’s greatness. Some say that the concept of a “cup of blessing” was inspired by the Levites’ songs, which they sang during the wine libations on the Temple altar. Similarly, we hold a cup of wine as we sing out to God, then drink of it. On Seder Night four blessings and readings – Kiddush, Haggadah, Birkat Hamazon, and Hallel – are all accompanied by a cup of wine.

### **Who must drink the cups?**

Rambam clearly states that every individual must drink four cups. Tosafot, however, raise the possibility that the entire family can fulfill the mitzvah with one set of Four Cups. The Brisker Rav explains that this divergence is in line with their two different views of the nature of the Four Cups. The Rambam asserts that there is a mitzvah to drink four cups as an expression of our freedom, and this applies to all attendants at the Seder. Tosafot, however, maintain that the Four Cups are exclusively four “cups of blessing.” Just as on a normal Shabbat, when only one cup of Kiddush is required for the entire family, and one cup is likewise sufficient after Birkat Hamazon or at a wedding, so too one cup suffices for Seder Night. In practice, we rule that each individual must drink all four cups. (Someone with medical issues should consult with his/her rabbi).

### **How much must be drunk?**

Tosafot clearly say that one must only drink a cheekful of wine, and the rules here are identical with those of other “cups of blessing,” such as the cup of Kiddush and of Birkat Hamazon. The Shulchan Aruch cites this opinion, but also includes the approach that requires drinking the majority of whatever cup one has before him. The Mishnah Berurah advises the use of a cup small enough to enable its drinker to drink the majority of all four cups.



### Can you fulfill your obligation by drinking four cups of grape juice?

A significant group of contemporary halachic authorities say that one who finds it difficult to drink wine can use grape juice instead. This will preserve, for such a person, the “freedom” aspect of the Four Cups, as he drinks a grape beverage he enjoys. However, actual wine is ideal for those that can drink it, for wine enhances the joy of the holiday, and some authorities see it as the fullest expression of freedom.

#### RECOMMENDED 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)