

# ONEG SHABBAS

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## Libationless in Leviticus?

Rabbi Drew Kaplan

As we have begun the book of Leviticus in our Torah-readings, I have been sharing with people in recent weeks that it is difficult to find drinking or drink references in the book of Leviticus. Several times, people have responded to me, "With all of the offerings being discussed, aren't there plenty of libations taking place?" Actually, there are not.

Yes, it is true there are a lot of offerings made throughout the book of Leviticus and certainly our Torah portion, yet there are almost no libations mentioned. While libations are mentioned a few times in chapter 23 of Leviticus (sheaf of the firstfruits to be waved (23:13), Shavuot (23:18), as well as a general mention of libations (23:37)), there are no other libations mentioned throughout the entirety of the rest of the book. *Almost* libationless in Leviticus.

As a perfect example of this phenomenon, we can turn to this week's Torah portion, which is pretty similar to last week's Torah portion, in that they both discuss a variety of offerings, with nary a mention of any libations. Libationless.

While we can speculate as to the absence of libations in the early part of Leviticus, despite their receiving plentiful amounts of discussion in the book of Numbers, perhaps it's simply enough for us to consider these sacrifices without the context of libations. Either way, these are certainly dry Torah portions, leading up to our next Torah portion, in which the kohanim are forbidden from drinking on the job.

L'chaim 🍷



## How Much Wine to Drink for the 4 Cups?

Rabbi Drew Kaplan

With a four-cup minimum to drink of wine at the Passover Seder, how much is necessary for each cup?

### Quantity of Wine to be Poured Into Each Cup

When it comes to pouring the wine, there must be a minimum of a quarter-log, as we read in an early rabbinic text (*Pesachim* 108b). This amount to be filled in the cups is regarded unquestionably throughout the remainder of Jewish history, including being codified as such in the Set Table (ש"ע או"ח תע"ב:ט) of Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575).

While there is no disagreement about the minimum size of how much wine to pour for each of these four cups of wine, there is a range of contemporary opinions as to exactly how many ounces there are for a quarter-log, ranging from a few ounces up to several ounces (Halachipedia.org):

- Rabbi Mordechai Willig holds that a Revi'it is 2.5 fl oz (75cc).
- Rav Ovadia Yosef writes that a Revi'it is 2.7 fl oz (81cc).
- Rabbi Avraham Blumenkrantz writes that a Revi'it is 2.9 fl oz (86cc).
- Rabbi Shimon Eider writes that according to his measurements, the Revi'it is 3.0 fl oz (89cc).
- Rabbi Dovid Feinstein (Kol Dodi Haggadah, 5730, p. 4) writes that based on measuring large eggs, which should be used for the four cups, a Revi'it is 3.3 fl oz (98cc).
- Rav Yisrael Belsky recommended having a Revi'it of 4.3 fl oz (127cc).
- Rav Chaim Kanievsky writes that according to the rulings of the Chazon Ish, a Revi'it is 5.1 fl oz (150cc).

Elsewhere on the same website, one also reads: "Rav Chaim Noeh holds that the Reviyit is 86 grams (3 oz), the Chazon Ish holds that the Reviyit is 150 grams (5.3 oz), and some quote Rav Moshe as saying the Revi'it is 3.3 oz." Please consult your local rabbi on what the minimum measurement to use (or just pour more than 5 ounces per cup at the seder to be on the safe side (you know, to be careful 😊)).

### Quantity of Wine to be Drunk From Each Cup

Despite the stated amount above, however, that amount is not necessarily the amount to be drunk, as we read on the same page in the Talmud (ibid.):

Rav Yehudah said: "Shmuel said: 'These four cups must contain enough for diluting a significant cup.	אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: ארבעה כוסות הללו צריך שיהא בהן כדי מציגת כוס יפה.
[If] one drank them undiluted, [he has] fulfilled [his obligation].	שיתאן חי - יצא.
[If] one drank them all at once, [he has] fulfilled [his obligation].	שיתאן בבית אחת - יצא.
[If] one gave his sons or the members of his household to drink from them, [he has] nevertheless] fulfilled [his obligation]."	השקה מהן לבניו ולבני ביתו - יצא.

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{4 cups-drinking from previous page}

According to Shmuel (165-257), as quoted by Rav Yehudah (220-299), the final aspect of his statement is fascinating, as it implies that one may be sharing one's wine with one's children or other people at home. Commenting on this last aspect of his quote, Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak (d. 356) qualifies it (ibid.):

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: "And this is if he drank the majority of the cup."

While one can drink a majority of the cup, Tosafot commented that, at the very least, one should drink at least a cheekful's worth of the wine; however, ideally, one should drink a minimum of a quarter-log of wine per cup (Tosafot, *Pesachim* 108b, S.V. רובא דכסא). After mentioning what Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said, as well as quoting Tosafot, Rabbi Karo mentions a few further aspects in his review of medieval positions (י"ב רובא):

And [the author of] Kol Bo wrote, if there was a large cup that had two quarter-logs in it, two can drink from it, one after the other and fulfill their obligations. And here is the language of Rabbi Aaron ben Jacob ha-Kohen (13th-14th c.): "If the cup was large in which there were two or more quarter-logs, two or more people can drink from it, according to the number of quarter-logs within the cup and fulfill their obligations, since they have drunk enough to fill their cheeks, even from a small cup that contains only one quarter-log that he gives to drink for his children and the younger members of his household. And Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (1194-1270) wrote that one needs to drink the majority of the cup, even if it contains many quarter-logs...."

He then codifies these ideas (שו"ע או"ח תע"ב):

And if there are many quarter-logs, a bunch of different people can drink from it according to the number of quarter-logs there are in the cup. And there are some who say that one needs to drink a majority of the cup, even if it contains many quarter-logs.

### Quantity of Time to Drink the Wine in Each Cup

Another matter of measurement for these cups of wine is the amount of time it takes to drink a cup. Is it an entire cup if there is too much time that passes from the beginning of one's drinking of a cup and completing it? Rabbi Eleazar of Worms (1176-1238) thought so, bringing up a concern about delaying the completion of drinking of each cup that it would not be in fulfillment of the requirement to consume these cups of wine, as quoted by Rabbi Karo (בית יוסף או"ח תע"ב). This then leads to Rabbi Moshe Isserles (1530-1572) (popularly known as the Rema) writing (מפה לשו"ע או"ח תע"ב):

One needs to drink the amount of wine (whether a quarter-log or a majority of a quarter-log) without a big delay between sips.

This then causes Rabbi Abraham Abele Gombiner (1635-1682) (popularly known as the author of the Magen Avraham) to write (גן אברהם או"ח תע"ב):

...It seems to me that if one delayed more than the amount of time it takes to eat a half-loaf of bread (about 3-5 minutes), one has not fulfilled one's obligation of drinking that cup of wine, even ex post facto, and one needs to repeat and drink, even for the latter cups. And, if one delayed in drinking enough for a quarter-log, then, it would be questionable with the first two cups, then one should repeat and drink.... Ideally, one should drink a majority of a quarter-log in one gulp....

וני"ל דאם שהא יותר מאכילת פרס אפי' בדיעבד לא יצא ... וצריך לחזור ולשתות אפילו בכוסות אחרונות ואם שהה כדי שתית רביעית א"כ הוי ספיקא בשני כוסות ראשונות יחזור וישתה וע"ש מ"ש ס"ז בהג"ה ולכתחלה ישתה רוב רביעית בבת אחת

This idea of gulping down one's glass of wine is echoed by Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (1829-1908) (popularly known as the author of the *Arukh HaShulhan*), who wrote (ערוך השלחן או"ח תע"ב:י"ג):

One needs to drink the amount (whether a quarter-log or a majority of a quarter-log) in one gulp, but, at the very least, without a major interruption. And one should drink in the manner of drinking a quarter-log. Ex post facto, one has fulfilled one's obligation if they drank with an interruption/delay of up to the amount of time it takes to eat a half-loaf of bread. But if one delayed beyond this amount of time, one has not fulfilled one's obligation. If one drank it within the amount of time, one has fulfilled one's obligation.

וצריך לשתות השיעור בבת אחת, ולכל הפחות שלא בהפסק גדול. וישתה כדרך שתית רביעית. ובדיעבד יצא כשתה בהפסק עד כדי אכילת פרס. ואם שהה יותר משיעור זה – לא יצא, וצריך לשתות כוס אחר. אבל בפחות מזה – יצא

While gulping down one's wine does not seem the way of free people, a simpler take is shared by Rabbi Yisrael Meir ha-Kohen Kagan (1838-1933) (popularly known as the author of the *Chofetz Chaim*) (תע"ב:ל"ד):

Ideally, one should be careful to not delay drinking a majority of the cup more than the time it takes to drink a quarter-log

לכתחלה יש לזוהר שלא לשהות בשתיית רוב הכוס יותר מכדי שתית רביעית

Of course, the question is how long does that take? Perhaps Rabbi Kagan meant that one should not delay it with such effort or show a lackadaisical approach to wine-drinking on Seder night, since it is an important aspect of the Seder.

### Considering Ourselves as If We Have Departed Egypt

I am a big believer in enjoying one's drinking. I also believe that, while we begin the Seder as seeing ourselves as slaves, we ultimately turn to see ourselves as if we have departed from Egypt and no longer are enslaved. We are בני חורין, freefolk. While people can certainly gulp down wine if they choose, there is also something to be said for taking a leisurely approach to drinking the four cups of wine at the Seder. When we consider the typical amount of time it takes to drink a few ounces of wine, how long does it normally take? Perhaps one way of considering this aspect is take one's time, enjoy the glasses of wine, and appreciate the freedom to do so, as we are not enslaved. Conversely, if we take too much time to do so, there is also a concern that it does not seem to be part of the same experience in one cup.

### Conclusion

When considering how much of wine to drink for the [minimum] four cups of wine at the Seder, our tradition has us beginning with several ounces of wine in our cups and drinking a majority of it within the time it takes to drink that wine (how much time that is requires a separate discussion).

L'chaim 