



4 CUPS SEDER SUPPLEMENT



The 2026 4 Cups Seder Supplement features essays on the Four Cups of Wine for the Passover Seder.

Who Drinks the Four Cups?

While the fair assumption for who is involved in consuming the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder would be simply men, what about women and children?



Children Drinking Wine?

There is actually a very clear early text including them (*Pesahim* 108b):

All are obligated in these four cups, including men, women, and children.

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How Much Wine for the Four Cups?

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 (*Pesahim* 108b):

These four cups must contain one quarter[-log], whether [the wine] is undiluted or diluted, whether it is new or aged.

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 ('שורע או"ח תע"ב:ט) of Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575).

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Which Wine to Drink for the 4 Cups?

When it comes to drinking four cups at the Passover Seder, wine is the expected beverage to be drunk for these four cups. Do all wines count?

Talmudic Statements on Wine for the Four Cups

There is a second century text that is accepting of all wines (*Pesahim* 108b):

These four cups must contain one quarter-log, whether the wine is undiluted or diluted, whether it is new or aged.

Thereupon, Rabbi Yehudah (2nd century) argues against this very open and welcoming position, restricting what one can use (*ibid.*):

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How Quickly to Drink the Four Cups?

A follow-up column on how much wine to drink from each of the four cups (see the essay above), there is another aspect to consider related to how much wine to drink - that of how quickly to drink the minimum amount of wine.

Medieval Introduction of Consideration of Limiting

The notion of an upper limit of how much time it takes to drink each of the four cups of wine was introduced in the early 13th century. Rabbi Eleazar of Worms (1176-1238) was the first to introduce 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 Yosef Karo (1488-1575) (בית יוסף או"ח תע"ב):



Rabbi Eleazar of Worms wrote in §283 "the Tosefta states: 'One who drank them in פוסין has not fulfilled [one's obligation]', explaining that one who delays a long time between them [has not fulfilled one's obligation]."

כתב הרוקח בסימן רפ"ג בתוספתא שתאן בפוסין לא יצא פי' ששהה שעה גדולה ביניהם

While this statement does not appear in the Tosefta, perhaps it may have been in a version of the Talmud Yerushalmi, which states (*yShekalim* 3:2):



May one drink them with interruptions? They said that he should drink to feel differently, not that he should get drunk. If he drinks them with interruptions, he will not become drunk.

מהו לשותותן בפסקין. כלום אקרו שישתנו לו כדי שישתנה ולא ישתכר. אם שתה בפסקין אף הוא אינו משתכר

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These essays originally appeared in *Oneg Shabbas*, a weekly publication exploring drinking in the weekly Torah portion, along with timely essays on drinking in Jewish life. An archive is available at JewishDrinking.com/Parashah-Sheets.

Drinking Between the 4 Cups?

Between the Cups in Rabbinic Literature

When we think of the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder, we typically think of just that: four cups of wine. However, even the Mishnah mentions that these four cups are a minimum (*Mishnah Pesachim* 10:1):

...and [the poorest Jews shall be provided] no fewer than four cups of wine [for the Passover Seder], even from the public communal funds.

ולא יפחתו לו מארבע כוסות של יין, ואפלו מן התמחוי

In fact, later in that same chapter, we read (*Mishnah Pesachim* 10:7): If one wants to drink between these cups, one may drink, but not between the third and fourth cups.

בין הכוסות הללו, אם רוצה לשתות, ושתה. בין שלישי לרביעי, לא ישתה

Clearly, there's the understanding that both before the meal and during the meal, one may drink further glasses of wine beyond the minimum four glasses of wine, but not between the third and fourth glasses.



While the Babylonian Talmud does not address this line in the Mishnah, the Yerushalmi does (*Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim* 10:6):

Why? So that he should not get drunk. Is he not already drunk? What is the difference between wine with the meal and wine after the meal? Wine after the meal intoxicates, wine with the meal does not intoxicate.

למה. בשביל שלא ישתכר. כבר משוכר הוא. מה בין יין שבתוך המזון ומה בין יין שלאחר המזון. יין שלאחר המזון משכר. שבתוך המזון אינו משכר

This is a helpful understanding between those first two gaps as opposed to this final gap between the third and fourth cups - the concern is getting drunk. Of course, it is not quite clear as to what is problematic about getting drunk at this moment: is it a concern for simply getting drunk, is it a concern for not being able to carry out one's full liturgical duties for the fourth cup, or perhaps something else?



Between the 2nd & 3rd Cups in Post-Talmudic Literature

Throughout Jewish tradition, the greatest leeway for drinking between cups would be that of the gap between the second and third cups; after all, this is the meal. Not only is drinking a common activity amidst meals, but the eating helps absorb one's drinking, so it is perceived as less of a concern. Nevertheless, Rabbi Moses Isserles (1530-1572), basing himself off of what Rabbi Yaakov ben Moshe Levi Moelin (1365-1427) (popularly known as the Mahariel) wrote (*Mefeh* לשו"ע או"ח תע"ז:א):

One should neither eat more than sufficiently, nor drink more than appropriately, so that one should not eat the afikoman with coarse eating or even to get drunk and sleep immediately.

ולא יאכל ולא ישתה הרבה יותר מדיא שלא יאכל האפיקומן על אכילה גסה או ישתכר וישן מיד

As Rabbi Isserles expresses, the concern with heavy drinking amidst the meal is causing one to get drunk, which would cause sleep, which would get in the way of fulfilling one's duties for the post-meal blessings and liturgical aspects.

Between the 3rd & 4th Cups in Post-Talmudic Literature

While the Mishnah clearly stated that there was a proscription against drinking between the third and fourth cups, Rabbi Isserles references a few medieval rabbinic authorities, including Rabbi Moelin, that while this proscription remains intact, maybe this third cup is not as fixed as one would expect (*Mefeh* לשו"ע או"ח תע"ט:א):

However, one is able to drink many times from the third cup and all of it is considered as one drinking, even though one interrupts between these drinkings.

מיהו מכוס שלישי יכול לשתות כמה פעמים והכל מחשב שתייה אחת אע"ג הדפסיק בנתיים



This is certainly an interesting loophole to continue one's drinking of the third cup(!), even though one is not supposed to drink between the third and fourth cups. Commenting on this statement, Rabbi Abraham Gombiner (1633-1683) wrote (מגן אברהם או"ח תע"ט:א, ד"ה כמה פעמים):

When one had their mind to do so at the time of their blessing.

Commenting upon that, Rabbi Jacob ben Joseph Reischer (1661-1733) commented (חוק יעקב או"ח תע"ט, ד"ה יכול לשתות כמה פעמים):

And, by default, when one recites a blessing over the cup, one's intention is upon all of it. However, if the cup is large and holds a great amount, one should not drink much from it, so that one does not become intoxicated.



A different approach to what Rabbi Isserles wrote is described by Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan (1838-1933) (popularly known as the Chofetz Chaim) who wrote (ביאור הלכה תע"ט:א):

What Rabbi Moshe Isserles wrote that everything is considered as one drinking means to say even if there was still a quarter-log remaining [in one's cup]. But this requires further inquiry.

ומש"כ הרמ"א והכל מחשב שתייה אחת ר"ל אפי' היה בהנשאר שיעור רביעיית וצ"ע

Rabbi Kagan is not really sure how to consider this: can one continue to keep cup three rolling? Perhaps, it would seem, albeit inconclusively.



Between the 1st & 2nd Cups in Post-Talmudic Literature

Perhaps the most curious discussions concern drinking between the first two cups; after all, they should be totally in the clear for drinking, right? Well, not according to Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575), who wrote (*שו"ע* או"ח תע"ג:ג):

If one wants to drink many cups, he has permission to do so. Nevertheless, it's not appropriate to drink between the first and second cups, if there's no great need, so that he won't get drunk and be prevented from performing the Seder and the reading of the Hagada.

אם ירצה לשתות כמה כוסות הרשוי בידו ומ"מ ראו ליוזרה שלא לשתות בין ראשון לשני אם לא לצורך גדול כדי שלא ישתכר וימנע מלעשות הסדר וקריאת ההגדה

This assertion that it is not appropriate to drink between these first two cups is interesting, although he qualifies this assertion by saying "unless there is a great need" - what constitutes a great need is unclear. However, what is clear is the reasoning he provides, which is in order to not get drunk, which would prevent one from accomplishing the prime elements of the Seder, which is the whole reason for the occasion.

Seemingly pushing back on Rabbi Karo, albeit without naming him, Rabbi Yoel Sirkis (1561-1640) wrote (ב"ח, אורח חיים תע"ג:ז:א):

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{How Much Wine?, continued from page 1}



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 (*Pesahim* 108b):

Rav Yehudah said: "Shmuel said: 'These four cups must contain enough for diluting a significant cup. [If] one drank them undiluted, [he has] fulfilled [his obligation]. [If] one drank them all at once, [he has] fulfilled [his obligation]. [If] one gave his sons or the members of his household to drink from them, [he has nevertheless] fulfilled [his obligation].'"	אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: ארבעה כוסות הללו צריך שיהא בהן כדי מציגת כוס יפה. שתאן חי – יצא. שתאן גבת אחת – יצא. השקה מהן לבני ולבני ביתו – יצא.
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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."	אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק: והוא דאשתו רובא דכסא.
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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, *Pesahim* 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 (ד"ה ומי שוא"צ כולו אלא רוב

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...."

וכתב הכלבו אם היה כוס גדול שיש בו שתי רביעיות שותין בו שנים זא"ז ויוצאין זול"א"ח אם היה כוס גדול שיש בו שתי רביעיות שותין בו שנים או יותר לפי הרביעיות ויוצאין שאחר ששתה מלא לוגמיו אפ"ו מכוס קטן שאינו מחזיק אלא רביעית משקה לבני ולבני ביתו הקטנים והרמב"ן כתב שצריך לשתות רוב מכל כוס אפילו מחזיק כמה רביעיות וכן כתב מהר"ר ש"ט עכ"ל

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.

אם יש בו הרבה רביעיות שותין ממנו כל כך בני אדם כמנין רביעיו שבו ויש אומרים שצריך לשתות רוב הכוס אפילו מחזיק כמה רביעיות

Rabbi David HaLevi Segal (1586-1667) also writes on this (ט"ז, או"ח תע"ב), ד"ה כולו או רוב:

The explanation of my late father-in-law, of blessed memory (Rabbi Yoel Sirkis (1561-1640)), is that 'all of it' is required at the outset, while 'most of it' is acceptable if it already happened. And in regions where wine is expensive, even from the outset, the majority suffices.

פי' מו"ח ז"ל כולו לכתחלה או רובו בדיעבד ובמדיניות שהיין ביוקר אפ"ו לכתחלה סגי ברובו

Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan (1838-1933) also writes on this (משנה) (ברורה תע"ב:ל"ג):

Even though in general, the majority of a quarter-log is sufficient, even from a large cup, here regarding the four cups, the requirement is stricter, and specifically the majority of the cup, itself, is needed; if not, one has not fulfilled their obligation. Legally, we follow the first opinion. Nevertheless, if one does not intend to drink a large amount, they should not take a large cup, but rather one that holds exactly a quarter-log, in order to take this opinion into consideration.

אף שבעלמא די ברוב רביעית אפילו מכוס גדול הכא לענין כוסות חמיר טפי דבעינן דוקא רוב כוס ואם לאו לא יצא. ולדינא קיי"ל כדעה הראשונה. ומ"מ אם אין בדעתו לשתות הרבה לא יקח כוס גדול רק כוס שמחזיק רביעית כדי לחוש לדעה זו

The practical consideration here is to make sure that your cups/glasses for the Seder are not only large enough for you to drink the requisite amount of wine, but also not too large where it will be too much for one to drink a majority of it.



{Who Drinks? continued from page 1}

However, Rabbi Yehudah (2nd c.) immediately questions the wisdom of providing four cups of wine to children (*Pesahim* 108b-109a):

Rabbi Yehudah said: "What benefit do children receive from wine?"	אמר רבי יהודה: וכי מה תועלת יש לתינוקות?
Rather, one distributes roasted grains and nuts to them on Passover eve, so that they will not sleep and they will ask."	בין? אלא מחלקין להן קליית ואגוזין בערב פסח כדי שלא ישנו, וישאלו

Writing in his notable work, Rabbi Ya'akov ben Asher (1270-1340), nevertheless, mentioned giving children wine (טור, אורח חיים תע"ב):

Even the children - it is good to give each one his own cup placed before him. And it is a mitzvah to distribute to them roasted grains and nuts so that they will notice a change and ask questions.	וגם התינוקות טוב ליתן לכל אחד כוס לפניו ומצה לחלק להם קליית ואגוזים כדי שיראו שינוי וישאלו
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In explaining this age of children, Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575) explained (ב"י או"ח תע"ב, ד"ה ומ"ש וגם התינוקות):

...so wrote there Rabbi Asher ben Yehiel (1250-1327) (popularly known as "The Rosh") — and Rabbi Mordechai ben Hillel HaKohen (1250–1298). And the Rosh wrote in a responsum that this refers to children who have reached the age of education.	כן כתב שם הרא"ש והמרדכי וכתב הרא"ש בתשובה דהיינו בתינוקות שהגיעו לחינוך
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Subsequently, Rabbi Karo summarized this as the following practice (שו"ע תע"ב:ט):

It is a mitzvah to place a cup [of wine] in front of each child who has reached the age of education.	תינוקות שהגיעו לחינוך מצוה ליתן לכל אחד כוס לפניו
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However, the need to provide each and every child a glass of wine for four cups of wine is not necessarily universal, as Rabbi Eliyahu Spira (1660–1712) points out (ערוך השלחן או"ח תע"ב:י"ח):

Rabbi Zedekiah ben Abraham Anaw (13th century) wrote in his <i>Shibbolei HaLeket</i> ("Ears of Gleaning") that "one should drink the majority of one's cup with his children and other younger members of his house drinking from his cup a little bit, but not that everyone needs to have a cup." And similarly Rabbi David Abudarham (14th century) wrote upon this matter.	ושבלי הלקט כתב דישתה רוב הכוס ובניו ובני ביתו הקטנים שותין הימנו מעט, אבל אין צריך כוס לכל אחד ואחד וכן כתב ר' דוד אבודרהם
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What about Women?

As to women, there is a very explicit third century explication making sure they are included (*Pesahim* 108a-108b):

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: "Women are obligated in the four cups since even they were part of that miracle."	אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי נשים חייבות בארבעה כוסות הללו שאף הן היו באותו הנס
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This is a standard for his way of thinking, as he also included women in Hanukkah candle-lighting (*Shabbat* 23a) and Megillah-reading (*Megillah* 4a). Rabbi Karo quotes his statement (שו"ע תע"ב:י"ד) and it seems to have been accepted without dissent.

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{How Quickly to Drink the 4 Cups, continued from page 1}

19th Century Rabbis

A simpler take is shared by Rabbi Yisrael Meir ha-Kohen Kagan (1838-1933) (popularly known as the author of the *Chofetz Chaim*) (ת"ב (תע"ב:ב"ל):

Ideally, one should be careful to not delay the drinking of the majority of a cup in more time than it takes to drink a quarter-log.... Nevertheless, after the fact, if one delayed [too much time] amidst the latter two cups, one should not re-drink them..., but with the first two cups, one should re-drink them. Ideally, it is proper to drink the majority of a quarter-log in one gulp.

לכתחלה יש לזוהר שלא לשהות בשתיית רוב הכוס יותר מכדי שתיית רביעית לחוש לדעה ראשונה המבואר בסימן תרי"ב ע"ש ומ"מ בדיעבד אם שהה בשתי כוסות אחרונות לא יחזור וישתה וכעין המבואר לעיל בס"ז בהג"ה ע"ש. ובשתי כוסות ראשונות יחזור וישתה. ולכתחלה נכון לשתות רוב הרביעית 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. After the fact, 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 שתיית רביעית. ובדיעבד יצא כשתה בהפסק עד כדי אכילת פרס. ואם שהה יותר משיעור זה – לא יצא, וצריך לשתות כוס אחר. אבל בפחות מזה – יצא

According to 20th century measurements, the amount of time it takes to eat a half-loaf of bread is roughly 4 minutes; the amount of time it takes to drink a quarter-log is roughly a minute (halachipedia.org).

Different Rates of Drinking

How much time should one consider that it would take to drink several ounces? Is it really only a minute? Is it the amount of time one chugs it down, or is it how long it takes to drink it in the normal manner of drinking? Also: what is going on when one is delaying a long time while drinking an individual cup? Is it that one doesn't remember they are drinking wine? Also, how much does it differ from cup to cup? Another consideration is that there may be drinking really quickly, drinking in a reasonable time frame, drinking in a leisurely time frame, and then there's taking a long, casual time to drink down a full wine cup.

Conclusion

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.

L'chaim



{Who Drinks? continued from page 4}

Others?

However, women and children are not the only demographic to consider as potentially drinking or not drinking the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder, as Rabbi Karo considers (בית יוסף, אורח חיים תע"ב:ט"ו):

...Rabbi Shlomo ben Avraham ibn Aderet (1235-1310) wrote "The question of a person who does not drink wine all year long because it harms or he hates it - what should this person do; can he make the seder upon the matzah? He responded that it is logical that everyone who has wine needs to force himself [to drink wine at the Seder] and to do as Rabbi Yehudah son of Rabbi Ilai who said, 'I never taste any wine, except for that of kiddush, havdalah, and the four cups of Passover; and I tie my temples from Passover to Shavuot [in recovering from the pain]' (Nedarim 49b)..."

וצריך כל אדם לשתות ד' כוסות על הסדר שנפרש וכו' שם במשנה כתב הרשב"א שאלת מי שאינו שותה יין כל השנה כולה מפני שמזיקו או שונאו מהו שיעשה כל הסדר על הפת תשובה מסתברא שכל שיש לו יין צריך לדחוק עצמו ולעשות כר"י ב"ר אלעאי דלא הוה שתי חמרא ושתי ד' כוסות ואמר חוגרני צידעי מפסחא ועד עצרת

In quoting Rabbi ibn Aderet, he then goes on to write that one should indeed force oneself to drink wine for the four cups even if it will give this person a headache (ש"ע או"ח תע"ב:י). In providing an explanation of this, Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan (1838-1933) articulated (משנה ברורה) (תע"ב:ל"ה):

He means to say that it pains one to drink and results in a headache from this wine-drinking, but it is not within the category of causing one to be temporarily bedridden.

מפני שמזיקו - ר"ל שמצטער בשתייתו וכואב בראשו מזה ואין בכלל זה כשיפול למשכב מזה

Rabbi Kagan also provides a helpful mitigation strategy in consuming wine for people who get headaches from wine-drinking (משנה ברורה תע"ב:ל"ז):

But one is able to dilute this wine a lot as long as it is still fitting to make Kiddush.

ארבע כוסות - ויכול למזוג היטב אכן בעיניו שיהא עדיין ראוי לקידוש

Conclusion

Both men and women are to drink wine for the four statutory minimum cups at the Seder, although kids do not seem to be included so much. Even one who yields headaches from drinking wine should, nevertheless, drink wine.

L'chaim

{Between Cups? continued from page 2}

And if one wants to drink, one can drink even many, one has permission to do so, which derives from a mishnah that between these cups if one wants to drink, one can drink between the third and the fourth, one shall not drink, etc. And Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (1085-1158) wrote that "in the Yerushalmi that between the third and fourth cups, one should not drink in order not to get drunk, since one would not be able to say Hallel, since post-meal wine intoxicates, but what one drinks prior to the meal does not intoxicate; therefore, even between the first two cups, one can drink."

ואם ירצה לשתות אפי' כמה הרשות בידו משנה שם בין הכוסות הללו אם רצה לשתות ישתה בין שלישי לרביעי לא ישתה וכו' וכתב רשב"ם דאיתא בירושלמי דבין ג' לרביעי לא ישתה כדי שלא ישתכר דתו לא מצי למימר הלל דיין שלאחר המזון משכר אבל מה ששתה קודם זה בתוך המזון או לפני המזון אינו משכר הלכך אף בין ראשון לב' ישתה ומש"ה כתב רבינו דיכול לשתות אפילו כמה מאחר שאינו משכר וכ"כ במרדכי

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{Which Wines? continued from page 1}

Rabbi Yehudah says: "[The wine for the four cups of wine at the Seder] must have the taste and appearance of wine."

רבי יהודה אומר: צריך שיהא בו טעם ומראה יין

While it is unclear which types of wine don't look like wine (perhaps it could be cloudy or some other non-wine appearance), the Talmud's greatest wine-lover, Rava (280 - 352) offered (ibid.):



Rava said: "What is Rabbi Yehudah's reason for making this statement? As it is written: 'Only look upon wine when it reddens' (Prov. 23:31)."

אמר רבא: מאי טעמא דרבי יהודה, דכתביב: 'אל תרא יין כי יתאדמ' (אי"ק י"א)

To Rava's understanding, Rabbi Yehudah seems to be speaking about the color of the wine for the cups. In this way, Rava explicitly favors the redness of wine for the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder, which makes sense, since he used this Scriptural verse for arguing that one should only ever use red wine for Shabbat kiddush (Bava Batra 97b). Clearly, the Talmud's greatest wine-lover not only preferred red wines versus white wines in general, but also for ritual use.



Moreover, it would seem it was not a mere personal preference for him, as we read of another fourth century rabbi to privilege red wine for the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder, as we read (yShekalim 3:2):

Rabbi Yirmiyah said: "It is a commandment to fulfill one's requirement of four cups of wine at the Passover Seder with red wine, as it is said, 'Only look at wine when it reddens...' (Prov. 23:31)."

אמר רבי ירמיה: מצוה לצאת ביין אדום שנאמר אל תרא יין כי יתאדמ

So, rabbis in both Israel and Persia in the fourth century were not only explicitly advocating the use of red wine for the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder, but also using the same scriptural verse to do so.

That may have had something to do with a widespread preference for red wine over white wine, as we read of Rava's father-in-law contrasting them (Gittin 70a):

Rav Hisda said: "There are sixty types of wine. The best of them all is red, fragrant; the worst of them all is inferior white wine."

רב חסדא: שיטין מיני חמרא הוו, מעליא דכולהו - וסינקה ריחיתנא, גריעא דכולהו - טיליא חוירא

Other Rabbinic Considerations of Wines

In that same section previously mentioned in the Talmud Yerushalmi, there are several varieties of wine that are considered (yShekalim 3:2):

- May one fulfill his obligation with Sabbatical wine?
Rabbi Hoshai taught: "One may fulfill his obligation with Sabbatical wine."
May one fulfill his obligation with spiced wine?
Since Bar Qappara taught: "Spiced wine is like wine", which implies that one may fulfill his obligation with spiced wine.
May one fulfill his obligation with mixed wine?
Rabbi Hiyya taught: "The Four Cups which they prescribed, one may fulfill his obligation either with unmixed or mixed, on condition that it have the taste and looks of wine."
...
May one fulfill his obligation with cooked wine?
Rabbi Yonah said: "One may fulfill his obligation with cooked wine."

- מהו לצאת ביין שש?
תאנא רב אושעיה. יוצאין ביין של שבועית.
מהו לצאת בקונדיטון?
מדתני בר קפרא. קונדיטון קיין.
הדא אמרה. יוצאין ביין קונדיטון.
מהו לצאת ביין מזוגין?
מדתני רבי חייא. ארבעה כוסות שאמר יוצאין בהן בין חיים ובין מזוגין ובלבד שיהא בהן טעם ומראה יין.
...
מהו לצאת ביין מבושל?
אמר רבי יונה. יוצאין ביין מבושל.

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{Between Cups? continued from page 5}

And he wrote further that, between the first and second cups, there is a mitzvah aspect to such drinking a lot, since it generates hunger and one may enjoyably eat matzah, which is not as written in the anonymously composed Kol Bo.

This is such a fascinating response by Rabbi Sirkis, who not only marshals multiple medieval rabbis to support his position, but even provides the brilliant opinion of Rabbi HaKohen (popularly known as the Mordekhai) that, based upon a statement of Rava (280-352) that drinking wine boosts his appetite (Pesahim 107b).

Even considering this notion about the potential for getting drunk while drinking between the first and second cups, Rabbi Reischer wrote (חוק):

And according to this, it implies that other beverages that are not intoxicating are permitted to drink. However, according to what Rabbi Mordekhai ben Hillel HaKohen wrote—that the reason one may drink between the first and second (cups) is because wine 'stimulates the appetite,' and thus one will eat matzah with appetite—it is possible that other drinks would be forbidden to drink between the first and second, since they do not stimulate (the appetite). Nevertheless, we do not find that any halachic authority expressed concern for such a prohibition; only regarding wine was it necessary to permit it, so that it should not appear as if one is adding to the (obligatory) cups, and also so that you should not say that wine is filling/satiating.

A separate issue with drinking between these two cups is: Can one even do so? Rabbi Kagan provides both sides of this debate (ביאור הלכה תע"ג): If he poured the cup and began to expound upon the haggadah, one is not permitted to interrupt in the middle of it, which is what Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (1194-1270) wrote; and similarly wrote Rabbi Nissim ben Reuven of Girona (1290-1376). And it's further inferable from his words that even if one had not yet begun the haggadah, just simply that they had poured the cup and prepared to say the haggadah, that would also be forbidden. But Rabbi Zerahiah ben Isaac ha-Levi Gerondi (1115-1186) permitted in all of these situations. And similarly have the Tosafists written that it is specifically with Hallel or the blessing of asher ga'alnu that it is prohibited (Pes. 103b). But Rabbi Karo categorically writes according to what Rabbi Moses ben Nahman wrote, even for a mitzvah cup....

Seemingly, Rabbi Karo was concerned, both for the intoxication aspect, but also for interrupting a liturgical aspect. It seems that Rabbi



{Which Wines? continued from page 5}

In sum, these wines about which are queried and considered, all of them end up being articulated as being effective for use for the four cups at the Passover Seder. This discussion considered spiced wines, mixed wines, and cooked wines, all of which have been altered from their regular wine form, but, nevertheless, permitted for use for the four cups. The other type of wine considered is sabbatical year wine, meaning it derived from grapes harvested in Israel during a sabbatical year, the most recent of which was 2022.

What About White Wine?

What about white wine, though? Rabbi Yaakov, son of Asher (1270-1340) (popularly known as the Rosh) opens up the possibility (טור או"ח תע"ב):

And it is stated in the Jerusalem Talmud that ויתא בירושלמי שמצוה לחזור אחר יין אדום ויראה שיש שם לבן משובח מהאדום שהוא קודם

Rabbi Yosef Karo wrote straightforwardly concerning this preference (שו"ע תע"ב:א):

It's a mitzvah to seek red wine. מצוה לחזור אחר יין אדום

Parenthetically commenting thereupon, Rabbi Moses Isserles (1530-1572) agreed with Rabbi Ya'akov, son of Asher (רמ"א לשו"ע או"ח תע"ב:א):

If the white wine is not preferable than [red wine]. אם אין הלבן משובח ממנו



While it seems to be that he is discussing one's own personal palate preference, it could also be better for safety reasons, as Rabbi David HaLevi Segal (1586-1667) (popularly known as Taz) wrote (ט"ז או"ח תע"ב:ט):

There is another hint in the red color — as a remembrance of the blood, since Pharaoh used to slaughter the children of Israel. However, nowadays people refrain from using red wine due to false blood libels, unfortunately.



Conclusion

While we can drink a variety of wines for the four cups at the Passover Seder, including modified wines, such as cooked wines and spiced wines, there remains a distinct preference for red wine in our tradition, seemingly because it tastes better. However, should one enjoy white wine more, or if there is a blood libel, then white wine may also be considered an ideal option. Whichever wine(s) you choose to use at your Passover Seder for your four cups, I am wishing you an enjoyable Passover Seder experience.

L'chaim

Nahman and Rabbi Karo viewed Maggid as an entire section to itself that needs to be devoid of interruptions from a liturgical standpoint. However, the other viewpoint on this matter, as articulated by the Tosafists pointed out, is that we are concerned with the blessings being interrupted, but not the storytelling. Even further, it should be pointed out, this evening is one of storytelling over wine - how could we best engage with storytelling over wine if we are not drinking wine during the storytelling?



Conclusion

As we look forward to drinking our four cups of wine at the Passover Seder, there is room for drinking between these statutorily minimum cups, especially between cups one and two, as well as two and three, although there are opinions urging not to drink between one and two. While we are not supposed to drink between cups three and four, there is the possibility that one could extend one's drinking of the third cups. Either way, I am wishing you a joyous and celebratory Passover.

L'chaim

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