

## TRADITIONAL

# Four Cups

Contributed by [Matt Chanoff](#)

Source: Original

•Reader: In Exodus, there are a lot of laws that pertain differently to natives, or “ezrah” and sojourners, or “ger.” The word “ezrah” is literally a kind of plant, probably a grapevine. Metaphorically, it means something like “nurtured by the soil.” The fact that native Israelites are referred to as “grapevines” says a lot about the importance of grapes and wine in our culture. •Questioner: Why are we obligated to drink four cups of wine?

•Reader: There are many reasons proposed. Here are the ones from the Hagaddah and from three different Jewish sages

•Reader: The Hagaddah says: With each cup, we recall the four different promises of freedom that God gave our people: “I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians,” “I will deliver you from their bondage,” “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm,” and “I will take you to be my people.” •Reader: The Vilna Gaon says: They relate to the four worlds: this world, the messianic age, the world at the time of the revival of the dead, and the world to come. •Reader: The Maharal says: They refer to the four matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah •Reader: The Abarbanel says: They refer to the four redemptions of the Jewish people: the choosing of Abraham, the Exodus from Egypt, survival during the Diaspora, and the final redemption to come. •Questioner: What other reasons are there? (discussion) Red or White?

•Reader: Traditionally, Ashkenazi Jews drank white wine at the Seder, while Sephardic Jews drank red wine.

•Reader: During the Middle Ages, Jews in Christian countries were accused of drinking human blood at the Seder (the “blood libel”). To avoid even the appearance of this, Ashkenazi Jews switched to white wine. Kiddush

•Reader: You have called us for service from among the peoples, and have hallowed our lives with commandments. In love you have given us festivals for rejoicing, seasons of celebration, this Festival of Matzah, the time of our freedom, a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt. Praised are you, Adonai, who gave us this joyful heritage.

•Everyone: Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Meleh ha-olam borei p’ri ha-gafen •Reader: We praise You, O God, Sovereign of Existence, Who creates the fruit of the vine.