



Aryevut

**QUESTIONS  
TO ENHANCE  
PESACH 2021**



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# QUESTIONS TO ENHANCE PESACH (PASSOVER)

These questions have been developed over the years by us, colleagues and other agencies to help you enhance your seder and pesach experience and to help you create meaningful and memorable conversation with your family, friends, students and congregants. New questions – more than 75 – have been added this year and past questions have not been edited or modified. The idea is for you to select questions from this list and pose it to those assembled to help spark dialogue. You can place a question on each place card and have people bring them up during the meal or you can select a question to address at each meal or to discuss with each child or family member over the holiday. While the seder is the highlight for many, we encourage you to utilize these questions throughout the holiday (and even after and throughout the year). These questions are designed so that you can use them every year. Feel free to modify and adapt these questions to best meet your needs. We hope these questions will help you and your family reflect on your values and educate, engage, motivate and inspire you to action. We welcome feedback and suggestions for additional questions at [info@areyvut.org](mailto:info@areyvut.org).

# COMMUNITY

1. How is your sense of belonging in a community tied to experiencing challenges together?
2. What are the areas in your community and on the larger world stage where bitterness, subjugation and slavery still exist?
3. I don't often see myself represented in my community and seldom hear my stories, how can I stay engaged in a community that doesn't reflect my identity?
4. What couldn't we accomplish on our own?
5. Think for a moment about the future of the Jewish community. Do you think your great-grandchildren will be sitting at a Passover seder someday? Why or why not?
6. What places of brokenness in the world or in the community do you most wish to help fix?

# COVID-19

1. As we celebrate our second Pesach of the pandemic, what are you grateful for?
2. Even while in lockdown, in what ways were you still free?
3. Has the pandemic made you feel like you've been living in a smaller space?
4. How can we remain aware of those around us who were already struggling and now must navigate this time too?
5. How will re-cast our lives as emerge from "this season" of fear and uncertainty?
6. How have the physical restrictions and material simplicity demanded now allowed you to concentrate on what is most important in your life?
7. What does resistance look like when we are self-isolating?
8. How will you be different as a result of living through our plague, COVID-19?
9. How will you try to change as a result of this plague?
10. Is COVID-19 a plague?
11. This Pesach, while many of us will not have guests joining for the seder. What are ways we can feel connected to family and friends over the holiday?
12. Which areas in your spiritual life has the current crisis highlighted that require change? What questions might you ask to start the process?

# DAYENU

1. Dayenu means “enough.” What does it mean to have enough?
2. What is dayenu or enough for you?

# DO YOU...

1. Do you believe we can eventually eradicate wars, poverty, and starvation? Or do you believe we will always be stuck in some version of these issues? How can we spread a more hopeful message and deal with the cynicism and self-doubt that sometimes accompanies conversations about changing the world?
2. Do you care about causes that have a direct impact on the people you love more than other causes? If so, what about your concern for people who are not in your immediate circle of care? Who will work on behalf of them?
3. Do you have a story of being invited into someone’s home for a meal at a time of vulnerability in your life?
4. Do you feel loved?
5. Do you feel supported?
6. Do you feel valued?
7. Do you see yourself as having personally gone out of Egypt?

# DIASPORA

1. Are some Diaspora Jews more free than others?
2. Are you more free living as a non-practicing Jew in Israel or as practicing Jew outside of Israel?

# EGYPT

1. How do the paths you have taken in life help you understand the journey out of Egypt?
2. Imagine that you're rushing out of Egypt and you only have time to grab one thing. What would you take?
3. Moses took action because the Israelites in Egypt were being denied their basic rights. Which modern human rights issue compels you to act?
4. What does it mean to experience coming out of Egypt with a group of people?
5. What does it mean to "regard" one's self as having "personally left Egypt?"
6. What makes it so hard to leave our own personal Egypt?

# ELIYAHU HANAVI

1. Eliyahu Hanavi come in at the seder. Why him? What's he doing here? Who would you invite if you were given the option?
2. Tradition says that Elijah the Prophet is supposed to announce the coming of the Messiah. If you could send Elijah to any spot on the globe to make the announcement of the Messiah, where would you send him?

# EXODUS

1. How does the Exodus inform the kinds of actions and decisions you take?
2. How might a journey through time, rather than across distance, be part of the Exodus itself?
3. If you were making a video about the Exodus, which rooms in your home would you use to film the video and why?
4. In what ways have you made a personal connection to the Exodus?
5. Think of a time when you went into the unknown. What can the Exodus teach us about how to handle such a situation?
6. What about the Exodus makes you curious?
7. How did what your parents or grandparents pass down to you about the Exodus affect you when you were a child?
8. What are some ways you might use the telling of the Exodus story to continue your family's traditions?
9. Why is it important to tell the next generation our personal or family "Egypt" stories?
10. Why is it important to make the Exodus a personal experience?
11. What did your parents or grandparents pass down to you about the Exodus?
12. What relevance do you find in the story of the Exodus?
13. What impact as an adult did your parents or grandparents teachings about the Exodus have on you?
14. What does "from Generation to Generation" mean to you?

# FAMILY

1. What are ways you can feel connected to family and friends over the holiday?
2. What creative gifts of other family members do you see as an expression of their possible callings?
3. What stories do you know about your family's struggles and successes?
4. What if the other proverbial bitter herb at the table is your brother-in-law or a family friend? How should such an individual be treated at the seder?
5. What was the best thing about how your parents raised you?
6. What's the best thing you learned from your Mother?
7. What was your favorite toy as a kid?

# FOOD

1. Have you ever picked fruit or vegetables on a farm and eaten it straight from the earth? If so, what was that experience like and what feelings did it evoke for you? If not, find the opportunity.
2. How do the foods we eat on Passover help immerse you in the feeling of escaping Egypt?
3. How do the traditional Passover foods remind you of your family's journey?
4. If you had to pick one food to eat every day, what food would it be?
5. If you were to add a new food to the Seder plate that symbolizes the yearning for freedom, what would it be and why?
6. What is your favorite thing to eat at the Seder?

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Are there events in our lives that it is important to remember daily?
2. Are we proud to be the Almighty's Chosen People? Do we live up to that designation as we should?
3. Ask yourself, as I enter a holy place and holy time, what do I want to be cleaned of, that I might be worthy of taking my place in a holy tent?
4. What mitzvah is most important to you?
5. What mitzvot do we do without making a bracha? Does this make them different from mitzvot that we do make a bracha on?
6. Can overthinking lead to paralysis rather than growth?
7. Have you ever allowed the perceptions of others change the way you think about yourself?
8. Have you ever met one of your heroes?
9. What does honor mean to you? How important is it to you? What exemplifies honor?
10. What does it mean to "speak to someone in their own language"? What is the value in it?
11. How can the way we treat and act with others change the way they think about themselves?
12. How can we act to bring about a better world?
13. How might you lift your eyes above and express your praise?
14. How much effort should we exert into trying to understand each other?
15. What living person would you want to host in your home? What questions would you ask them?
16. If you could have tea with a fictional character who would it be?

17. If you had \$5,000 how would you spend it?
18. What's your idea of a perfect vacation and how can we make it happen?
19. Imagine that are told to leave home in 24 hours and can only take a small suitcase. What would you include and why?
20. Is humility on Your Moral Bucket List?
21. Is there a value in doing something because of its inherent value, not just because it's a mitzvah?
22. Is love a factor for you when you think about what kind of social cause you want to pour your energy into?
23. Name something about yourself that you appreciate, something that is your light that you can shine on others. Now think about the person sitting next to you, what is their light?
24. Think about a time when you felt fully loved. What did that sense of love and confidence motivate you to do?
25. Think about a time when you stood up for an ideal or helped someone else. What ripple effect did it cause?
26. What do we need to purify ourselves from?
27. What do you have to give?
28. What are challenges you have overcome in your life? Who supported you? Who have you supported?
29. What have you learned from your bitter experiences?
30. What are the different types of tears you have in life?
31. What are the different reasons you get teary?
32. What are we hiding from ourselves?
33. What are we purifying ourselves for?
34. What are you filling your vessel with this year? What if anything is missing?
35. What are you grateful for right now?
36. What are you striving towards?
37. What experiences in your life have given you hope? Tell about some struggle to change something that worked. What did you learn from it?
38. What is a piece of really good advice that someone has given you?
39. What would be possible if we allowed ourselves to find the truth?
40. What keeps you up at night?
41. Was there a time when feeling loved helped you endure a bitter time?
42. Where do you turn to find strength during difficult times?
43. What reminds you of the importance of justice in your life?
44. When have you acted as an upstander?
45. When have you sat by and done nothing as a bystander?
46. When you say dayenu in your life
47. What role have you taken to actively help repair the world?
48. What songs would you put on the sound track of your life?
49. What places in yourself do you wish to find new wholeness for?
50. What things can you celebrate in your life?
51. What would be our ideal life in 5, 10 and 20 years?

# FOUR SONS

1. Do you think there is a 5th son? What should our relationship be with that son? Are we failing him?
2. How is each of the Four Children present within each one of us?
3. Why by the Four Sons do we tend to classify individuals as being in only one of these categories?
4. Which of the four sons were you most like as a kid?
5. When it comes to getting involved in social causes, which of the Four Children do you most identify with?

# FREEDOM

1. Are Jews most free as a nation, a religious community or something else entirely?
2. Are there any parts of your life in which you feel you do not have freedom?
3. As Jews, are we more or less free than other people?
4. Can we choose to be free?
5. Discuss the activities we are free to do that many other people around the world are not free to do.
6. Has there ever been a situation when you wished you did not have so much freedom?
7. How can one object symbolize both slavery and freedom?
8. How has the current reality brought you greater freedom?
9. If you think freedom is mostly about being free from specific threats or dangers, consider the cost of that freedom. What might be at risk, or even lost, as that kind of freedom is secured?
10. On Passover we recall our journey from slavery to freedom. How are you pursuing freedom for others?
11. What app on your phone is the most enslaving and which is the most freeing?
12. What can you do to help people who are not free?
13. What do you like most about freedom?
14. What does freedom mean to you?
15. When you hear the word freedom, what words come to mind?
16. Why is it important to acknowledge the sadness during a day and time of freedom?
17. Why did we need Moses to lead us to freedom? Why couldn't we accomplish it on our own?
18. Why was it necessary for an outsider like Moses to lead us to freedom?
19. What is Jewish about freedom?
20. Why do we seek liberation for all?
21. What's the value of acknowledging pain and sadness during a celebration of freedom and hope?
22. What is the definition of "freedom," and how can we apply it to make our lives more meaningful?
23. What freedoms do Jews have when gathered?
24. What freedoms do Jews have when scattered?

# GRATITUDE

1. Can offering gratitude shape our approach to moving through challenging times?
2. How do you connect the obligation to experience leaving Egypt personally with the duty to express gratitude?
3. How do you express gratitude?
4. How do you sufficiently express your gratitude?
5. How have you expressed gratitude this year?
6. What has compelled you to say “thank you” during this time?
7. When you think about making a positive difference in someone’s life, how might gratitude refresh and energize you?
8. What is something that is “very good” in your life?

# HAGGADAH

1. Haggadah means “telling”. What happens when you tell a story?
2. How do the different verbs of “telling” and “answer saying” help you understand the Haggadah?
3. The Haggadah prompts us to ask Four Questions. What questions do you have about the Seder table?
4. The Haggadah takes us through many parts of the narrative of the Exodus from Egypt. Can you tell us what you know about the Exodus?
5. Why isn’t Moses mentioned in the Haggadah?
6. Which of those experiences of leaving Egypt described in the Haggadah- “...from sorrow to joy, from grief to celebration; from darkness to great light,” etc. have you had in your life? How might these personal experiences help you appreciate and commemorate the Exodus?
7. What questions might you add to the traditional questions of the Haggadah at this Pesach season?
8. Why is God referred to as “HaMakom” or “the place”?

# HUNGER

1. How can we open our homes to those who are hungry and in need?
2. How do we gather enough provisions while making sure everyone can access what they need?
3. How do we share our surplus with those who are increasingly vulnerable?
4. If you ruled the world, how would you solve world hunger?
5. Is there ever a time that we should not be inviting the poor and instead focusing on our own and our family needs?
6. The Seder begins by inviting “all who are hungry” to come and eat. Is feeding the poor the only way to end hunger?
7. What does it mean for you to fulfill the statement, “let all who are hungry, come and eat”?
8. Why is wine, an expensive, even extravagant item, chosen as the food that must be provided to the poor?
9. Why should the community provide the means for the poor to have their own seder instead of simply finding a place for them?

# KARPAS

1. We dip karpas (greens) in salt water to symbolize the tears of the ancient Israelites. What modern suffering evokes your sympathy?
2. Why would we dip the symbols of growth and renewal in salt water, which symbolizes tears?
3. When are tears purifying and what do we want our tears to purify us from- and for what purpose?
4. What makes up your personal “karpas”?

# MA NISHTANA

1. Could “What makes this night different?” be a separate question that deserves its own answer?
2. How does having the youngest person at the Seder ask the Ma Nishtana make the whole process feel new?
3. If the questions of the Ma Nishtana are proscribed and the answers are known, how do the questions stay relevant?
4. If you could add a fifth question about what bothers you most or bringing up a central theme which Haggadah neglected to mention here, what would it be?
5. If you could add a fifth question to the Ma Nishtana (why is this night different) what would it be?
6. Is there actually a fifth question in the Ma Nishtana?
7. It is traditional for the youngest person at a seder to ask the Four Questions. If you were to create a new tradition for the asking of the Four Questions, who would you choose to ask the questions and why?
8. Why is it significant that the Four Questions are almost exactly as they were asked in the time of the Second Temple?
9. What questions might you ask in addition to The Four (the Ma Nishtana)?

# MATERIALISM

1. How can I acknowledge my privilege in a way that works towards elevating the voices of marginalized people in my community?
2. How can we identify both material and non-material abundance?
3. How do we recognize and share our own privilege in moments like these?

# MATZA

1. Breaking the matzah represents the brokenness in our world and our commitment to repair it. What's one repair you'll make this year?
2. What does the matzah represent to you? What new awareness might you bring to it this year that links this ancient symbol to modern poverty?
3. What is the relationship between the "bread of affliction" and the two commandments that follow?

# NEXT YEAR

1. How would you like next year's Pesach to look different from this year's Pesach?
2. The seder concludes looking toward the future as we recite, "Next year in Jerusalem." What's your aspiration for your life or for the world this year?
3. What do you want to accomplish in the next year?
4. What is your hope for the Pesach to come?
5. Where do you want to be next year?

# QUESTIONS

1. Do we listen to questions we hear repeated many times?
2. Does asking questions reinforce our sensory experiences?
3. Does asking questions that were asked thousands of years ago change how you think about those words?
4. Has a question ever changed your life?
5. How might asking questions about the Exodus change the way you internalize the meanings of the story?
6. How might your answers to the next generation's questions affect the way they see the world?
7. In what ways does questioning help you to better understand the story of the Exodus?
8. Why can questions be so powerful?
9. What happens when we hear a question repeated many times?

# PESACH PREPARATION

1. How do you help your family get ready for Pesach?
2. Which parts of your home feel busier before Pesach?
3. How does it feel when your home is ready for Pesach?
4. Is it really so hard to refrain from chametz for the full holiday of Passover?

# THE PESACH MESSAGE

1. If there is one lesson to take from our Pesach experience, what would it be?
2. What do Pesach and Easter have in common? (Think spring festivals, eggs, and redemption, to start.) How do they differ?
3. What is your favorite part of the Pesach holiday?
4. Why is it so important to personally connect to the story and holiday of Pesach?
5. Where is the balance between the sense of play and the seriousness of the Passover message?
6. What message do you hear God saying to you right now?

# PLAGUES

1. How are modern plagues similar or different to the plagues that we recall at the seder?
2. How can we help to get rid of the plagues in the world?
3. Some people say the Ten Plagues are part of tradition and so they should be included in the seder. Others say the plagues lead us to inappropriately exalt in the adversities suffered by the Egyptians. Others say that Jews take a drop of wine from the cup for each plague, acknowledging that freedom was won at a cost. Do you believe in a God who punishes people? Would God slay the Egyptians' firstborn sons? What do you think? Should the Ten Plagues be part of the seder?
4. What are the plagues we face today?
5. What is a plague in our world, and how do you think it could be solved?
6. What is a modern day plague that you come in contact with every day?
7. What is today's plague teaching you?

# REMEMBERING

1. How does one balance between remembering and getting stuck in the past?
2. What is the role of memory in the building of Jewish culture and society

# SEDER

1. Before 2020, you might have hosted or been a guest at a seder with many people. Do you remember who was at the seder/sedarim?
2. Choose an object on the Seder table. If it could tell us a story about itself, what story would it tell us?
3. Did you ever “taste” love and bitterness together on “one bite” like the Korech sandwich?
4. How has your sense of seder or order been this year?
5. If the president, your favorite actress, or a famous athlete (or any other celebrity you like) came to your seder, which symbol or ritual would you want to show them first?
6. In what ways could making your Seder more engaging for children also enrich it for people of all ages?
7. In what ways does your Seder engage various senses and which are the senses you are using?
8. What are ways you can take the Seder experience and incorporate its messages into the rest of the year?
9. What is different about washing your hands to prepare yourself to “do something” as opposed to washing away something?
10. What is the Seder encouraging us all to do?
11. What is your favorite part of the Seder?
12. Why is it important to finish the meal with “being found”?
13. What one item would you bring to this year’s Seder that represents the past year?
14. What one item would you bring to this year’s Seder that represents your hopes and dreams for this year?
15. What happens at your seder that connects you to previous generations of your family?
16. Why do you think the Seder specifically is meant to be done in the vernacular, while many other mitzvot and prayers are done in Hebrew?
17. Where do you most find the symbol of hope in the Seder?
18. What is something memorable that you remember from last year’s seder?
19. What is something fun that you remember from past seders?
20. Which symbol on the seder plate do you think is the most important?
21. Which symbol on the seder plate represents you? Why?

# SLAVERY

1. Are there experiences in your life or your family’s that help you relate to the feelings and challenges of slavery or fleeing?
2. Can exploring our history of slavery make us more free today?
3. What can slavery mean for the modern day Jew who has never been enslaved?
4. What does it mean for you to say, “now we are all slaves”?
5. What power does it have to begin the night from tears of slavery?
6. What connections can you make between slavery/incarceration in the story of Passover and modern-day conditions for people in jails and detention centers?
7. When all this is over, what form of “slavery” that has had you in its grip will you not return to?

# SPRING

1. How are we feeling as we greet this new season, Spring, which our tradition views as a harbinger of new birth and rebirth?
2. How do you honor the natural world, the changing seasons and the emerging spring?
3. What nourishes us in this season? What has nourished us to this point?

# STORYTELLING

1. How does telling a story or hearing a story shape how memories are made?
2. How is storytelling an act of remembering?
3. What role does the retelling of the story have?
4. What is the connection between telling a story and asking questions about that story?
5. In your life, how does the telling of a story help you preserve memories and make new ones?
6. What are you passing on to the next generation in your telling/saying?
7. When you share your personal journey, do you tell that story in different ways to different people? Why or why not?

# STRANGERS

1. How might relating to the Passover story help us relate to the struggles of the refugees?
2. How might the Passover story teach us to treat strangers today?
3. The Passover story reminds us that we, too, were once refugees. How can we draw upon our history to help people fleeing their homes today?
4. Who do you regard as “the stranger” today?
5. Who is living under persecution or in need of redemption now?
6. Would you be willing to move to another country for the rest of your life if you knew that you would be very successful in the new country?
7. What would you put in your backpack if you had to leave your home forever?
8. What can you do today to help those living under persecution or in need of redemption?
9. What redemption do you hope for in our generation?
10. What is the root of anti-Semitism and why have we always had enemies that seek our destruction?

# THIS YEAR

1. How are you filling others vessels this year?
2. How might the current challenging reality allow you to recognize the many blessings in your life?
3. How might you embrace the vulnerability of your present reality?
4. The Haggadah concludes with a hopeful aspiration for the coming year. What's your aspiration for your life or for the world this year?
5. What bitterness are you revising this year?
6. What did you learn from the bitter experiences this year?
7. What did you shed tears over this year?
8. What makes this seder joyful for you?
9. What makes this seder or Passover different?
10. Who would you want to invite to your seder this year? How can you invite their qualities to join you at the seder? What are stories of theirs that you want to remember?
11. What memories will be drawn from this year's handwashing when we look back at it?
12. What was a holy, awe inspiring event moment for you this year?
13. What is an example in the past year that you can point to as a source of inspiration regarding people who you know are working towards alleviating current day bitterness?
14. What new connections did you make this year?
15. What is something new you have learned about your home this past year?
16. What new observations and experiences have changed you?
17. What is different about you this year as compared to last year?

# TODAY

1. How do you think the Passover story connects to your life today?
2. We retell the Passover story in each generation. What do you want the next generation to remember about how you responded to today's challenges?
3. Who are the enemies of our generation that seek to destroy us, and can we identify miracles God does to protect us?
4. In what way do the themes of Passover resonate with the current socio-political climate?
5. What lessons have you derived from the Torah you have studied these past few weeks and from the experience of this current reality?
6. What lessons are you learning from today's reality?