



America

AT

250

**250 Conversation Starters,
Reflections and Actions**

 Areyvut

Dedication

In Memory of Sergeant Melvin "Buddy" Friedman



This resource is lovingly dedicated to the memory of Sergeant Melvin Herbert "Buddy" Friedman, Menachem Chayim ben Avraham, my great-uncle, my maternal grandmother's brother, whose yahrzeit is observed on the 15th of Tamuz and to the generations of Jewish servicemen and servicewomen who have proudly served the United States of America.

While I never had the privilege of knowing Buddy personally, his story has been part of our family and has helped shape my appreciation for the sacrifices made by those who serve our country. Although I never met him, his story has helped shape my understanding of sacrifice, service and gratitude.

Buddy answered the call to serve during World War II. Like so many others of his generation, he willingly put his life on hold in defense of freedom. Serving with the 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division, he participated in the D-Day landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944. Gravely wounded during the invasion, Sergeant Friedman fought to survive but ultimately succumbed to his injuries a month later. He was only 26 years old.

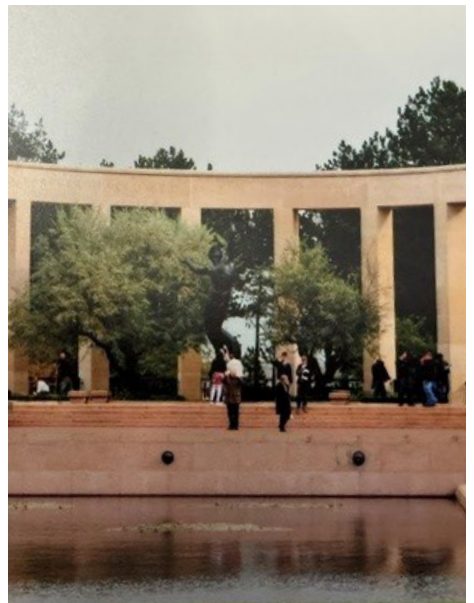
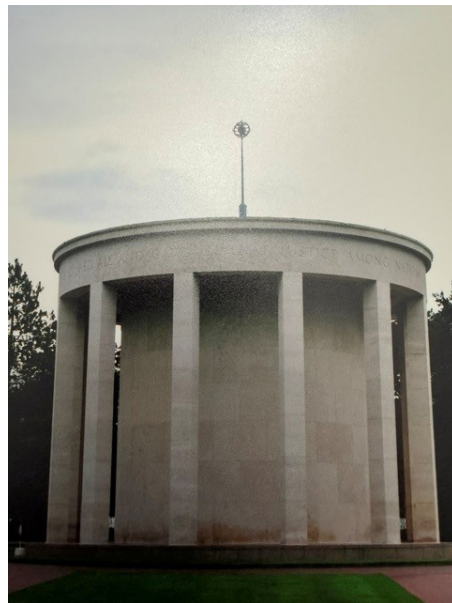
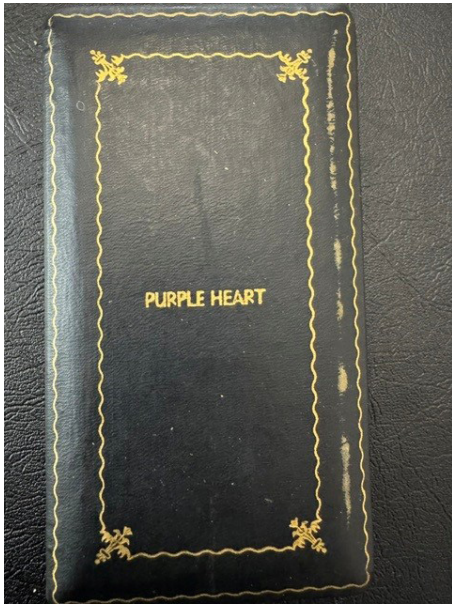
For his courageous service and sacrifice, Buddy was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart. He is buried at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, France (Plot J, Row 23, Grave 23), among thousands of American heroes who gave their lives in the cause of freedom.

As America celebrates its 250th birthday, it is fitting that we remember not only the milestones and achievements of our country, but also the individuals whose courage, sacrifice and commitment helped make those achievements possible.

Buddy's story represents far more than one individual. It reflects the experiences of countless Jewish Americans who have proudly served our country throughout the past 250 years. Their service reminds us that freedom is never free and that citizenship carries with it both privileges and responsibilities.

May Buddy's memory continue to inspire us to live lives of purpose, service, gratitude and responsibility. May his legacy and the legacies of all those who served be a blessing.

Yehi Zichro Baruch.
Daniel Rothner
Founder & Director
Areyvut



With Gratitude to Those Who Served

As America commemorates 250 years of independence, we pause to express our deepest gratitude to the generations of Jewish servicemen and servicewomen who have served our nation with honor, courage and distinction.

From the American Revolution through today, Jewish Americans have answered the call to serve in every branch of the military and during every major conflict in our nation's history. They have defended our freedoms, protected our country and contributed immeasurably to the strength and security of the United States.

Some returned home to their families and communities.

Others bore physical and emotional scars that lasted a lifetime.

Too many made the ultimate sacrifice.

Their service reminds us that the freedoms we enjoy today were secured through the dedication, courage and sacrifices of countless individuals.

We are profoundly grateful for all who have worn the uniform of the United States Armed Forces and for the families who supported them.

As we celebrate this historic milestone, may we honor their service not only through words of appreciation, but also by striving to build stronger communities, care for one another and contribute positively to our country.

To all who have served, thank you.

We remember.

We are grateful.

We honor your service.

May your legacy continue to inspire future generations.

Introduction

In 2026, the United States of America celebrates its 250th birthday. Throughout those 250 years, American Jews have contributed immeasurably to our nation through military service, public service, education, philanthropy, volunteerism, innovation and leadership.

Anniversaries invite us to look backward with gratitude and forward with hope. They provide an opportunity to reflect upon the people, values and experiences that have shaped our nation and to consider the responsibilities that accompany the freedoms we enjoy.

At Areyvut, we believe that meaningful reflection should inspire meaningful action. For more than two decades, Areyvut has worked to promote the core Jewish values of chesed (kindness), tzedakah (charitable giving), tikkun olam (repairing the world) and commUNITY. Through educational programs, volunteer initiatives, intergenerational experiences and commUNITY engagement opportunities, we seek to help people of all ages translate values into action.

America at 250 was created as an invitation to reflect, discuss and act. This resource is rooted in the belief that meaningful conversations can inspire meaningful actions and that meaningful actions can transform individuals, communities and society.

While America's 250th birthday serves as the occasion for this resource, the values explored throughout these pages are timeless and relevant every day of the year. Rather than focusing primarily on dates, events and historical facts, this resource explores timeless themes that remain as relevant today as they were generations ago: gratitude, kindness, leadership, service, responsibility, generosity, patriotism, commUNITY and hope for the future.

The 250 conversation starters, reflections and action challenges contained in these pages are designed to help individuals, families, schools, camps, synagogues, commUNITY organizations and leaders engage in meaningful conversations about the kind of society we wish to build.

Some questions may be easy to answer. Others may challenge assumptions or spark deeper reflection. All are intended to encourage thoughtful discussion and positive action.

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, may we not only appreciate the blessings we have inherited, but also recommit ourselves to strengthening our communities, helping others and building a better future for generations to come.

Ways to Use this Resource

While this resource was created in honor of America's 250th birthday, its purpose extends far beyond this historic milestone.

The values explored throughout these pages—gratitude, chesed, tzedakah, tikkun olam, leadership, service and commUNITY—are timeless. The questions, reflections and activities are designed not only to commemorate America's semiquincentennial, but also to inspire meaningful conversations and actions throughout the year and for years to come.

This resource can be used by:

- Rabbis and educators preparing sermons, classes and discussions
- Camps seeking meaningful programming and conversation starters
- Day schools, yeshivot and supplementary schools
- Synagogues, JCCs and communal organizations
- Parents and grandparents looking to engage children and grandchildren
- Board members, lay leaders and volunteers
- Families around the Shabbat table
- Students, professionals and commUNITY members seeking personal reflection
- Selecting a question to share each day with your family or via social media

Some may choose to work through the questions individually. Others may use them as discussion prompts in classrooms, camps, youth groups, board meetings, leadership programs, volunteer initiatives, family gatherings or commUNITY events.

Our hope is that these conversations inspire not only reflection, but action.

We respectfully request that when using this resource or content from it, you properly credit Areyvut. We welcome your feedback at info@areyvut.org and look forward to how you used this resource.

As America celebrates 250 years, may we recommit ourselves to building stronger communities, serving others, strengthening our relationships and helping repair the world. And may these important conversations and transformational dialogues continue long after the anniversary celebrations have ended.

Acknowledgements

Areyvut is grateful to the many individuals and organizations whose efforts, service and sacrifices have helped shape our nation and strengthen our communities.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the members of the Areyvut Board of Directors for their passionate commitment to our mission and vision. We are deeply grateful to our donors and supporters whose generosity makes resources such as this one and so much of what we do possible.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in the United States Armed Forces. Their courage, sacrifice and dedication help safeguard the freedoms we enjoy and inspire us to contribute positively to our communities and country.

Special thanks to Rena Ray for her creativity and design expertise, which helped bring this resource to life.

We are also grateful to the author's uncle, Raphael Lavin and his cousin, Jeffrey Smith, for their assistance with and contribution of photographs that enrich this publication.

May this resource inspire meaningful conversations, thoughtful reflection and acts of kindness, service and civic engagement as we celebrate America's 250th birthday and work together to build a stronger, more caring and connected commUNITY.

Section 1: Gratitude and Appreciation

As America celebrates its 250th birthday, we have an opportunity not only to look backward, but also to reflect on the blessings, opportunities and freedoms that shape our lives today.

Jewish tradition places tremendous emphasis on gratitude. In fact, the Hebrew word for Jew, Yehudi, is rooted in the word hoda'ah, gratitude. Appreciating what we have is not merely a nice idea. It is a responsibility and a mindset. Gratitude helps us recognize the contributions of others, appreciate the opportunities we have been given and avoid taking things for granted.

The following questions are designed to spark reflection, conversation and appreciation. There are no right or wrong answers. The goal is simply to think more deeply and engage meaningfully with those around us.

Questions 1-25

Gratitude for America

1. What is something about America that you are especially grateful for?
2. What freedoms do you think people most often take for granted?
3. What opportunities have you had because of where you live?
4. What does freedom mean to you?
5. If you could thank one American from any period in history, who would it be and why?

Take Action: Write a thank-you note to someone whose work often goes unnoticed.

6. What is a privilege you enjoy that many people throughout history did not have?
7. How does gratitude change the way we see the world?
8. What is something about your local commUNITY that you appreciate?
9. What is one public service you are thankful for?
10. Who helps make your commUNITY a better place?

Take Action: Thank a teacher, first responder, crossing guard, sanitation worker or veteran.

Gratitude for People

11. Who has had the greatest positive impact on your life?
12. What qualities do you appreciate most in a friend?
13. What is something a family member has done that you are grateful for?
14. When was the last time someone helped you unexpectedly?
15. Who is someone you should thank but have not yet?

Take Action: Reach out to someone who has positively impacted your life and let them know.

16. What is a lesson you learned from an older generation?
17. What is a lesson you learned from someone younger than you?
18. What role has kindness played in your life?
19. What opportunity are you grateful to have today?
20. What challenge ultimately helped you grow?

Take Action: Share a story of gratitude with a friend or family member.

Gratitude and Responsibility

21. How should gratitude influence the way we treat others?
22. What responsibilities come with the freedoms we enjoy?
23. How can gratitude inspire acts of chesed?
24. How can appreciation lead to action?
25. What is one thing you are grateful for today that you may have overlooked yesterday?

Reflection Challenge

Before going to sleep tonight, write down three things for which you are grateful and one action you can take tomorrow to express that gratitude.

Areyvut Challenge

Choose one person this week and intentionally thank them for the difference they make in your life or in your commUNITY. Do not send a text. Tell them directly, write a note or make a phone call.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"Who is rich? One who is happy with their portion."
— Pirkei Avot 4:1

Discussion Question:

How does gratitude help us appreciate what we have rather than focusing on what we lack?

Section 2: Chesed and Kindness

The world often celebrates wealth, power, influence and achievement. Judaism celebrates kindness. Chesed is one of the foundational values upon which Jewish life is built. It is not merely about grand gestures or extraordinary acts. It is about consistently noticing others, responding to their needs and making the world a little better through our actions. America's story has been shaped by countless acts of kindness, generosity and service. Some were performed by famous leaders. Many more were performed by ordinary people whose names we will never know.

As America celebrates its 250th birthday, we are reminded that strong communities are built not only by laws and institutions, but also by people who care for one another.

The following questions invite us to think about kindness, compassion and our responsibility to others.

Questions 26-50

Understanding Kindness

26. What is the kindest thing someone has ever done for you?
27. What is the kindest thing you have ever done for someone else?
28. Is kindness a skill, a habit or a character trait?
29. Why do small acts of kindness often have such a large impact?
30. Who is someone you know who consistently demonstrates kindness?

Take Action: Perform an anonymous act of kindness this week.

31. How do you define chesed?
32. What is the difference between kindness and obligation?
33. Is it easier to be kind to friends or strangers?
34. Why do some people hesitate to ask for help?
35. How can we become better at noticing the needs of others?

Take Action: Reach out to someone you have not spoken to recently simply to see how they are doing.

Kindness in Everyday Life

36. What opportunities for kindness do we overlook every day?
37. How can we make schools more caring environments?
38. How can workplaces become more compassionate?
39. What role does kindness play in leadership?
40. How can one act of kindness create a ripple effect?

Take Action: Thank someone whose kindness often goes unnoticed.

41. What prevents people from helping others?
42. Have you ever witnessed an act of kindness that inspired you?
43. How can technology be used to spread kindness?
44. What is a time when kindness changed the outcome of a difficult situation?
45. Why is kindness especially important during times of disagreement?

Take Action: Choose one person with whom you disagree and make an effort to listen respectfully to their perspective.

Building a Kinder Society

21. How should gratitude influence the way we treat others?
22. What responsibilities come with the freedoms we enjoy?
23. How can gratitude inspire acts of chesed?
24. How can appreciation lead to action?
25. What is one thing you are grateful for today that you may have overlooked yesterday?

Reflection Challenge

Think about a time when someone showed you kindness during a difficult period in your life. What did they do? Why did it matter? How can you pay that kindness forward?

Areyvut Challenge

Create a "Kindness Chain." Perform one act of kindness and challenge the recipient to perform an act of kindness for someone else. Encourage the chain to continue for as long as possible.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"The world is built on chesed."
— Tehillim (Psalms) 89:3

Discussion Question:

What would happen if every person performed one additional act of kindness each day?

Section 3: CommUNITY and Belonging

Human beings are created to live in relationship with one another.

While independence is celebrated throughout American history, so too is interdependence. Communities are strongest when people know one another, care about one another and feel responsible for one another.

Judaism places enormous emphasis on commUNITY. We pray together, celebrate together, mourn together and support one another through life's challenges and opportunities. Strong communities do not happen by accident. They are built intentionally through relationships, participation and shared responsibility.

As America marks its 250th birthday, it is worth reflecting on the communities to which we belong and the role we play in strengthening them.

Questions 51-75

- 51. What makes a commUNITY strong?
- 52. What communities are most important in your life?
- 53. When do you feel most connected to others?
- 54. What is the difference between living near people and being part of a commUNITY?
- 55. What responsibility do commUNITY members have to one another?

Take Action: Introduce yourself to someone in your neighborhood, school, workplace or synagogue whom you do not know well.

- 56. What qualities make someone a good commUNITY member?
- 57. What causes people to feel isolated?
- 58. How can we help others feel welcome?
- 59. What role does hospitality play in building commUNITY?
- 60. When have you felt a strong sense of belonging?

Take Action: Invite someone to join you for a meal, event, activity or conversation.

- 61. What can communities do to become more inclusive?
- 62. How can communities better support people during difficult times?
- 63. How do relationships with people from different backgrounds strengthen a commUNITY?
- 64. How do shared experiences strengthen relationships?
- 65. What traditions help create a sense of belonging?

Take Action: Attend a commUNITY event you would not normally attend.

- 66. What role does volunteerism play in building commUNITY?
- 67. How can social media strengthen communities?
- 68. How can social media weaken communities?
- 69. What is one challenge facing your commUNITY today?
- 70. What is one strength of your commUNITY that should be celebrated?

Take Action: Publicly recognize someone who contributes to your commUNITY.

- 71. How can one person positively influence an entire commUNITY?
- 72. What does it mean to be responsible for one another?
- 73. How can communities bridge differences and disagreements?
- 74. What kind of commUNITY do you hope future generations inherit?
- 75. What can you do this week to strengthen one of the communities to which you belong?

Reflection Challenge

Think about a commUNITY that has had a significant impact on your life. What made it meaningful? What did you contribute to it? What did you receive from it?

Areyvut Challenge

Identify one person who may feel disconnected or overlooked and make a meaningful effort to include them in a conversation, event or activity this week.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazei." "All of Israel is responsible for one another."
— Talmud Shevuot 39a

Discussion Question:

What does mutual responsibility look like in America today?

Section 4: Service and Volunteerism

A strong society depends upon people who are willing to contribute to something larger than themselves.

While governments, institutions and organizations all play important roles, many of society's greatest needs are addressed by people who choose to give of their time, talents and energy to help others.

Service is not simply something we do. It is an expression of who we are and what we value.

Throughout American history, volunteers have strengthened communities, responded to crises, supported neighbors and improved the lives of countless people. Jewish tradition similarly teaches that we each have a responsibility to help improve the world around us.

The following questions invite us to reflect on service, volunteerism and the impact that one person can make.

Questions 76-100

76. What does it mean to serve others?

77. Why do people volunteer?

78. Who has inspired you through their service?

79. How does helping others benefit the person providing the help?

80. What causes are most deserving of volunteer support?

Take Action: Research a local nonprofit and learn about its mission and impact.

81. What was your first volunteer experience?

82. What made that experience meaningful or memorable?

83. What skills do you have that could help others?

84. How can people who are very busy still make a difference?

85. Why do some people volunteer consistently while others do not?

Take Action: Commit to one hour of volunteer service during the next month.

86. What commUNITY needs concern you most?

87. What is something young people can do today that would meaningfully improve their commUNITY?

88. How can older adults continue contributing to society?

89. What role should families play in volunteering together?

90. How can volunteerism strengthen communities?

Take Action: Identify one volunteer opportunity that you can do with a friend or family member.

91. What barriers prevent people from volunteering?

92. How can organizations make volunteering more meaningful?

93. Have you ever volunteered for something that changed your perspective?

94. What is the difference between volunteering once and making service a habit?

95. How can schools encourage lifelong volunteerism?

Take Action: Thank someone who regularly volunteers and serves others.

96. If you could solve one problem through volunteer efforts, what would it be?

97. How can service help bridge differences between people?

98. What impact can one dedicated volunteer have?

99. How do acts of service reflect Jewish values?

100. What is one way you can serve others this week?

Reflection Challenge

Think about a volunteer experience that impacted you. What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about others? How did the experience change you?

Areyvut Challenge

Participate in a hands-on volunteer experience and then reflect on the following question: Who benefited more from the experience—the recipient or the volunteer?

Jewish Text for Reflection

"It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."
— Pirkei Avot 2:16

Discussion Question:

How can this teaching inspire people to volunteer even when the problems facing society seem overwhelming?

Section 5: Leadership and Responsibility

Leadership is often associated with titles, positions and authority. In reality, leadership has far less to do with status and far more to do with influence, character and responsibility. Every day, people lead through their actions, decisions and example. Parents lead families. Teachers lead students. Coaches lead teams. Volunteers lead projects. Friends lead friends.

America's story has been shaped by leaders from every walk of life. Some became famous. Most did not. Yet each made a difference through their willingness to take responsibility and help others.

Jewish tradition teaches that leadership begins with personal responsibility. Before we can influence others, we must first be willing to hold ourselves accountable and act with integrity.

The following questions invite us to reflect on leadership, responsibility and the impact each of us can have.

Questions 100-125

- 101. What makes someone a leader?
- 102. Who is the best leader you have ever known?
- 103. What qualities do you most admire in a leader?
- 104. Can someone be a leader without holding a formal position?
- 105. What is the difference between influence and authority?

Take Action: Thank someone whose leadership has positively impacted your life.

- 106. What responsibility comes with leadership?
- 107. Why do some people avoid leadership roles?
- 108. When have you demonstrated leadership?
- 109. What leadership skills are most important today?
- 110. How can leaders build trust?

Take Action: Identify one leadership quality you would like to strengthen and work on it this week.

- 111. How do leaders respond when they make mistakes?
- 112. Why is accountability important?
- 113. What role does humility play in leadership?
- 114. How can leaders inspire others to act?
- 115. What is the difference between leading by example and leading by instruction?

Take Action: Take responsibility for a task or challenge that you have been postponing.

- 116. What does integrity mean?
- 117. Why is it important to keep commitments?
- 118. How can people earn the trust of others?
- 119. When is it difficult to do the right thing?
- 120. How should leaders respond during times of crisis?

Take Action: Reflect on a recent decision and consider whether it reflected your values.

- 121. What responsibility do we have for the well-being of our communities?
- 122. How can young people develop leadership skills?
- 123. What leadership qualities do you hope future generations embrace?
- 124. What challenge is waiting for someone to step forward and lead?
- 125. What is one way you can lead by example this week?

Reflection Challenge

Think about a leader whom you admire. What specific actions or qualities earned your respect? How can you incorporate those qualities into your own life?

Areyvut Challenge

Identify a need in your school, synagogue, workplace or commUNITY. Rather than waiting for someone else to address it, take one concrete step toward helping solve it.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"In a place where there are no leaders, strive to be a leader."
— Pirkei Avot 2:5

Discussion Question:

What does this teaching mean in today's world? When is it appropriate to step forward and lead?

Section 6: Tzedakah and Giving

Giving is one of the most powerful ways that individuals can impact the world around them.

Judaism views tzedakah not merely as charity, but as an act of justice and responsibility. Giving reminds us that we are connected to one another and that we have an obligation to help those in need.

Some people give through financial support. Others give through acts of kindness, volunteer service, mentorship, a kind word or advocacy. Regardless of the form it takes, giving reflects our values and priorities.

The following questions invite us to think about generosity, philanthropy and the role that giving plays in building a stronger society.

Questions 126-150

126. What does tzedakah mean to you?

127. Why is giving important?

128. What motivates people to give?

129. Who taught you about generosity?

130. What is the difference between charity and responsibility?

Take Action: Make a contribution—large or small—to a cause that matters to you.

131. Is it better to give one large gift or many smaller gifts throughout the year? Why?

132. How does giving benefit the giver?

133. What causes are most important to you?

134. How do you decide where to give?

135. What role should generosity play in daily life?

Take Action: Support a nonprofit or cause that is new to you.

136. What is the most meaningful gift you have ever given?

137. What is the most meaningful gift you have ever received?

138. How can children learn the importance of giving?

139. How can families create a culture of generosity?

140. What role does gratitude play in giving?

Take Action: Create a family, school or workplace giving project.

141. How can small gifts make a big difference?

142. What responsibility do those with resources have toward others?

143. What causes deserve greater support?

144. How can generosity strengthen communities?

145. What impact can collective giving have?

Take Action: Encourage a friend or family member to support a cause they care about.

146. How can giving help build relationships?

147. What role does trust play in philanthropy?

148. How can we inspire future generations to give?

149. What would a more generous society look like?

150. What is one way you can practice generosity this week?

Reflection Challenge

Review your giving during the past year. What does it reveal about your values, priorities and commitments?

Areyvut Challenge

For the next seven days, perform one act of generosity each day. Reflect on how those actions impact both the recipient and yourself.

Jewish Text for Reflection

“The world stands on three things: Torah, service and acts of kindness.”
— Pirkei Avot 1:2

Discussion Question:

How can generosity help strengthen both individuals and communities?

Section 7: Tikkun Olam and Social Responsibility

While no one person can solve every problem, each of us can contribute to making the world better.

The Jewish concept of tikkun olam challenges us to look beyond ourselves and consider how our actions affect others. It encourages us to take responsibility, pursue justice and work toward positive change.

America's history is filled with individuals who recognized problems and chose to act. Their efforts helped improve communities, strengthen institutions and expand opportunities for others.

The following questions encourage us to think about our responsibilities and the role we can play in helping repair the world.

Questions 151-175

- 151. What does tikkun olam mean to you?
- 152. What issue in society concerns you most?
- 153. What problem would you most like to help solve?
- 154. How can one person make a difference?
- 155. What responsibility do we have to improve the world we inherited?

Take Action: Learn more about an issue that matters to you and identify one way to help.

- 156. Why do some people take action while others remain observers?
- 157. How can communities address local challenges?
- 158. What role should compassion play in addressing social problems?
- 159. How can individuals advocate for positive change?
- 160. What does it mean to be responsible for more than yourself?

Take Action: Participate in a commUNITY improvement project.

- 161. How can young people contribute to repairing the world?
- 162. What examples of positive change inspire you?
- 163. What role does education play in creating a better society?
- 164. How can people with different perspectives work together?
- 165. What obstacles often prevent change?

Take Action: Discuss a commUNITY challenge with others and brainstorm possible solutions.

- 166. How can acts of kindness contribute to larger societal change?
- 167. What responsibility do we have to care for vulnerable populations?
- 168. How can volunteerism support social change?
- 169. What role does optimism play in improving the world?
- 170. Why is persistence important when addressing difficult problems?

Take Action: Support an initiative that seeks to improve your commUNITY.

- 171. What does success look like when trying to improve society?
- 172. How can we measure impact?
- 173. What lessons can we learn from people who created positive change?
- 174. What challenge do you hope future generations will solve?
- 175. What step can you take today to help repair the world?

Reflection Challenge

Identify one issue that concerns you. What practical action can you take during the next month to address it?

Areyvut Challenge

Gather a group of friends, classmates, colleagues or family members and work together on a project that benefits others.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." — Pirkei Avot 2:16

Discussion Question:

How can this teaching help us balance ambition with realism when trying to improve the world?

Section 8: Learning Across Generations

Every generation has something to teach and something to learn.

America's story has been shaped by the wisdom, sacrifices, experiences and dreams of generations that came before us. At the same time, younger generations bring new ideas, perspectives and opportunities that help shape the future. Judaism places tremendous value on transmitting values, traditions and experiences from one generation to the next. The conversations we have across generations strengthen families, communities and society.

The following questions encourage meaningful dialogue between people of different ages and backgrounds.

Questions 176-200

176. What is the most important lesson you learned from an older generation?

177. What is something younger generations understand particularly well?

178. How can people of different generations learn from one another?

179. What family story should never be forgotten?

180. Who is an older person who has influenced your life?

Take Action: Interview a parent, grandparent, mentor or older commUNITY member about their life experiences.

181. What values have been passed down through your family?

182. What traditions are important to preserve?

183. What changes have improved society over time?

184. What challenges are unique to younger generations?

185. What challenges were unique to older generations?

Take Action: Ask someone from a different generation to share a life lesson with you.

186. What historical event has most shaped your generation?

187. How do family stories help shape identity?

188. What responsibility do we have to preserve memories?

189. What can young people teach older adults?

190. What can older adults teach young people?

Take Action: Spend meaningful time with someone at least 20 years older or younger than you.

191. How has technology changed relationships between generations?

192. What values should be passed to future generations?

193. What experiences helped shape your worldview?

194. What advice would you give to future generations?

195. What do you hope future generations remember about our time?

Take Action: Write a letter to a future generation.

196. How do communities benefit from intergenerational relationships?

197. What role does respect play in learning from others?

198. Why is it important to listen to people's stories?

199. What legacy do you hope to leave?

200. How can we strengthen connections between generations?

Reflection Challenge

Think about someone who helped shape the person you have become. What did they teach you? Have you thanked them?

Areyvut Challenge

Spend time with a senior citizen and learn about a significant moment in their life. Share one lesson you learned with others.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders and they will explain to you." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 32:7

Discussion Question:

What wisdom from previous generations do we most need today?

Section 9: Jewish Values and American Ideals

For 250 years, America has provided opportunities and freedoms that have allowed Jewish communities to grow and flourish.

At the same time, Jewish values have inspired generations of Jews to contribute to American society through service, philanthropy, education, leadership and volunteerism.

While America and Judaism are distinct, many American ideals resonate with timeless Jewish values including responsibility, justice, freedom, compassion, service and commUNITY.

The following questions invite reflection on the relationship between Jewish values and American ideals.

Questions 201-225

201. Which American value resonates most strongly with you?

202. Which Jewish value most influences your life?

203. How are freedom and responsibility connected?

204. What does liberty mean from a Jewish perspective?

205. What responsibilities accompany our rights?

Take Action: Reflect on one freedom you enjoy and how you can use it responsibly.

206. How does Judaism encourage commUNITY involvement?

207. What role does service play in Jewish life?

208. How does tzedakah strengthen society?

209. What does tikkun olam mean in practice?

210. How can Jewish values influence everyday decisions?

Take Action: Perform an act of chesed inspired by a Jewish teaching.

211. Why is gratitude central to Jewish life?

212. How does Jewish tradition view leadership?

213. What role does education play in Judaism?

214. How can faith inspire action?

215. How can values guide decision-making?

Take Action: Study a Jewish text that inspires you to take action.

216. How can people with different beliefs work together for the common good?

217. Which Jewish contribution to American society do you find most inspiring?

218. What can America learn from Jewish values?

219. What can Jewish communities learn from America?

220. How can diversity strengthen a society?

Take Action: Learn about someone whose actions reflected both Jewish values and American ideals.

221. What role does mutual responsibility play in society?

222. How can we strengthen respect for one another?

223. What values should unite Americans?

224. What values should unite Jews?

225. How can Jewish values help shape the next 250 years?

Reflection Challenge

Choose one Jewish value and identify one practical way to live that value during the coming week.

Areyvut Challenge

Learn about a Jewish individual whose actions positively impacted American society and share their story with others.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"Justice, justice shall you pursue."
— Devarim
(Deuteronomy) 16:20

Discussion Question:

How can the pursuit of justice strengthen both Jewish communities and American society?

Section 10: The Next 250 Years

Anniversaries are opportunities not only to reflect on the past but also to think about the future.

America's 250th birthday invites us to consider what kind of nation, communities and world we hope future generations will inherit.

While none of us can predict the future, each of us has the ability to influence it through our choices, actions and values.

The following questions encourage us to think about the legacy we hope to leave and the future we hope to build.

America 250 Challenge:

If you could leave one message for Americans celebrating the nation's 300th birthday, what would you say?

Questions 226-250

226. What do you hope America looks like at its 300th birthday?

227. What values should future generations embrace?

228. What challenges do you hope future generations solve?

229. What opportunities do you hope future generations enjoy?

230. What responsibility do we have to future generations?

Take Action: Write down three hopes you have for the future.

231. What kind of commUNITY do you hope your grandchildren inherit?

232. What role should kindness play in the future?

233. How can technology improve society?

234. How can technology create challenges?

235. What values should never change?

Take Action: Discuss your hopes for the future with family or friends.

236. What role will volunteerism play in the future?

237. How can future generations strengthen communities?

238. What lessons from the past should never be forgotten?

239. What accomplishments should future generations celebrate?

240. What can we do today to build a better tomorrow?

Take Action: Choose one action that will benefit future generations.

241. How can we create a more compassionate society?

242. How can we strengthen civic engagement?

243. What role should education play in shaping the future?

244. What can individuals do to leave a positive legacy?

245. What does it mean to plant seeds for future generations?

Take Action: Begin a project that will positively impact others beyond your lifetime.

246. What will future generations thank us for?

247. What mistakes should future generations avoid?

248. What legacy do you hope to leave behind?

249. What is one action you can take today that will matter years from now?

250. How can you help build the future you hope to see?

Reflection Challenge

Imagine that someone is writing about your life 50 years from now. What do you hope they say about your values, actions and impact?

Areyvut Challenge

Create a personal action plan identifying one way you will strengthen your family, commUNITY and world during the coming year.

Jewish Text for Reflection

"It is not upon you to finish the work, but neither are you free to neglect it."
— Pirkei Avot 2:16

Discussion Question:

What responsibility do we have to future generations?

Conclusion

America's 250th birthday is more than a celebration of the past.

It is an opportunity to reflect on who we are, what we value and what responsibilities we have to one another.

Throughout this resource, we have explored questions about gratitude, kindness, service, leadership, generosity, responsibility, commUNITY and the future. While the questions may differ, they share a common theme: each of us can make a positive difference.

No individual can solve every problem.

No single act of kindness can transform the world.

Yet history repeatedly demonstrates that meaningful change often begins with one conversation, one act of generosity, one volunteer, one leader or one person who chooses to care.

That belief is at the heart of Areyvut's work.

As you complete this resource, we encourage you to identify one idea that inspired you, one conversation that challenged you and one action that you will take as a result.

The future will be shaped not only by the values we discuss, but by the values we live.

May we continue to strengthen our families, our communities, our country, the Jewish people and the world.

May we honor the past, embrace the present and help build a brighter future.

And may these conversations continue long after America's 250th birthday has passed.