



The Jewish Federation
OF GREATER WASHINGTON

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PURPOSE

Home Alone for Passover, We Face Jerusalem Together

**Webinar Presented & Resources Compiled
by Federation's Master Teacher, Avi West**

As we prepare to explore the seder's simulated journey from slavery to freedom, we can't help but reflect on this year's unusual circumstances of being a nation in isolation.

Technology may help us connect to family, but a tradition at seder time may also connect us to the people of Israel around the globe.

Together, we face east and declare "Next year in Jerusalem!"

Seder Shifts for 2020

It is okay to mourn the reasons why this night is different – but name the issue and counter it with words and action. It is ok not to pull off the usual seder extravaganza; but what you do still needs to have meaning and relevance (as it always should) even if you have to repurpose certain traditions (as Jews have always done as a high art form).

Abstract fears (many unknowns)	Concrete rituals and symbolic acts
Distanced from loved ones	“Korban Pesach”; not sacrifice but “offering that approaches” or brings near
Isolation indoors	Celebrate Spring renewal “nature goes on” karpas
When life gives you lemons...	Charoset turns slavery’s mortar into sweet aphrodisiac
FOMO and CONTROL	Matzah as bread of humility
Plague all around	Dayenu gratitude all around
Cut off from multi-generations	Yachatz is fixed by afikomen; discover your inner child, SING! And remember ancestors through albums/stories
Don’t whine	WINE! Make 4 toasts “to the one here today and the ones we lost along the way – because drinks bring back memories
Economic emergency	Rehearse how you will again open your door to “all who are hungry” Even in slavery, we excelled (metzuyanim)
Politics got you down (US & Israel)	Next Year in Jerusalem the “rebuilt” and the city on the hill repaired – keep your eye on the potential

Passover Activity: Write Your Own Six-Word Passover Poetry

Published on *ReformJudaism.org*

This activity can be done in the days or weeks leading up to Passover or during your seder with a group of any size. It's appropriate for families, kids who can write, *chavruta* (pairs of study partners) or even individuals pondering the upcoming holiday.

Materials:

- Writing paper/magic slate
- Pencils or pens
- Kitchen timer

Directions:

1. Distribute paper and a pen or pencil to each person.
2. Set the timer for six minutes (or longer if younger children are participating).
3. During the allotted time, each person writes a six-word poem related to Passover. For example, "So happy to be here again" or "Seder is too long, when is food?" or "Do not be sharp like matzah" or "Be sweet like charoset and wine"

When time's up, share your poems, either with the whole group or with someone sitting near them.

How to Conduct a Passover Seder – The 14 Steps of a Traditional Seder

Rabbi Barry D Lerner

Provided by Hillel's Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Learning

This article provides a breakdown of the seder: each major component and the order in which it traditionally occurs. For more details, including readings, words to the blessings and other materials, you will want to consult a Haggadah.

Note: Before the seder begins, the host traditionally lights the holiday candles and says the blessing.

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheynu melekh ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lehadlik ner shel yom tov.

1. *Kadesh* — Kiddush

Blessing the wine at the start of the meal. On Friday, the biblical section specific to the Sabbath is added. On Saturday evening, add the Havdalah section separating sanctity of Sabbath from the sanctity of holy day.

2. *Urhatz* –Wash

Washing preparation for eating vegetable entree (*Karpas*). Since the need for such washing was questioned, no blessing is required. It is good to go around to each of the participants, pouring water over the hands from a pitcher into a bowl.

3. *Karpas* — Spring vegetable

Any vegetable that is not bitter may be eaten. Common vegetables used are celery, parsley, onion, or potato. Dipped in salt water for purification and seasoning they remind us of the vegetation of spring, or the baby boys cast in the Nile, or the tears shed by the slaves. The blessing said is the usual benediction of thanks before eating any vegetable.

4. *Yahatz* — Divide

Break the middle matzah into two parts. Take larger part, wrap it in napkin and save for the conclusion of the meal. Try — but not too hard — to keep it from being stolen by the children because it must be available for the end of the meal.

5. *Magid* — Narrate

- Lift up the plate with the symbols of affliction. The traditional invitation to the stranger to join the seder is offered.
- The wine cups are refilled.
- The youngest person at the seder asks the Four Questions.
- The Response to the Questions. Read portions in unison. Have other portions recited by different individuals at the table.
- The Four Children.
- The Ten Plagues. Since our “cup of salvation” cannot be regarded as full when we recall the suffering of the Egyptians, a drop of wine is removed from the cup with the mention of each plague.

- *Dayenu* (It Would Have Been Enough). Let all present join in the refrain thanking God for all the miracles he bestowed upon the Israelites.
- The cup is again lifted in joy, thankful for God's deliverance, ready to praise Him with the first word of the Psalm of praise (Hallel).
- Two Psalms of the Hallel.
- Drink the wine, with the blessing of salvation.

6. *Rohtza* — Wash

Ready to eat, the hands are washed before the meal, as is required at any meal. It is similar to the previous handwashing, but now all wash with the usual benediction as the hands are dried.

7. *Motzi Matzah* — Eating Matzah

The first food at the meal is the matzah, the unleavened bread. The usual blessing over bread, *Hamotzi*, is recited. However, before eating the matzah, a second blessing thanking God for the requirement to eat matzah is recited.

8. *Maror* — Bitter Herbs

Small pieces of horseradish are dipped into *haroset* (a sweet paste symbolic of mortar) to indicate that overemphasis on material things results in bitterness. Before eating it, a blessing thanking God for this requirement is recited. Some people mix ground horseradish with charoset.

9. *Korekh* — Hillel Sandwich

In ancient times, the Talmudic scholar Hillel ate the three symbolic foods (lamb, matzah, and bitter herbs) together so that each mouthful contained all three. Thus, the symbols of slavery and liberation were intermingled. Now that we do not have the Paschal lamb, we eat just the matzah and horseradish in a "Hillel sandwich." No special blessing is said, but we do read the words recalling Hillel's practice.

10. *Shulhan Orekh* — Meal

The joyous feasting gives us the feeling of human fellowship in harmony with God.

11. *Tzafun* — Dessert

Now the afikomen. Either someone has "stolen" it, or parents can hide the afikomen when it is first put aside (Step 4) and let the children look for it during the meal to win a prize.

12. *Barekh* — Grace After Meals (Birkat Hamazon)

This is the usual "*bentschen*," grace after meals, including, of course, thankfulness for the Passover holiday. Fill the cup before this grace and drink the third cup at its conclusion, with the usual "*bore p'ri hagafen*" blessing. At this point in the seder, we **open the door For Elijah**, who by tradition is the forerunner of the Messiah, the harbinger of hope. Sing "*Eliyahu Ha-navi*."

13. *Hallel* — Psalms of Praise

The rest of the evening is given over to hymns and songs. The Hallel is completed, and all join in singing songs: *Adir Hu*, *Had Gadya*, etc.

14. *Nirtzah* — Conclusion

With the traditional formula, the seder is concluded, and then we sing *L'Shana HaBa'ah B'Yrushalayim* [Next Year in Jerusalem].

1. The Jewish Song That Comforts Me in Uncertain Times

Rabbi Alex Kress

Kol ha'olam kulo gesher tzar maod v'haikar lo l'fached klal

כל העולם כולו גֶּשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד וְהַעִיקָר לֹא לִפְחֹד כָּלֵל

“The whole world is a very narrow bridge, but the important thing is not to fear at all.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxiFABQLMLw>

It begins quiet and timid, fearful and unsure of the path ahead. As the song journeys forward, intimate voices slide in and fade out, guiding one foot in front of the other. At times erupting in power, in others sinking into doubt, ultimately landing in a peaceful submission to circumstance.

As we traverse the narrow bridge in front of us, [Geshet](#) provides us with a musical roadmap: Give fear room to process, but do not let it take root; humbly accept the unnatural and urgent circumstances before us; and then, put one foot in front of the other, sing with gusto, and digitally embrace your people.

Soon, we'll be singing together around another bonfire.

2. What is Mindfulness?

Rabbi Jill Berkson Zimmerman

Mindfulness is the ability to pay attention to the present moment... We can be mindful of both mundane and sacred activities... Instead of brushing our teeth quickly... we can set an intention (kavanah) to brush our teeth, noticing the taste of the toothpaste, the feel of the bristles on our teeth, the sound of the motions... Paying attention to our inhales and exhales is a core mindfulness practice... We can use Jewish texts, values, and stories from our tradition to teach about being present, grateful, and compassionate... Our recitation of blessings focuses our awareness of a piece of fruit, thunder, a rainbow... Passover celebrates our freedom from slavery in Egypt and the birth of the Jewish People, but it is also an opportunity to notice signs of spring growth...the core mindfulness principles such as finding the sacred in the ordinary...

3. We Can Still Celebrate Our Freedom This Passover. Here's How.

Amy Grossblatt Pessah

And yet, given coronavirus, Passover this year presents several unprecedented questions: Just how, exactly, will we take this metaphorical journey from a sense of slavery to freedom? How can we be free when we are not free to move about in the world? How do we remain present and focused on the holiday and its message in the midst of the current pandemic?

True freedom can be found in a two-pronged approach: by connecting to the “Big Picture,” as I call it, and by taking control of our own minds. When I say “connecting to the Big Picture,” here’s what I mean: If we are able to move from the micro of our individual lives and shift to a wider perspective, it helps us see things from a different vantage point.

By celebrating Passover — even if it’s just a pared-down version with our immediate families at home this year — we connect ourselves with our ancestors, who have also experienced significant challenges and traumas over the millennia. The seder helps us link ourselves to the chain of our people, a chain that has survived for thousands of years. Reframing the situation this way can help us find strength and hope. Might we be able to feel the tenacity of our ancestors supporting us, even as we fear that we will fumble?

By linking ourselves to the larger story of our people, we gain a more expansive perspective. Panning out to see the Big Picture enables us to realize that, despite the immense challenges of the moment, this, too, shall pass. Most certainly, our lives will be forever changed by this pandemic, but I believe that, ultimately, we will be stronger, wiser, and more resilient. Right now, we are living through some dark times, and there is much uncertainty. How we navigate this experience is up to each of us. How we think about our current reality is our decision.

Despite the unknowns, we can choose to fill our minds with hopeful thoughts, or we can choose to fill our mind with negativity and fear. We can choose to focus on what we do have, or we can choose to give attention to what we do not have. We can wake each morning and count our blessings, or we can begin our days in angst and anxiety. We are not able to change the fact that we are living in the midst of a pandemic, but we can change how we relate to it, how we experience it, and what we feed our minds.

4. Mindfulness Practices for Every Step of The Seder

Sarah Chandler

Urchatz *ורחץ* – the washing of the hands.

Water is life and our hands are purified by the waters. Instead of washing and then rushing to dry them off, hold your wet hands open on your lap or on the edge of the table. Sit in silence or quiet whispers as you watch and feel the water evaporating.

Q. Think how the new washing regimen in the time of COVID-19 has heightened your understanding of water and life.

Yachatz *יחץ* – breaking the middle matza.

The breaking of the matza should be done in silence. As you prepare for the break, count three long breaths with eyes open and focus on the matza, held high for all to see. Listen closely to the sound of the matza breaking. At this moment, we hold the paradox of wholeness and brokenness; the matza is both the bread of our affliction and the bread of freedom. Take three more deep breaths.

Q. What paradoxes in your life are you sitting with today?

Shulchan oreich *שלחן עורך* – lit. "set table"—the serving of the meal.

Many seder meals begin with a spherical object, such as an egg, gefilte fish, or matza ball. Take a moment to examine this round food item, with no beginning and no ending. You have made it to the midpoint of the seder; and yet, this round item reminds us there is no beginning and no end. We are fully redeemed, and we are still waiting to be redeemed. Turn over the item again, then bring it to your mouth for the first bite.

5. Guided Meditation to Prepare for Pesakh

Emunah Noah Jess Schurtman, Applied Jewish Spirituality

www.appliedjewishspirituality.org

Every year, before Pesakh, we are commanded to prepare our homes by getting rid of all the *hametz*, to start fresh and clean, to sweep out all the gunk and crumbs. We can do the same thing with the homes called our bodies, where we store a lot of aches, pains, annoyances, disturbances, stresses, maladaptive habits, etc. I invite you now to get comfortable in your seat, feel your feet firmly on the floor, your buttocks on the seat, and allow your spine to be lifted as if you had a string on the top of your head that was being pulled up toward the heavens.

I invite you to think of a positive word or Energy, such as *Yah, Adonai, Shekhinah, Shalom, Ahavah*, something you would experience more of if you had freedom from the things you are enslaved to. For all four worlds, we will be using this positive word (and our breath) as the source of power/energy to sweep through our bodies and direct all the *traif, drek, shmutz, and hametz* down our arms and out through our fingers on the out breath. You may feel a warm, tingling sensation, or a sense of sludge as you do this, or you may not notice a difference. Allow whatever happens to be OK.

Round 1 – Physical body scan – broom

Releasing body tensions and distractions of things you have to do. Start at your feet and work your way up the body, part by part, paying particular attention to any part that feels constricted. Breathing deeply, think, “breathing in (Shalom or positive word), breathing out, releasing *shmutz*” (3–4 min).

Round 2 – Mind/Thoughts – dust rag

Breathing in *Yah* (or other positive word) and dusting out worries, fears, repetitive thoughts anything you are holding onto that belongs to someone else; any thoughts that are keeping you in a restricted state of being; any ego puffery. Don't think too hard about it, just whatever is present at this moment. Think, “breathing in (Shalom or other positive word), breathing out, releasing mental *shmutz*” (3–4 min).

Round 3 – Emotions – water

Wash away difficult emotions, irritations and annoyances, stored grief, any core negative beliefs that narrow how you view yourself or the world (3–4 min).

Round 4 – Spirit/ Essence – feather

Allow the breath to be very refined, like a baby's breath, and imagine a feather brushing away anything that remains that is blocking you from essence, from oneness, that is keeping you in *Mitzrayim*. Allow the breath to travel to the hidden corners and whisk away any remaining particles. Focus on air cleansing and purifying your body, your mind, your heart, your spirit, your soul (3–4 min). Shake out your hands/arms, releasing your internal *hametz*. Sit quietly observing your new-found sense of freedom and spaciousness, focusing on the breath (8–10 min).

6. On Conquering Fear

David Brooks

New York Times, April 3, 2015

Once people start speaking to each other and telling stories to each other, they generate alternate worlds. A story isn't an argument or a collection of data. It contains multiple meanings that can be discussed, questioned and reinterpreted. Storytelling becomes central to conquering fear. It's a way of naming and making sense of fear and imagining different routes out. Storytellers expand the consciousness, waken the sleeping self and give their hearers the words and motifs to use for themselves. Jews tell the story of the Exodus each generation to understand the fears they feel at that moment. Stories create new ways of seeing, which lead to new ways of feeling and thinking.

Q. What does this excerpt from David Brooks' article suggest about the power of storytelling? Does it resonate with your own experience of the Seder ritual?

7. Sefat Emet on the Haggadah

R' Yehudah Leib Alter of Gur (1847 – 1905)

The Haggadah says, "In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see themselves [as if they left Mitzrayim]..." and then it continues, "[The Divine] took us out..." (Dt. 6:23) It appears from this that through Emunah, that there is a Yitziat Mitzrayim for every generation revealed in this [practice of Seder Night]... And it appears to me also that through Emunah a person enters into the collective, and certainly life is drawn to every Israelite from the collective experience of Yitziat Mitzrayim for Israelite consciousness. Only through Emunah can a person come to this! And once a person sees themselves as if they left, they know and believe that even the enlightenment that they have, would not exist without Yitziat Mitzrayim. Through this it is revealed to them to see how to really leave! That is the truth, but it must be clarified through Emunah, which is the recital of the story, in clarifying, open and explicit language, that in every generation there is a Yitziat Mitzrayim according to the concerns of that generation, and all of this occurs at the time of [the original] Yitziat Mitzrayim. And according to a person's Emunah that they themselves are like one who went out, this aspect is revealed to them, and they feel the current Yitziat Mitzrayim, and so every person can leave their own personal Meitzer (place of constriction)."

Q. What does this teaching say to you about the meaning of your Pesach this year? What is your personal Meitzer (place of constriction) that you seek liberation from?

8. Guided Meditation for Pesach

Daniel Raphael Silverstein

This meditation is inspired, in part, and also based on the teaching of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Chasidic Judaism, that "a person is a microcosm of the world, and they have inside them Pharaoh, Egypt and so on."

<https://opensiddur.org/prayers/lunisolar/pilgrimage/passover/erev-pesach/guided-meditation-for-pesach-by-rabbi-daniel-raphael-silverstein/>

Make yourself comfortable, take a deep breath, and then let's begin...

We were born into slavery.

Our bodies, minds and spirits are broken from harsh labor and savage cruelty.

We have been here so long, our oppression seems to us the way life was, is and will be.

We are powerless, we are crushed, we are silenced, we are unable to even name or describe our reality.

The days, months and years are not marked in any way; they simply stream into one another.

Until, after many years, something eventually changes.

For the first time, we permit ourselves to cry.

Our cry becomes a prayer, ascending to the Infinite and arousing compassion for our plight.

Our cry is a human awakening that changes G!d; it wakes up the Infinite.

G!d listens, G!d remembers, G!d sees, G!d knows.

We are beginning to retake control of our thoughts, of how we look at ourselves, and at life.

We have never marked time for ourselves, but now we are being told to count until the tenth day after the new moon and then to take a lamb – an Egyptian god – and brazenly tie it up, and then kill it.

And so, it happens...we take the god of our oppressors, we tie it up, we wait four more days then we kill it and we eat it, and we smear its blood on our doorposts.

When the moment of freedom comes, we walk out through those bloody doorposts and out into the wide-open desert.

We are learning once again what it is to be truly free, truly ourselves, truly alive.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) What is the liberation I am needing right now?
- 2) Freedom from what?
- 3) Freedom towards what?
- 4) How have I best made progress in this journey of liberation until now?
- 5) How might I best progress with this journey of liberation going forward from this moment?

9. Next Year in Jerusalem – Understanding the Familiar Phrase in Light of Modern Realities

Michele Alperin

The most straightforward answer is that “Jerusalem” refers to the future city—and its Temple—rebuilt when the Messiah comes. Most traditional Jews feel quite comfortable expressing this messianic longing at the end of the seder. And to clarify for Israelis, some traditional Haggadot indicate that those in the Jewish state should replace the phrase with “next year in Jerusalem, the rebuilt,” implying a rebuilt Temple. But many liberal Jews do not accept the idea of the Messiah and the return to a Temple-based Judaism focused on Jerusalem. The phrase “next year in Jerusalem,” however, can be interpreted in many different ways. These words convey a web of meaning from concrete to abstract, and from earthly to holy.... On the seder night, each participant has personally experienced the physical redemption at that Red Sea.... Then, as we end the seder, we utter this phrase that reaches forward to the coming of the Messiah and to complete spiritual redemption, represented by Jerusalem.

One interpretation is that by implementing God’s word, the Jewish people in the Diaspora and in Israel can have a role in bringing peace to the world and to Jerusalem.

For Diaspora Jews who find it difficult to authentically recite this phrase at the end of the seder, the opening words, “next year,” offer another entry point. The uttering of “next year in Jerusalem” is a way of expressing solidarity with Klal Yisrael, the entire Jewish community, past, present and future. “Next year” encapsulates that continuing flicker of hope that has sustained Jews for centuries past in the midst of despair. It also offers hope that the Israeli nation of today will find peace and that Jerusalem will remain a potential future haven for Diaspora Jews who still live under political and economic oppression.

But our phrase also offers a more majestic sense of hope. The words “next year” suggest a sense of being on the cusp but not yet having arrived, of possibility that is ripe and alive with implication. Rabbi David Hartman, in *The Leader’s Guide to the Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night*, sees a “radical futurism” reflected in the phrase, with its intimation of messianic possibility. He sees both the miracles of creation and the exodus from Egypt as pointing to the potential for revolutionary change—that things don’t have to be the way they are, that oppressive regimes can change. Every year, he writes, Jews drink four cups of wine and then pour a fifth for Elijah. “The cup is poured, but not yet drunk. Yet the cup of hope is poured every year.

Passover is the night for reckless dreams; for visions about what a human being can be, what society can be, what people can be, what history may become. That is the significance of ‘Le-shanah ha-ba-a b’Yerushalayim’ (Next year in Jerusalem).”

10. Ohr Kodesh Congregation

Rabbi Lyle A. Fishman

Our setting this year will be unusual. Perhaps this year we may compare ourselves to the five sages who gathered in B'nei B'rack where they narrated the story of the exodus throughout the night until their students alerted them that the morning had arrived. They delighted in the story even if they were isolated and perhaps hidden. We can accept the challenges of this Pesach and add new layers of meaning to the seder. For example, in our confinement shouldn't we appreciate Eliyahu's virtual journey from home to home?

I suggest that we think creatively about the "ha lachma anya/all who are hungry" passage. We cannot open our doors to them this year. We can contact food banks and homeless shelters before Passover asking if we can donate food to the hungry. We can also commit to contribute our time and resources after Passover to local organizations that support the needy.

Finally, I want to remind you of a Biblical second chance that might become important for us this year. In the book of Numbers, Israelites acknowledge to Moses that they missed Passover. They ask Moses about an opportunity to observe Pesach later. The answer they receive is that under certain conditions they can observe Pesach one month later. Perhaps this year, when we are liberated from the constraints of COVID-19, we can all gather with family and friends to observe a second chance Passover.

11. A Passover Poem

Bracha Meschinov

House cleaned

More or less

Kitchen surfaces covered

More or less

Food ready

More or less

An experience of redemption

More or less

12. A Shabbat Prayer for Healing in the Era of Coronavirus

Rabbi Leah Doberne-Schor

Dear God,
We ask that You be there for us,
as you were for our ancestors,
a pillar in our midst.

Help us to turn to You, O God,
for guidance during these troubled times.
Give us strength for the weeks ahead.

Help us to reach out in love and
compassion to one another,
to support those who are ill,
unable to leave their homes,
or who are struggling financially.

Be with our doctors and caregivers,
our nurses and scientists,
as they are working to develop a cure
and care for those who are ill.

Be with all who are ill and their families,
offering them Your compassion.
And, we pray, Your healing.

Be with our leaders.
Guide them to wise decisions
in these troubled days.

Be with us O God.
Help us to find the inner strength
to be patient when our nerves are tested.

Be our Still Waters
when we are surrounded by fear
and anxiety.

Be our Rock, to Whom we can turn
and give our worry and fears.
Be our Shelter.
Guide our steps
and keep us safe.
Help us to feel Your presence in these
times of change.

As we light the candles this Shabbat,
each in our own homes,
may our kindled lamps,
each its own point of light,
join as the stars in the heavens --
a community together
welcoming Your Shabbat Peace
Your Shabbat Love
Your Shabbat Joy
into our homes,
Your day of rest that together we welcome
more than ever before..

13. Karev Yom

From the song "And it Came to Pass at Midnight"/"Vayehi bechatzi halayla"

<https://youtu.be/rqCjyK TRII>

*Karev yom asher hoo lo yom v'lo lyla
Rahm hoda kee l'cha hayom af l'cha halayla
Shomrim hafked l'eercha kol hayom v'chol halayla
Ta'eer k'or yom kheskhat lyla*

קָרֵב יוֹם אֲשֶׁר הוּא לֹא יוֹם וְלֹא לַיְלָה
רַם הוֹדַע כִּי לָךְ הַיּוֹם אַף לָךְ הַלַּיְלָה
שׁוֹמְרִים הַפְקֵד לְעִירְךָ כָּל הַיּוֹם וְכָל הַלַּיְלָה
תֵּאִיר כְּאוֹר יוֹם חֶסְכַּת לַיְלָה

Bring near the day is that is neither day nor night.
Most High, make known that Yours is the day as well as the night.
Appoint watchmen [to guard] Your city all day and all night.
Illuminate like day the dark of night.

14. A Special Prayer for Healing for the Seder Table

Erica Brown

(To be inserted and recited in unison after reciting the Ten Plagues in the Haggadah)

God, who brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, shower us today with Your wonder. Bring a swift and steady end to the plague blowing through the world like pestilence. Free and deliver us. Redeem and liberate us. Lift and carry us through this crisis.

Shine Your enduring love on those performing daily miracles: medical personnel and teachers, grocery and delivery workers, sanitations crews and volunteers, and all of our healers and helpers. Reward their kindness with good health and a thousand blessings. We thank them for lifting and carrying us through this crisis.

Endow us with abundant love, compassion, strength and extraordinary patience to remain kind in these trying times and find true shelter in each another. Let us lift and carry one another through this crisis.

Bring solace and consolation to those who are grieving and to those who are alone and grant a complete healing of body and soul to those who are suffering, in the spirit of Isaiah's wisdom, "For the Lord comforts his people, and will have compassion on his afflicted ones" (49:13).

Hear us, O Lord, and answer us, lift us and carry us, and let us say, Amen.

15. What Matters Most – Yalto

Edward Ibeh

In times of
self-quarantine
people
are fearful of
COVID-19's spread
and take stock
of what
matters most
to them
in their lives
grandparents
mothers and fathers
guardians of their hearts
and
keepers of their souls.

16. Psalms Chapter 122 תהלים – A Song of Ascents; of David

1 I was glad when they said to me: We are going to the house of the Lord.

א שמחתי, באמרים לי-- בית יהוה נלה.

2 Our feet were standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

ב עמדות, היו רגלינו-- בשעריה, ירושלים.

3 Jerusalem that is built. It is like a city that is united together.

ג ירושלים הבנויה-- כעיר, שחברה-לה יחדו.

4 For the tribes went up there, the tribes of the Lord, a testimony to Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

ד ששם עלו שבטים, שבטי-יה--עדות לישׂראל: להדות, לשם יהוה.

5 For there they sat on thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

ה כי שמה, ישבו כסאות למשפט: כסאות, לבית דוד.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May they prosper who love you.

ו שאלו, שלום ירושלים; ישליו, אהביה.

7 May peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces.

ז יהי-שלום בחילה; שלוה, בארמנותיה.

8 For my brothers' and companions' sakes may I now say: Peace be within you.

ח למען, אחי ורעי-- אדברה-נא שלום בך.

9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

ט למען, בית-יהוה אלהינו-- אבקשה טוב לך.

17. Next Year in Jerusalem – A Poem for the Waning Moments of Passover

Rick Lupert

As long as I've been alive
the words *next year in Jerusalem*
have left my mouth
at the end of every
Passover seder my ancient bones
have reclined at.
My bones in New Jersey cried
next year in Jerusalem and the very
next year I was in Florida.
My bones in Florida cried
next year in Jerusalem and the very
next year I was in Syracuse.
My bones in Syracuse cried
next year in Jerusalem and the very
next year I was in California.
My bones in California cried
next year in Jerusalem and the very
next year I was in Allentown.
We're holding steady in
Pennsylvania, still crying for the
holy land.

I could just buy a ticket but
the rest of the family has declared
Jerusalem to be in the Rust Belt.
We don't even gather in
the east end of the house.
This is the funk of diaspora.
This is the Jerusalem we
create in our North American
living rooms.
This is the holy city
whose golden bricks I see
whenever our eyes intertwine.
I'm going to keep crying
next year in Jerusalem.
A promise kept
in whatever city
that cushions
these old bones.

18. Ecology of Jerusalem From Poems of Jerusalem

Yehuda Amichai

The air over Jerusalem is saturated with prayers

and dreams

like the air over industrial cities.

It's hard to breathe.

And from time to time a new shipment of history

arrives

and the houses and towers are its packing materials.

Later these are discarded and piled up in dumps.

And sometimes candles arrive instead of people

and then it's quiet.

And sometimes people come instead of candles

and then there's noise.

And in enclosed gardens heavy with jasmine

foreign consulates,

like wicked brides that have been rejected,

lie in wait for their moment.

19. Jerusalem is a Port City

Yehuda Amichai

Jerusalem is a port city on the shore of eternity.

The Temple Mount is a great ship, a pleasure yawl

In splendor.

From the portholes of her Wailing Wall, jubilant saints

Peer like passengers. Hasidim on the pier wave

Goodbye, yelling hurrah, bon voyage. She

Is always docking, always embarking.

And the fences and docks

And policemen and flags and churches' high masts

And the mosques and the smokestacks of synagogues and the chanteys

Of praise and mountain-billows.

The ram's horn sounds out sunset: one more

Has set sail.

Yom Kippur sailors in white uniforms

Ascend between the ropes and ladders of tried-and-true prayers.

And the profits of market and gates and goldencap domes:

Jerusalem is the Venice of God.

20. Tourists

Yehuda Amichai

Visits of condolence is all we get from them.

They squat at the Holocaust Memorial,

They put on grave faces at the Wailing Wall

And they laugh behind heavy curtains

In their hotels.

They have their pictures taken

Together with our famous dead

At Rachel's Tomb and Herzl's Tomb

And on Ammunition Hill.

They weep over our sweet boys

And lust after our tough girls

And hang up their underwear

To dry quickly

In cool, blue bathrooms.

Once I sat on the steps by agate at David's Tower,

I placed my two heavy baskets at my side. A group of tourists

was standing around their guide and I became their target marker. "You see

that man with the baskets? Just right of his head there's an arch

from the Roman period. Just right of his head." "But he's moving, he's moving!"

I said to myself: redemption will come only if their guide tells them,

"You see that arch from the Roman period? It's not important: but next to it,

left and down a bit, there sits a man who's bought fruit and vegetables for his family."

21. Close Every Door from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVVpigmilbas>

Close every door to me,
Hide all the world from me
Bar all the windows
And shut out the light

Do what you want with me,
Hate me and laugh at me
Darken my daytime
And torture my night

If my life were important I
Would ask will I live or die
But I know the answers lie
Far from this world

Close every door to me,
Keep those I love from me
Children of Israel
Are never alone

For I know I shall find
My own peace of mind
For I have been promised
A land of my own

Close every door to me,
Hide all the world from me
Bar all the windows
And shut out the light

Just give me a number
Instead of my name
Forget all about me
And let me decay

I do not matter,
I'm only one person
Destroy me completely
Then throw me away

If my life were important I
Would ask will I live or die
But I know the answers lie
Far from this world

Close every door to me,
Keep those I love from me
Children of Israel Are never alone

For we know we shall find
Our own peace of mind
For we have been promised
A land of our own

22. Somewhere Out There from Feivel

Linda Ronstadt, James Ingram

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tawDB3iE2rA>

Somewhere out there
Beneath the pale moonlight
Someone's thinking of me
And loving me tonight

Somewhere out there
Someone's saying a prayer
That we'll find one another
In that big somewhere out there

And even though I know how very far apart we are
It helps to think we might be wishing
On the same bright star

*And when the night wind starts to sing a lonesome lullaby
It helps to think we're sleeping
Underneath the same big sky*

Somewhere out there
If love can see us through
Then we'll be together
Somewhere out there
Out where dreams come true

And even though I know how very far apart we are
It helps to think we might be wishing
On the same bright star

*And when the night wind starts to sing a lonesome lullaby
It helps to think we're sleeping
Underneath the same big sky*

Somewhere out there
If love can see us through
Then we'll be together
Somewhere out there
Out where dreams come true

23. 10 Great Discussion Topics for Your Passover Seder

Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro

Somewhere during the course of your Passover seder this year – whether it's just you and your roommate, or with your partner and kids, or even with virtual guests joining you from afar – ask one (or all) of these questions and see how others respond. Depending on your audience, the responses may be either serious or playful. Either way, you're guaranteed interesting discussion.

1. 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?
2. Which symbol on the seder plate do you think is the most important?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. What do Passover and Easter have in common? (Think spring festivals, eggs, and redemption, to start.) How do they differ?
6. 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?
7. If President Barack Obama, actress Lena Dunham, or basketball star LeBron James (or any other celebrity you like) came to your seder, which symbol or ritual would you want to show them first?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. What experiences in your life have given you hope? Tell about some struggle to change something that worked. What did you learn from it?