

THE PASSOVER QUIZ

2020-5780



The first Golden Shmura Matzah Award, 1982

This is the 40th year of this acclaimed quiz.

Fifty years ago, when I was 20, I went to Israel for the summer after my junior year in college. And though I arranged to meet people along the way, I basically went by myself because going to Israel was my main focus, and my friends were uncertain if they would get there or spend much time there. I worked on a kibbutz for a month and traveled afterwards for 2 weeks. As Beva, who had been there the year before, told me it would be, it was a life altering experience. A few months ago, on the 50th anniversary of my trip I again went to Israel by myself. I joined a group – CAARI- of wonderful active retired individuals. We volunteered, we toured, we met with informed speakers and we ate a lot. This time it was a life reaffirming experience. The future of Judaism and the existence and security of Israel are basically one and the same. *Am Yisrael Hai* and *M'deenat Yisrael Hai*. Murray J. Berkowitz

There is one correct answer to each question (I think). The person with the most correct answers wins the Golden *Shmura Matzah Award*.

In case of a tie, the winner will be decided by the following tie-breaker:

How many times has this author been to Israel and for how many total weeks?

Answer key:

1.g. 2.b. 3.f. 4.a. 5.e. 6.f. 7.a. 8.e. 9.d. 10.e.

11.c. 12.e. 13.f. 14.f.

15.b. 16.e. 17.f. 18. e. 19.choice. 20.choice. 21.choice.

1. There are multiple books published on all aspects of Passover. Which of the following titles and descriptions are actual publications?
 - a. “The Passover Parrot” by Zusman which relates the story of a parrot that steals the *afikoman*. Polly want a (matzah) cracker!
 - b. “The Dinosaur on Passover” is an illustrated children’s book. The prehistoric animal arrives at a young boy’s house to help him celebrate Pesah but instead causes havoc. Reminiscent of when Barr became attorney general to help establish the rule of law but continually violated legal and moral precedent.
 - c. “The *Afikomen* Mambo” by Rabbi Joe Black. It has a catchy rhyme to enliven the hunt for the *afikomen* and includes a sing along CD. Joe is also, rumor has it, working on a Hamilton-type musical based on the life of *Raban Gamliel*, entitled, “Getting to the Point.”
 - d. “The Banana Duct-Taped Art *Haggadah*” by Italian artist Marizio Cottelin. This one-of-a-kind masterpiece has a banana duct-taped to the cover of a large volume and begs the question of the value of the fruit-shaped valuables given to the Israelites by the Egyptians. The volume also includes celery secured with electric chartreuse duct tape for the *karpas*.
 - e. “The Baby Shark *Haggadah*” is a song and choreographed movement book. It highlights the splitting of the Red Sea emphasizing the words “safe at last,” which demands a group response of “doo doo doo doo doo doo” (six times).
 - f. “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel Passover *Haggadah*” was put out last year as a 1958 retro Maxwell House *Haggadah*. We can imagine it featuring Midge making her special date-inundated Sephardic *Haroset*, and just as she begins preparation, she and her agent Susie exclaim, “Pits Out!”
 - g. a., b., c. and f.

2. Why is some of the wheat for *matzah* grown in Southern Arizona around Yuma?
 - a. Because a certain sect of *Hasidic* Jews are devoted to old TV westerns. (You should see their *Streimels*.) They identify the Israelites with Johnny Yuma, who “was a rebel and roamed through the West,” because the Hebrews rebelled against Pharaoh and also wandered aimlessly, like their clean-cut hero.
 - b. Because of the dry conditions, the wheat and the flour are not contaminated with moisture, which would make them *hametz*. One hundred thousand pounds of flour is shipped back to the East yearly.
 - c. Yuma is very close to Felicity, California, which has been declared by the French as the center of the world. Who wouldn’t pay extra for a premium *matzah* labelled as, “The Center of the World *Matzah*” and sold only at Whole Foods with a discount for Amazon Prime members?
 - d. The Quenchen (also known as Yuma) Native Americans of the area highly regarded “dreamers” and since Joseph was known for his dream interpretation, the religious Jews harvesting the wheat there felt a kinship with the people and the area. Also ‘dream catchers’ are shaped like a sideways yarmulke.

3. Besides the normal items on the Seder plate--*matzah*, *marror*, *hazeret*, *haroset*, *z’roa*, *beitzah*, and *karpas*--which of the following items do some people place on their plates and why?
 - a. A tangerine - (according to Susannah Heschel) to symbolize freedom for gay and lesbian Jews. Orange you glad we respect everyone?
 - b. Pine cones – symbolize mass incarceration in our society. They bring to mind Trump’s fixer, the Cohen who used his head for nefarious tasks. Beldar would have been disappointed.
 - c. Artichokes - to recognize interfaith families. Though they remind me of Uncle Harry’s joke, “Artie chokes three for a dollar.”
 - d. Fair trade chocolate – to remember those still in slavery throughout the world. It really isn’t fair.
 - e. The Mueller Report – because we just can’t forget it.
 - f. All but e.

4. What happened to Pharaoh after the Israelites left Egypt?
 - a. He pursued them to the Sea of Reeds and he, along with his army, drowned when the sea closed.
 - b. Like Prince Harry and Megan, he decided to give up his royal role. He became a herpetologist specializing in frogs (since he had been exposed to quite a few). He was very hoppie.

- c. He went home and blamed his daughter for everything because she pulled Moses out of the water and saved him. This began a campaign of misogyny that challenged the world until recently. This injustice has been an indelible “wine stain” on the *Pesah* tablecloth of life. (It may take 23 years to remove).
- d. He retired to his estate and concentrated on creating palindromes to ease his frustration. He came up with “Dammit I’m mad” to express his dismay. Then, eventually, he waxed philosophical with, “Do geese see God?” Finally, his depressed state of mind led him to compulsive gambling, wagering only on numbers in roulette, but “never odd or even.”
5. The *maggid*, the telling of the story of Passover, begins with the *Ha Lahma* statement. This declaration is comprised of three parts. Which of the items below, with the combined accompanying explanations, comprise the totality of the statement?
- One statement links all gathered, especially the children, to the Jews of Egypt and their plight (the kumbaya moment--kumbaya was originally a plea to G-d to help those in need).
 - One statement demonstrates our concern for our fellow Jews, *klal yisrael*, and teaches this concern to our children even as we celebrate a joyous holiday. (Like party animals who belong to ASPCA.)
 - One statement deals with the hope for a magnificent future for the Jewish people. A hope that has been sustained through many difficult times in our history. During Black Death in the 14th century, Jews were blamed for their neighbors’ disease, resulting in the annihilation of 510 Jewish communities. This could be termed “pandemic profiling” by ignorant and prejudiced people.
 - By holding aloft the “simple plant-based” *matzah* we declare the freedom from processed and poor, nutritionally unbalanced food. This delivers to us the hope, joy, and health that comes with eating a Vegan diet (roasted beets can replace the shank bone on the *Seder* plate).
 - a., b. and c.
6. In Morocco there is an age-old question, “Did the Berbers convert to Judaism or did immigrant Jews become Berbers?” Regardless of the answer, there was a close relationship between the Jewish Berber community (which no longer exists) and the Muslim Berber community. This cross-culturization is demonstrated in the Passover song, “*Ehad Mi Yodayah*” with variations found in both groups. Which of the following statements are true regarding this song?
- The Muslim version of the tune is titled *my igan yan* which means, “who is one?” The Jewish version is, “One, who knows what it is?” But the answer to both is the same. (And no it is not the Japanese manga artist).
 - The Jews sing the song at the *Pesah Seder*, the Muslim Berbers have their young children belt it out after a day of study at a Koranic school. (This is thought to have been the inspiration for the new musical “School of the Dome of the Rock.”)
 - Only two answers are similar for the enumerated questions in the song. The answer to #1 is of course – G-d. The answer to #11 in Hebrew is for the eleven stars Joseph saw in his dream (which represented his brothers) and in the Muslim version it is for the 11 brothers of *Yussuf*.
 - When singing the tune, both groups wrapped themselves in heavy blankets due to the harsh environs of the Atlas Mountains. Thus, the origination of the Burr-Burr blankets. Also the famed wrestler Mighty Atlas was rumored to have been a Berber, though his religion was unknown. His real name was Maurice Shapiro, so we may have a clue.
 - They drank Rabbi Jacob Wine, kosher for *Pesah* and bottled in Casablanca, in the Jewish community with the song and mint tea, prepared and poured properly, with the tune in the Muslim community
 - a., b. and c.
7. As we raise the cup of wine to praise G-d at the beginning of the *hallel*, we speak of 5 forms of deliverance. Match the periods in Jewish history with the type of deliverance to receive the correct encoded answer.
- | | |
|---|---|
| p. Release from Egyptian bondage | O. From darkness to great light. |
| a. Return from Babylonian exile | is. From grief to joy |
| e. Stopping Haman at Purim | THE. From mourning to festivity |
| L. Victory by the Maccabees | r. From slavery to freedom |
| R. To end our own exile | D. From servitude to redemption |

- a. p.r.a.is.e. THE. L.O.R.D.
- b. a.r.is.e. O. P.O.p.e.
- c. D.e.a.L. THE. D.O.p.e.
- d. THE. P.e.a.r.L is. R.e.D.

8. In medieval Spain many Jews, forced to become Christians under the threat of death, became Marranos. They observed Passover in secret. Which of the following describes some of their clandestine observances?
- a. They had a practice of taking willow branches and beating the waters of a stream to commemorate the parting of the Sea of Reeds. To deflect suspicion they would explain to anyone who happened by that they were just trying to perfect the invention of the first Jacuzzi.
 - b. They secretly made wine in their basements – giving rise to the first wine cellars. It is rumored one guy name Herzog stomped on his grapes while totally nude, giving rise to Bare-on Herzog wines.
 - c. Uncertain of the true date of *Pesah*, they celebrated the holiday on the full moon of the civil month of March. Fearful of being discovered, this led to the expression “beware the [H]ides of March.”
 - d. During *Pesah*, whenever a low flying insect **passed over** a man and woman who were romantically involved, they would be reminded of G-d’s deliverance and be inspired to make mad passionate love to express their free will. The event which triggered this tryst was referred to as “among free people love takes flight as the Spanish flies fly.” Later the description of this event was reduced to “Spanish Fly.” (Today, a marriage that is in trouble is referred to, at times, as a “no fly zone.”)
 - e. a., b. and c
9. During Temple times there is little information on how the pascal sacrifice was observed. The only *Torah* reference is in Exodus 12:11, which states, “This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded. Your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a Passover offering from the Lord.” Considering this passage, which of the following is (are) true?
- a. Today, only the few surviving Samaritans follow the *Torah* literally. You can always identify a Samaritan because of his girded loins and his gaseous nature from eating way too fast.
 - b. Rabbinical authorities only considered these instructions applicable for the first pascal meal, the Egyptian Passover, and not to any subsequent *Pesah* celebration (one and done).
 - c. The *Naot* sandal company is launching an ad campaign targeted at observant Jews with a line of biblical sandals that are very kosher and chic to wear for *Pesah*. They look stunning with a *kittel* and come with a free walking stick.
 - d. a. & b
10. Which of the statements below are correct concerning the ten plagues?
- a. They demonstrated that a Supreme Being existed who was all powerful without limitations. Somewhat akin to a mother-in-law in today’s world.
 - b. They rectified the dominance of a society over one segment of that society. Those in power dominated in three ways. By improperly treating strangers in their midst, by enslaving them and by torturing them. Sound at all familiar? (And don’t forget family separations!)
 - c. Rabbi Yehuda’s mnemonic, *D’TZACH ADASH B’AHAV*, helps us remember the plagues, even though not in chronological order.
 - d. Little frogs brought down the high and mighty, much like diminutive Greta is doing with today’s world leaders. I hope it is getting appreciably hot for them.
 - e. All of the above.
11. Why is there a custom among some not to use cloves on Passover?
- a. Because cloves can increase the motility of the gut and therefore one cannot fully appreciate the effect of *matzah* (the evacuation of the bread of affliction).
 - b. Because clove chewing gum, invented in 1914, was used during the prohibition to hide the smell of alcohol on the breath. During the *Seder*, we, as free people, revel in our alcohol breath.

- c. At one time cloves were soaked in beer. Beer is not only *hametz*, but carries names like ‘dogfish,’ which refers to a non-kosher shark and ‘Bud,’ which is definitely not a Jewish moniker.
 - d. Because some people think that vaping clove tobacco is safer than cigarettes. The Rabbis know better, so they banned cloves and flavored vaping all together.
12. Continuing a forty year tradition, Brigham Young University, offers a Passover Seder service this year. Which of the following statements are valid concerning this tradition?
- a. They take place on Fridays, March 20 and 27, and Saturday, April 11. They start promptly at 6:00 pm and Sunday dress (whatever that is; for me it’s a bathrobe) is appropriate.
 - b. It is not recommended for children under 12 years of age. So I guess you must be *B’nei Mitzvah* to attend and apparently no questions are allowed.
 - c. The event will be held in Room 3228 of the Wilkinson Center. In *Gematria*, the number 3228, is equivalent to the phrase, “Let’s secretly convert the Jews who perished in the Holocaust.”
 - d. They can accommodate most dietary restrictions, but I am not sure you could get a kosher meal there.
 - e. Four cups of wine will be served to all, with Slivovitz shots available for the first 18 sign-ups.
 - f. All of the above but e.
13. In various communities, the *Maggid* text, as we know it, has been expanded. Which of the following are examples of this?
- a. In the Yemenite community, a section follows the four questions. It is about one hundred words written in Arabic and ends, “This is the answer.” This is opposed to Ken Jennings, Jeopardy GOAT champion, who confidentially announces out loud in English, “This is the question and I know it.”
 - b. The ‘*Utkol*’ (meaning “you shall say”) is an add-on from Tunisia. This long passage describing Abraham’s recognition of G-d was inserted immediately following the declaration, “Our fathers were idol worshippers.” They pay homage to the first Jew, who some say celebrated *Pesah* when he served *matzah* in his tent to his “angelic” visitors.
 - c. In a French edition, following the ideas of *Aromi Avod*, there is an added statement of the angels’ first attempt to destroy Egypt. *Rashi* rejected this. As we know, no middle man was necessary in the Exodus.
 - d. In the Republican-controlled Senate edition, there is no need to bear witness or answer questions, let alone expound on anything. Though there is some reference about Jordan being chilly and cold.
 - e. In the Bernie Sanders edition, following the line “afterwards they will go out with great possessions,” there is an insert. Here he expounds that the masses are slaves to the top one percent. That, by virtue of birth alone, and not industry, all are entitled to their wealth. Not quite a totally correct view of how freedom and self-determination should work.
 - f. a., b. and c.
14. Besides the definite structure of the *Seder*, there is also a certain symmetry to it. It is divided into two parts separated by the meal. The first part is the story of the Exodus and the pre-meal rites. Then comes the meal itself, with special foods. Then one concludes with the post-meal rites encompassing the praise of G-d and the creation of a feeling of festivity. Which of the following demonstrate this symmetry?
- a. There are two Aramaic passages: one at the beginning (*ha lahma anya*) and one at the end (*had gadya*). Spending next year in Jerusalem is expressed both near the beginning and near the end of the *Seder*.
 - b. There is a series of texts read before drinking the two cups of wine before the meal, and likewise on the same number of cups of wine after the meal.
 - c. Questions are asked twice in the evening. In the *ma nishtana* in the first half and in *Ehad Mi Yode’a* in the second part. (Except for the cousin who constantly asks stupid questions at random, like, “Why did the shatterproof Tesla windshield shatter?”)
 - d. You try to seat the two most annoying relatives furthest from yourself, equidistant, and at opposite ends of the table. This is the symmetry of self-preservation.
 - e. Some Jewish mathematicians use Romanesco broccoli for *karpas* because this chartreuse veggie is symmetrical and it a natural approximation of a fractal. Its inflorescence is self-similar in character, with branched meristems, making up a logarithmic spiral. (I will stick to celery.)

f. a., b. and c.

15. All but which of the following is(are) miraculous aspects of *manna*?
- It lasted 40 years. That is the longest miracle and is 39 years, 344 days and 8 hours longer than Kris Humphries fidelity to Kim Kardashian. Thank goodness she found Kanye West and then, she gave birth to daughter North, who has given new direction to her life.
 - Vegans got specially marked *manna*. But how did it ever imitate the taste of nutritional yeast?
 - No matter how much quantity of *manna* the former slaves gathered in with a “free hand” everyone ended up with the same amount, thus creating the expression, “Your eyes are too big for your hands.”
 - Any *manna* left over would rot on the following day, except *manna* that fell on Friday. It stayed fresh all through the Saturday. (Though it did taste like *cholent* on *Shabbat*.)
16. According to the “*Kabbalah Haggadah, Pesach Decoded*”, by Yehudah Berg, what are some of the meanings of washing our hands in the step *Rahatz* of the *Seder*?
- Our hands are like magnets that attract negative forces that reside in our hearts and our minds. By washing our hands, we wash all the negative forces that cling to them. (Jeffrey Epstein’s hands were so soiled that no amount of washing could cleanse his heart.)
 - The first 3 letters of the last 3 words of this prayer, Al Nitilat Yadyim, spell “*any*” or “poor person.” The last 3 letters of the same words has the same numerical value as “*ashir*” or “rich person.” By washing our hands and meditating to inject positive energy, we elevate ourselves from a disadvantaged person to a person rich with a wealth of meaning (and the author elevates himself by finding meaning in obscurity - maybe he should write a *Pesah* quiz).
 - Even before the spread of the Coronavirus, hand washing has been integral to our ritual in the consumption of bread. Also, it is customary in other instances as before worship, after sleeping, after leaving a lavatory, and after vacating a cemetery. Cleanliness equals G-dliness and disease control.
 - Bibi Netanyahu carried the idea of one hand washing the other to an unfortunate conclusion.
 - a. and b.
17. Which of the following are actual traditions that have been associated over the years with the celebration of *Pesah* around the world?
- In Tripoli about 100 years ago, Passover was a time for finding a husband. So young women would lose their scarfs normally covering their heads, stand on the roof or by the front door of their homes dressed in their best, and wait for suitors to bring them gifts. Once the presents of lettuce and flowers were accepted the couple was engaged. It is rumored that one rather pretty but haughty maiden standing on her roof with a tiara on her head received many offers, but refused them because she felt they were beneath her station (she had a very tall roof). Also, being quite stubborn, she stood out for 40 days and 40 nights waiting in **vain** for the right proposal. As luck would have, a thunderstorm arose and she was struck by lightning. This resulted in two positive outcomes: First, the shock from the strike altered her resolve and she married and lived happily ever after. Second, she saved her house from a conflagration from the lightning. Her predicament due to her vanity inspired her dad to invent a weather **vane**-lightening rod. It not only indicated wind direction, but he put a tiny tiara on the top of the lightning rod component to honor his **vain** daughter and to protect his home from being damaged by the elements.
 - During the Civil War Jewish soldiers used brick dust in their *haroset*, both as a symbol and because they lacked traditional ingredients. War is hell (on your taste buds and teeth too).
 - In a small Polish town on the seventh day of *Pesah*, *Hasidic* Jews flooded the floor with water, removed their shoes, rolled up their pant legs, and danced and drank as they crossed “the *Yam Suf*”. (If you try this at home, make sure you get that pre-*Pesah* pedicure and limit yourself to three slivovitz shots.)
 - Since watching the Rugrats Passover episode 25 years ago, the Charles Kushner family of New Jersey locked themselves in their attic on *Seder* nights. They relived the Exodus and reveled in G-d’s “mirables.” (This experience might have prepared Charles mentally for his time in jail.)
 - In a “Guide to a Yuppie Passover 2019” the husband is instructed to buy his wife a Peloton so she can please him by working off those extra *matzah* and macaroon pounds. (She is so pleased!)

f. a., b. and c.

18. The number four permeates the Passover celebration. Why is the number one also significant?
- Moses is mentioned only once in the Haggadah.
 - It's the number of times a woman's name is mentioned in the Haggadah. Females are not noteworthy in the story of the Exodus. No wonder it is difficult to have a woman as president without precedent.
 - There is only one G-d.
 - Unlike the full hand in the *midrash* of the *Maggid*, it's the number of middle fingers the Israelites raised to express themselves to the Egyptians as they made their way out.
 - a., b., and c.
19. Two Zuzim...
- will pay for a Baby Yoda doll from Hasbro if you preorder now for May.
 - is the scholarship amount left for the Scripps Spelling Bee winners after they had to divide it 8 ways.
 - is what a hector of land is worth in Australia after the massive fires.
 - is the value of the Astros World Series title. It should be revoked.
20. "In every generation they seek to destroy us" refers to...
- Hezbollah and Hamas
 - Iran
 - White supremacists and neo-Nazis
 - Ilhan Omar
 - The alarming rise in antisemitism throughout the world.
21. Next year...
- in a world without "The Good Place." (Come to think of it, with COVID-19 it is happening now)
 - in a country with checks and balances.
 - in a world without a devastating virus attack.
 - in Jerusalem.

Bonus from the web....What is the new *Seder* order for 2020?

Answer: *Kadesh...Urhatz...Karpas...Urhatz,,Yahatz...Urhatz...
Maggid...Rohtza...Motzi-Matzah...Urhatz...Korah...Urhatz...
Shulhan Oreh...Urhatz...and so forth*