



# PASSOVER

Prepared by: Jonathan Eig  
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Punctuation matters

It does

But not all written matter includes punctuation. Sometimes songs and poems and prayers force us to decide for ourselves whether we're reading a simple statement, a question, or an exclamation.

Consider the Passover song *Dayenu*, always a favorite at the Seder. We usually translate "Dayenu" as "It would have been enough," or simply "Enough," or "Enough to us."

If God had brought us out of Egypt, it would have been enough

If God had split the sea for us, it would have been enough

If God had given us Shabbat, it would have been enough

But what if "Dayenu" is a question?

What if the song is not about thanks but about hopes and ambitions? Passover has always been fundamentally different from celebrations such as Thanksgiving. It's always been an occasion to ask questions that challenge, a celebration of freedom that reminds us to remember our enslavement and to challenge the enslavement of others, a time to be grateful but not satisfied.

If we think of *Dayenu* as a question, we move from thanking God to pressing ourselves. What would we have done if God had brought us out of Egypt but *not* split the sea for us? What would we have done if God had led us to Mount Sinai but *not* given us the Torah? What would we have done for ourselves? What should we be doing for ourselves now rather than waiting for God to do for us?

Jews love questions and we always ask at least four questions at the Seder table. This year, consider adding another one: Dayenu?

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