



Why is this Passover Different from all the other Passovers?

I was speaking to one of our oldest members during the first days of the great Covid-19 synagogue transformation. She is 97 years old. She said to me, "Rabbi, in all my years, I have never experienced something like this in all my years!" I responded: "If you are 97 and haven't experienced something like this, there is a good chance that NOBODY in our community has."

I do not want to underplay the true grief and anxiety that many members of our community are going through because of the social isolation from the pandemic. Additionally, many of us are genuinely concerned for the health of our loved ones or ourselves. Some of us may have already experienced someone getting ill from this virus.

However, it is also important during this time to remember the great resiliency of humanity, and the eternal ability to adapt that the Jewish people have. We are the great adapters of history. Our ancestors snuck lulavim and etrogim under ghetto walls in Nazi-occupied Poland, and baked matzos in the ditches of Auschwitz. The rabbis in pre-State Israel revitalized the laws of the sabbatical year when we began having agriculture in the Land of Israel again. We will find ways to live Jewishly now also.

Even with the technological help, video calls don't take the place of Passover with family. Here are a few suggestions for how to make this Passover memorable – in positive ways.

1. RECORD FAMILY MEMORIES. Use this pandemic as an excuse to interview family members about your family's Exodus to America. Record on video or write it down so that it is not limited to just this Passover.

2. PLAY WITH ZOOM. Zoom and other video-conference technologies can allow multiple families to share a seder. Give yourself permission to make mistakes – we are all trying something new. The Torah says that the first Passover was filled with hipazon – hurried chaos. It's ok to have a little chaos with digital mishaps.

3. ENJOY THE NEW INTIMACY. The rabbis say that even if there is just a couple, they must ask each other the four questions. Even someone who is alone must ask the four questions. The mystics say that even God asks Himself the four questions. Use this year as a chance to go deep into the story of the Exodus. Ask good questions. Tell good stories. Read broadly and think deeply.

We will continue to find ways to connect in meaningful ways both during the pandemic and after it has hopefully passed over.

Annie and my children, Gavi, Ellie and Dani, join me in wishing you all a very meaningful Passover.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE Interim Executive Director



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It's April and that means it's tax time. Since the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 many of us who previously were able to itemize our deductions are no longer able to do so. The question now becomes how can I make a charitable contribution to Beth Shalom and still receive a tax benefit.

Those who are over 70 ½ years old and have an Individual Retirement Account have a way. You can avoid income tax

on the amount of your charitable contribution by making the charitable distribution directly from your IRA. Thus, your donation to Beth Shalom will reduce your tax liability and pay your dues at the same time. You can donate either all or just a part of your Required Minimum Distribution.

Please give me a call and I will be glad to further discuss this payment option.

