

This Night Is Different From Other Nights: Planning A Virtual Passover Seder

by Aly Walansky

The Passover Seder is all about gathering family and having a dinner steeped in tradition. This year, as families and friends cannot be together, that's going to look a little different.

“Many Jews around the world are faced for the first time with an existential Seder crisis based around a simple idea,” said Andrew Zimmern, James Beard award-winning TV personality, chef, executive producer and host of MSNBC’s “What’s Eating America.”

Seder means “order” in Hebrew, and refers to the 15 steps of a ritual dating back thousands of years. “The meal unfolds according to an elaborate script called the Haggadah, of which there are many modern versions... and the significance of the meal is in its details,” said Zimmern.

This is, of course, even more true in the bizarre and unnatural-feeling COVID-19. era. What if you don’t have bitter herbs, what if you don’t have the right foods, the right Haggadah, what if you can’t get matzoh? “God wants us to love each other, stay safe and honor the tradition as best we can!” said Zimmern.

Zimmern’s rabbi, Marcia Zimmerman whose congregation is based at Temple Israel in Minneapolis, had some advice that Zimmern passed on: “Every year, we gather around the Passover table and ask the Four Questions: “What

makes this night different from all other nights?" In light of what's happening in the world I can't help but think well there are so many things that make this year different from all other years. First off, stay home.... Saving a life is above all other commandments. We are living in unprecedented times. As many of us continue to work, care for our families and young children, and do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19, I encourage you to focus on the spirit - rather than on the letter - of the law this Passover. This year, let us all remain safe and healthy. L'shana haba'ah, next year, may we all be able to gather around our tables together in peace. B'virvat Shalom - With Blessings of Peace," said Zimmerman.

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