

A Spiritual Resource for Passover 2021

By Rabbi Renée Bauer

The Passover seder provides us an order for telling the story and ritualizing of the Israelite's journey from slavery to freedom. There are 14 traditional steps of the seder which we sing. This year we have been through the journey of a global pandemic. This is our second Passover during COVID. We can use the order of the seder to reflect on the journey we have been on through the last year. Here is a suggestion of how the pandemic journey can be mapped onto the seder. For more details about the traditional steps of the seder go to www.myjewishlearning.com/article/how-to-conduct-a-seder/.

Seder	Pandemic Journey
1. <i>Kadesh</i> — Kiddush	The beginning
2. <i>Urhatz</i> —Washing hands without a blessing.	Beginning to wash our hands, distance, wipe everything down with so much unknown about the virus and its spread.
3. <i>Karpas</i> — Spring vegetable dipped in salt water	Tears of the spring of 2020 as we watched the first wave of deaths and realized how much the pandemic would change our lives.

4. <i>Yahatz</i> — Divide the middle Matzah	We watched as our nation revealed its deep divisions- as evidenced by the racial protests of the summer and the mask wearing debates.
5. <i>Magid</i> — telling the story	As the quarantine dragged on, we began to tell the story and to ask questions. It felt long and we wondered when we it would be over.
6. <i>Rohtza</i> — Wash with a blessing	As we adjusted to life in the pandemic, we had our new routines and knew what to do to be safe.
7. <i>Motzi Matzah</i> — Eating Matzah	Matzah has little taste and is boring to eat. As the months wore on, we felt bored and craved the variety of life without COVID restrictions just as we crave bread during Passover.
8. <i>Maror</i> — Bitter Herbs	The second surge in the fall/winter brought fear and sadness and perhaps bitterness at our country's poor response.
9. <i>Korekh</i> — Hillel Sandwich	Perhaps this is where are now. We are not sure what to say just as there is no blessing for the sandwich. There is a mix of sweetness of the vaccine and the taste of bitterness of all the pandemic has taken.
10. <i>Shulhan Orekh</i> — Meal	We look forward to celebrating and eating together again.
11. <i>Tzafun</i> — Dessert	Just as we find the afikomen we will continue to find the hidden, and not so hidden, gifts we have gained during this time.
12. <i>Barekh</i> — Grace After Meal	We will or perhaps are beginning to say prayers of thanksgiving for having survived the pandemic.
13. <i>Hallel</i> — Psalms of Praise	Imagine the songs we will sing when this is all over
14. <i>Nirtzah</i> — Conclusion	We end the seder by saying next year in Jerusalem. Where will we be next year? What comes next? What is the new post-pandemic normal?