



CONGREGATION
ETZ HAYIM AT HOLLIS HILLS BAYSIDE
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Adar 5783

Dear Friends:

For the first time since 2019, we celebrate *Pesah* in freedom from fear of plague. Let's review the details we need to get ready for the Festival of Freedom!

- Many of us, no doubt, invite family and friends to the *seder*. If you are hosting a *seder* or two this year, please consider making yourself available to welcome others who may be in need of a place to celebrate this year. **Requests should be filtered through my office, and if you are in need of a place to go or are willing to host extra guests, please contact me.**
- Not only are we forbidden from eating *hametz*, or leaven; we are not even permitted to own it. We traditionally try to use up our *hametz* before *Pesah*, but to avoid great financial hardship, the rabbis enabled us to sell our *hametz* to a non-Jew, to whom the prohibitions do not apply, for the duration of Passover.

In order to sell your *hametz*, you can appoint me as your agent and sign your name to our congregation's document of sale. Enclosed is a form for you to return so I can serve as your agent. You may sell your *hametz* even before your house is clean. **We are permitted to eat *hametz* up until 10:45 AM on Wednesday morning, April 5th.**

Though I intend to re-purchase the *hametz* on your behalf immediately after *Pesah*, it must be noted that this is a very real transaction. Even if you keep the *hametz* in a separate area on your property, the *hametz* belongs to someone else; so improper use of it during Passover is also considered stealing!

It is my honor to serve as your *shaliah*, or agent, in this sacred task. **The form for sale of *hametz* is enclosed. I must have it in hand by 10 AM on Wednesday, April 5th in order to include your *hametz* in the transaction.**

- More than ever before, Kosher-for-Passover products are available to us. Virtually everything is being produced and supervised! However, as we well know, these products can be expensive, and not everyone who wishes to buy them is able.

One of the *mitzvot* of *Pesah* is *Ma'ot Hittin*--literally “money for wheat.” Jews have always taken care of one another, especially those in need of the basics for making Passover. I will be making a contribution to a variety of organizations that feed the hungry on Passover, as well as to those in our community who might need assistance. **I encourage you to return the enclosed form with your contribution to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, and I will make my donation in your name.**

- The Chesed committee is also setting up two bins in the shul in advance of Yom Tov. One will be for kosher, non-perishable *hametz* food items, which will be donated to a worthy cause. The last day for collection of *hametz* will be Friday, March 31st. The second bin will be for kosher-for-Pesah food items, which will be distributed to needy Jews throughout Queens. The final day of the collections will be Friday, March 31st. QJCC is looking for volunteers to help with food packing and distribution at Forest Hills Jewish Center. Stay tuned for dates and times.
- This year the annual *siyyum* (completing a tractate of Talmud) takes place on Wednesday, April 5th in person and on Zoom after morning services at 8:00 AM. If you are a first-born and don't want to fast on Wednesday join us for Rabbi Gary Greene's *siyyum* on Tractate Nazir, which he has been studying on as part of his Daf Yomi. And since an event as joyous as a *siyyum* must be marked with a *se'udat mitzvah*, a festive meal, he will gladly invite you to join him.
- I am enclosing the updated Rabbinical Assembly's Passover Guide to help get you started; it is newly updated, so read carefully. You'll also find the text of the ceremony of ***Bedikat Hametz*, the search for *hametz*, this year to be conducted on Tuesday night, April 4th, after dark. Those who wish to burn their *hametz* at the synagogue should come to the 210th street entrance at 11:15 AM on Wednesday morning, April 5th.**

Rabbi Greene and I are here to answer any and all *Pesah* questions you may have.

May we all have an easy preparation and a joyous *Pesah*—one that lives up to the joy of *Purim*!

Hag kasher ve-sameah,

Rabbi David Wise