



02 Jun
2020

CHAG PESACH SAMEACH FROM RABBI TANYA

Dear friends, How lucky we are to have such beautiful weather welcoming Pesach into our homes! Pesach is here and the spring is here too!

How is your mood today? Mine is Dayeinu. Just in time! Just in time to turn grumpiness into gratefulness, thoughts of “I’ve really had enough” into “well, our ancestors had it harder”, “I can’t take it anymore” into “it could have been worse without the beautiful weather, food, house and the Internet”!

We are living through a challenging time. The biggest challenges are uncertainty and the unknown. We are moving through the tunnel but no one yet knows where the end is.

Now we can really imagine how our ancestors felt when they were going out of slavery, not knowing what awaited them on the other shore of the sea- or if anything awaited them at all. We can understand now how our ancestors felt during wars or famine or pogroms. It is not only the Plague which is scary, it is also not knowing what the future holds for us and when the end of this test will be.

It is a test for all of us. How we react to the situation, how much we are in control of our negative emotions and how we encourage ourselves to grow in strength to overcome the fear and negativity. At the same time as developing empathy towards others and nourishing hope within ourselves, so we can share it with others, growing in our positive adaptability to the situation and making the most of it, making ourselves available for others, because when we help others, we also help ourselves.

We, as a community, have been a great example of all of the above, so I am confident that we will make the most of Pesach this year despite the circumstances and exactly because of them!

I cannot thank the care group, the volunteers' group and the communication team enough. They have made sure that we all stayed connected and were there for each other when it was needed.

A few of you offered to share your knowledge and skills with us all and I particularly look forward to the French lesson with Alex Mottier on Friday and a session on Mindfulness with Jo Boydell next Tuesday night. More sessions with other volunteers are planned already as well (including my Biblical course after Pesach) and will be revealed to you in the next couple of weeks. Surprise!

I am also excited about a new Zoom initiative we are launching on Sunday, when a different family will host us for tea and a chat about life, their coping strategies and their challenges during the quarantine every Sunday evening at 8pm starting this Sunday at my home. Please zoom in with your cuppa!

This Shabbat is the first in which I will lead together with other lay-readers of our congregation: Mary Brewer, Cathy Lasher and Norman Randall. also because for the first time we will be using chat rooms (which Cathy Lasher kindly helped me with) so you will have an opportunity to have a discussion and catch up with your friends during and at the end of the service. I am really looking forward to this Shabbat and Pesach Kol Ha-Moed Service.

You are a constant source of inspiration to me. I am amazed how creative and adaptive you are! I am attaching two photos of Shmura Matzah (made within 18 minutes!) which two members of our congregation (the two I know about!) Cathy Lasher and Chris Shilling made for their home Seder this year. How cool is that! The photos attached.

And most of us will be getting creative with our Seder Plates – I am really looking forward to sharing mine with you on Thursday night!

The Seder tonight will be different from most Sedarim we have done. It won't be difficult for any of us to tell tonight why this night is different from all other nights. The night of Seder is the time to ask questions. Use this unique opportunity to ask yourself many questions about our traditions and the world around us.

Enjoy the difference of your experience this year, enjoy the fact that you are marking it in freedom, good health and connecting to your friends and family over the Internet! Our spirits will rejoice and prevail – we are all in it together and let's have a joyful Exodus from our slaveries. Lets celebrate the strength and the freedom of our spirits and enjoy the fruits' of our creativity tonight. I look forward to seeing you tomorrow! Bring your own songs, your creative Seder plates and your spirits with you to our Zoom Communal Seder – we will have some good fun together!

I would like to finish with the joke I received from our member Rabbi Guy Hall:

The Torah Speaks of Four Kinds of People Who Use Zoom:

The Wise

The Wicked

The Simple

The One Who Does Not Know How to "Mute"

The Wise Person says: "I'll handle the Admin Feature Controls and Chat Rooms and forward the Cloud

Recording Transcript after the call.”

The Wicked Person says: “Since I have unlimited duration, I scheduled the meeting for six hours—as it says in the Haggadah, whoever prolongs the telling of the story is praiseworthy.”

The Simple Person says: “Hello? Am I on? I can hear you, but I can’t see you.” [Jerusalem Talmud reads here: “I can see you, but I can’t hear you.”]

The One Who Does Not Know How to Mute says: “How should I know where you put the keys? I’m stuck on this stupid Zoom call with these idiots.”

To the Wise Person you should offer all of the Zoom Pro Optional Add-On Plans.

To the Wicked Person you should say: “Had you been in charge, we would still be in Egypt.”

To the Simple Person you should say: “Try the call-in number instead.”

To the One Who Does Not Know How to Mute you should say: “Why should this night be different from all other nights?”

Chag Pesach Sameach – Have a great Exodus!

Rabbi Tanya

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