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## **A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Arthur Weiner**

Friday April 5, 2024 ~ Parsha: Shimini/Shabbat HaChodesh

### **Selling Your Chametz Is More Important (And Much Easier) Than You Think**

Each year, we send the Sale of *Chametz* forms for you to return to the synagogue. Here is the [link](#) to the synagogue website where you can download the form right now! The form will also be found in the annual Passover bulletin that is being mailed to the congregation today. On Sunday morning, we are also sending a Passover email filled with resources and religious services schedule. The Sale of *Chametz* form will be found there as well.

In other words, we are encouraging you to sell your *chametz*. Today, I want to make sure that everyone understands what this *mitzvah* is all about, why it is so important, and how it adds to our understanding and observance of Passover

First, let's start with a [simple definition](#) of *chametz*

The Bible prohibits the eating of leaven during the festival of Passover (Exodus 12:15-20). The Hebrew word *chametz* is translated as leavened bread and refers to any food prepared from five species of grain—wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye—that has been allowed to leaven, or rise. *Matzah* (unleavened bread) is made from any of these aforementioned five species of grain.

Passover is far more than eating *matzah*, and buying special foods. We are commanded to literally remove all *chametz* (leavened products) from our homes. The rule against *chametz* applies not only to its consumption but also to enjoying any benefit from it, and even to its possession. Therefore, before the arrival of Passover, all leaven must be removed from one's premises.

In the past, this was relatively easy. Until several generations ago, people rarely kept significant quantities of food in their homes. Food production was far simpler than it is today. Yet with improved food technologies, the advent of refrigeration and modern techniques, that has changed. Most of us have several days, if not several weeks of food in our home. Current methods of food production, combined with the complexity of the ingredients in our food, guarantee that much of the food we enjoy during the year cannot be used for Passover because so many of the ingredients are considered *chametz* and thus forbidden on Passover. Although we are commanded to remove all of these things from our home, it is virtually impossible to do so.

That's what *Mechirat Chametz*, selling our *chametz* is about. After we do our best to search for and remove *chametz* in our home, we literally sell, that is, we transfer the possession of whatever *chametz* we are unable to fully remove so that we are able to fulfill this important aspect of Passover observance.

Is it a legal fiction? Perhaps. But does that make it invalid? Certainly not! The mitzvah of selling *chametz* is not merely a legal loophole but a meaningful observance that connects us to our heritage. It is a recognition of the complexities of modern life and an affirmation of our commitment to uphold tradition amidst these challenges.

Passover, in many ways, is our most important holiday. We want to create the conditions that allow us to fulfill the words of the Passover Haggadah "in every generation, it is incumbent upon us to see ourselves as if we personally came out of the land of Egypt." Doing our best to remove as much of our unleavened products from our possession as possible and then selling our *chametz*, is one of many important ways to help make that happen.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Arthur D. Weiner