

# The Holiday Season

April 8, 2020 Wednesday

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted our lives to an extent most of us have never experienced before, is inflicting even more pain this month for followers of three of the world's major religions.

Normally, those of us who are Jewish would be gathering tonight with our families for Seder, the start of the Passover celebration. Instead, many will be at work on the front lines, while those fortunate enough to be home will nonetheless be unable to gather with loved ones as usual. It is particularly ironic that a holiday celebrating freedom falls this year at a time when we are restricted to our homes and/or workplaces, unable to move about normally.

Those of us who are Christian are celebrating Holy Week, which culminates this Sunday with Easter—a joyous celebration of resurrection and new life, which falls this year at a time when there is too little joy, and too much sadness and loss of life. Easter, like Passover, is also a time for extended families to gather over a large meal. Its absence will be sorely felt.

Later this month, those of us who are Muslim will begin observing Ramadan under similarly restricted and stressful circumstances. Observing the daily fast will be even more difficult while working at the pace and intensity this crisis demands, and breaking it less joyous without loved ones nearby.

Some of us are even more afflicted: those who have family members in countries hit even harder by COVID-19 than New York, and those with loved ones in the hospital in isolation, or who are sick themselves, unable to see even their closest family members. Our hearts especially go out to you.

For those of you who observe Passover and must work tonight or at any time during the week, please know that as always, kosher-for-Passover food will be available at all of our cafeterias throughout the holiday. We are also making provisions to get Passover food to all of our patients who want it.

And we hope all of you take a moment to reflect on the season in your own way, whether you are Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist, or a follower of another religion or of none at all. Please know that your sacrifices during this holiday season will not be in vain, that we will conquer this devastating pandemic, and that we will celebrate again with our loved ones. Together, we will win.

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