

Dear family and friends,

*Shalom*, and welcome to our wedding! It's truly a blessing to have each of you here to join us in celebration this afternoon. Because we have something very special in store for you, we thought a note of explanation would be in order.

As you probably know, Josh has always been passionate about the environment, majoring in ecology at Tufts and spending an inspirational semester abroad on *Beit Eisenhardt* (an organic kibbutz near the Kinneret). Meri has come to share his eco-awareness, and has made a commitment to "go Green," and not just in name!

To our dismay, every day we see bald commercialism displacing time-honored values. What we discovered in the past year, as we planned this singular day, is that nowhere is this commercialism more pervasive than in the wedding industry. Choosing the perfect attire, flowers, and musical accompaniment seems as important as finding one's perfect mate. What once was and still should be a spiritual undertaking has become an extravagant dog and pony show. As this didn't sit well with either of us, we strove to design an event that reflects our personal values within a neo-traditional setting. You'll probably notice several little things that reveal our personality as a couple that cares, about each other and the planet. (For example, our colorful *chuppah*—the customary wedding canopy under which we will become a family—is a patchwork of secondhand T-shirts from a Salvation Army thrift store. S.A.T.S. over Saks any day, we say.)

Early on in the planning, we realized that the only way we could feel comfortable having a fancy-schmancy wedding reception was to opt out of the norm and do instead what we could to highlight the absurdity of the *status quo*. Our research into possible alternatives led us to freeganism—an aggressively counter-commercial approach to procuring sustenance. You may have heard it referred to as "dumpster diving," though that crass term is used only by those who malign what they don't understand. Freeganism is an admirable, enlightened practice employed by those striving to make a difference through how and what they eat.

*Don't worry*: We wouldn't expect our loved ones to fight rats for scraps. And besides, this is a kosher wedding, and *kashruth* is about cleanliness in consumption, after all.

We have chosen to adapt the principles freeganism to our specific circumstances, and we are overjoyed to have you, our nearest and dearest, share in pioneering this practice with us. We call it *freegankashruth*, and it's really quite simple. Here's how it works:

When the bandleader (Meri's brother's friend Adam *Yoto-hi*, Adam, and thanks again!) announces each new course, you'll leave your seats (take your plate), exit the Magnolia Salon, and walk down the hall to the Kaplan-Werlin wedding reception (in the Lincoln Ballroom). There you'll select your food, buffet-style, from the unattended place settings of Debbie and Daniel's guests while they are dancing, before the busboys have had a chance to clear the tables. Bring your repast back to our event space as soon as you have your fill!

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The leftovers of the other wedding's guests will be limited, so you will be going for food one table at a time (for subtlety's sake) and in numerical order. Your table assignments were randomized to keep things fair. That is why your spouse (or date) might be sitting across the room, and why indeed you might not recognize anyone seated near you. Please note: Our younger guests will need to remain in this room. Please take care to feed your children only after you have secured food for yourselves.

While we do not know the other bride and groom—and they do not know that our guests will be harvesting what theirs will have disdainfully discarded—we have taken pains to learn as much as possible about them. After scaring up their engagement announcement in *Newsday*, we then gleaned essential personal details from their Facebook profiles in order to prepare you in case you find yourself needing to make conversation with any of their guests.

*Bride*: Deborah Anne Kaplan... 29... born Minnesota... graduated UMass (Amherst)... spent summers at Camp Rocky Mountain Chai (camper, then archery instructor)... now a graphic designer. *Groom*: Daniel Zvi Werlin... 34... born Wisconsin... Brandeis grad... ceramics minor, met Debbie at Camp Rocky Mountain Chai... runs online French/English bookstore, "It's a Livre."

*Do not mention someone named Sheryl Garelick. If you are asked your opinion about Sheryl Garelick, pretend to be choking and excuse yourself quickly.*

We want you to know that we didn't make the decision to ask our wedding guests to freeganize lightly. Nor did we cut corners. We made certain the food you will be scavenging for is, without question, the best available. After all, everyone knows it's the food that people remember longest about a wedding reception. We met with the foremost purveyors of kosher catering to sample their wares before agreeing on the one whose food you will be enjoying today. We then inquired when and where they were already hired and immediately booked an adjacent space in the same venue, for an event starting half an hour later. Had we been less concerned about the quality of your meal, we might have chosen to have our wedding in a more convenient venue, and maybe even on a different day.

So today is our wedding day, but to you, our guests, our fellow founders of *freegankashruth*, we say *Mazel tov!* We can see each of you becoming a little greener already.

And now, if you will all please be seated, we're almost ready to begin the service....

Love,

Josh & Meri