



A PASSOVER SEDER 2024

IN PREPARATION FOR A PASSOVER SEDER

Before the Seder do what you would have were there not going to be a Seder. Know that people everywhere believe in (God) and that terrible things are being committed in (God)'s name at this very moment. Ask yourself: How can I live in this world? Keep food prep times under 15 minutes when cooking for the Seder, and try to produce at least 3 Tiktoks during this period, while there's still time. Try to dance a little. You know, that thing, just shake it. Think to yourself 'Is the bruning anger that cooked this matzah, in fact, the sickest Brun?' If you cannot prepare your food quickly, place it in a satchel and go to sleep. Get up. Go outside. Touch grass. Remember grass? What's everyone doing out there? Why are there so many cops? What happened while I was sleeping? Oh wait, there's Gypsy Starshine and his girlfriend Utopia, and they've brought some *gooooood vibes*. Stop freaking out, rub your itchy eyes, grab the satchel, arrive at the Seder.

BUT REALLY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Hillel starts texting. Oh man he's really in a bad way. Looks like he got himself an AI girlfriend, and he just got dumped! Poor Hillel! Looks like he could really use your help. Please create a love offering that will win his AI girlfriend's AI heart/'heart' back. Alternatively, do you think he deserved it? If so please write the breakup letter that will finally get Hillel off this poor beleaguered AI's back once and for all, and give her some blessed peace, finally.

ORDER OF A SEDER

1. The First Cup
2. Dirty, Dirty, Dirty
3. Great Green Gobs
4. Fragmentation
5. The Second Cup
6. A Passover Story
7. Oy! It Would Have Been Enough!
8. Not So Much, Really
9. We Now Return To A Passover Story
10. Hillel, or: Make Your Own Passover Story
11. The Fourth Cup
12. The Festival Meal

THE FIRST CUP

All read:

All read: Thank you, (God), for providing us this profoundly legal cannabis. With it we can forget things that we need help forgetting. With it we may gain an important illusion of critical distance, but instead we may just get stupid. So let us not trust in this critical distance, for the more we smoke it, the smaller the chance we will find it, and the greater the chance that we will whirl around in a paranoid, neurotic feedback loop. A paranoid, neurotic feedback loop. A paranoid, neurotic feedback loop. With it we are inspired to make things, and think they are more beautiful than they actually are. With it we are more receptive to the both the beautiful and the everyday, but risk becoming, like a what, oh I forgot, never mind. We will try not to smoke it all the time and forget about You, d00d, but, you should have, what? You should have... you definitely should have somethinged. So let us say, ('Hence The Irony!') Leaning on the left side, if you blaze that shit, smoke the first cup. Also, while you're at it, fill the second cup while you're waiting for those hippies to finish.

DIRTY, DIRTY, DIRTY

Do not wash your hands, and do not say the blessing. Why wash your hair? It's just going to get dirty again anyway.

GREAT GREEN GOBS

The 'master' of the 'house' takes a bit of parsley or some other nasty veg and dips it in some salt water and distributes it to everyone at the table. Before eating the parsley, say this prayer while hanging one's head.

Thank you, (God), for providing us this vegetable. Well, fuck, then. What the actual fucking fuck? How naïve of us to ask "What the actual fucking fuck" at this point. May we, and our children, and everyone else's children have the courage to stand up to the forces that refuse to stop despoiling our world, and may we find a new way to live that is both sustainable and equitable, before it's too late, if it isn't too late already. So let us say, (Fuck). .

FRAGMENTATION

Before the group reads the following text, the 'master' of the 'house' breaks the middle matzah in the plate. 'He' leaves half of it there and excuses 'himself' to take, perhaps, a mean piss. Maybe 'he's hiding the other half, and maybe if anyone can find it after the meal has been eaten, they will win a *special prize*.

A book says that many years ago the Jews were slaves in Egypt. The book we are reading tonight is a translation of a Haggadah prepared by the Ktav Publishing House in New York City in 1949. That book is a translation of the story of the Exodus in the Bible, a written version of an oral text about Jew-persecution and Jew-flight. This translation is an attempt to perform this story as something that we can relate to and try to understand.

A book says that many years ago the Jews were slaves in Egypt. Like roughly half of the rituals in the Jewish tradition, Passover celebrates our survival. As the ritual begins we imagine ourselves as slaves, and through the recitation of the story we are liberated. To facilitate our metaphorical liberation we get drunk, kick back, recline, and since we are fortunate enough to be around other humans who we love, be genuinely grateful that we are able to tell a story together, and give ourselves unearned pats on the back.

This particular Seder has always been a struggle to create a sense of the sacred within the commodified, homogenized world that we live in, or at least to drum up some sacred hahas. If we celebrate this while people who claim to speak for us commit atrocities in our name, how can we claim to be free at all? As the world

grows darker, as monied interests try to move the world towards authoritarianism, as our government continues to materially support genocide, and as the effects of climate change grow starker, scarier and more real, what is the significance of this story? A guy out there once wrote, “The great oppressor? Now it’s me and you. It’s no longer punk to be a Jew.” We begin to recite our story of the Jews when the youngest person sitting at the table asks four questions.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

Note: Feel free to substitute your own question for the question in parenthesis.

On all other nights, we may doomscroll, doomscroll, try not to doomscroll, try not to think about everything that’s happened over the last year, try not to think about what is happening right now, or just try super hard not to think, dude. Tonight we sit around a table with a bunch of people who we probably know, enacting a ritual which we’ve probably done before. (How can we stop the super wealthy from rendering the Earth uninhabitable for everyone but themselves and their cronies?)

On all other nights, we can eat bread if we want to. Tonight we are obligated to eat matzah instead. And the process has to be supervised by a Jew (Jew-remote monitoring is acceptable) from the moment the wheat is cut from the shaft, and baked within 15 minutes of having been exposed to moisture, or it ain’t Kosher. (Did social media turn people into interminably whiny bitches, or were said whiners already interminably whiny?)

On all other nights, most of us would not eat any bitter herbs. Those of us who might would do so without considering them bitter, or even as herbs. Tonight we’ll be eating bitter herbs at least once, calling them “bitter herbs,” and making various concoctions with them. (How does a barbaric state morally return from atrocity?)

Let’s face it, on all other nights, many of us slouch. But tonight we are supposed to recline even if we have good posture, or our chairs are very uncomfortable. Wild Kratts! (Have emotionally stunted billionaires ever felt love? Is there an inverse relationship between the ability to feel love and accumulate capital?)

THE SECOND CUP

All read:

Thank you, (God), for providing us this wine. With it we can say things which we may ordinarily never say and do things which we may ordinarily have far too much self-consciousness and dignity to do. Indeed, we can both say and do these things and not regret it until the next morning, if we are unfortunate enough to remember them at all. And let us say, (Hence the Irony!)

Sip or Drink The Second Cup. If you don't finish it now, please finish it during A Passover Story.

A PASSOVER STORY

ALL READ! The word 'kibitz' is pronounced by compressing the words "kibbles and bits" together, taking the "kib" from kibbles, and the "bits" from bits. Kib-bitz. Kibitz. The word 'Laban' is pronounced "Lay-ban", like "Lay me down, this sick band is playing my jam and I don't care what you think, I gotta lay down and dance my lay down dance! Lay-ban. Laban. Kibbles and bits and bits and bits!

ALL SING: Meaty Bone is a barking good treat, bark if you like meat!
Arf! Arf!

We read this story tonight because the Jews are were a tribe of people who were just lucky and/or squirrely enough to survive whenever someone tried to kill them. And even now that the Jews live in relative plenty and security, they remain disinterested in being killed again. This story is either a reminder or some kind of propaganda that everyone really is still out to get us. We tell the story looking forward to when we can again take our safety and the safety of our loved ones for granted, or possibly in a haze of paranoia.

There are those out there, Freud among them, who believed Passover was a metaphor for reaffirming the Jewish tradition and explaining a time in history in which many people converted to Judaism. In this interpretation, the ten plagues represent the pagan gods of the Egyptians, the Jews were never really slaves (except

in a metaphorical way, to said pagan gods), and Moses was an Egyptian. If a based scholar was to try to puzzle out this metaphor they might roll a dip, slizz on some sizzurp, and then stop, because they'd realize in that moment that playing cultural appropriation for laughs is cheap, and those laughs are microaggressions. They would attempt to think, and then note that it's hard to think when my mind goes blank. You just can't think when your mind goes blank. And then they would not know what to think.

So the Jews get free, with a burning bush and a parted river and signs and wonders, dude, and they're led out of Egypt, dude, and wander in the desert for 40 years, dude! and that serves as a sort of womb for their rebirth, dude!!!. They have no responsibilities, wander aimlessly, and are fed by God. As they receive the 10 commandments from Moses, via God, they are reborn as a civilization.

It is easy to think that this is all probably a bunch of hokum. That's cool! We can still try to use the Passover story to help understand the world we live in. And even if our understanding lies fallow, it's good kibitzing. In olden times, telling this story was so important that wise old men would sit around and kibitz about when it should be told. They kibitzed about such things as whether the words 'all the days of your life' meant the days and the nights also. There was a heavy dispute over the difference between 'The days of your life' and 'All the days of your life.'

The Passover story also includes a large digression about Laban The Syrian. To this day, countless numbers of Jews do not understand the importance of Laban The Syrian to the Passover Story. If the story of Laban The Syrian is removed from the Haggadah, you feel a kind of vague loss. That night you dream you are piloting an AH-64 Apache helicopter gunship. The AI gave you a list of targets but you can't remember their names, only their faces. You haven't eaten in days. You are flying over a lake of fire that never ends. The transmission over the radio is hot dry static. The veins in your arm bulge as you grip the trigger. You don't understand why there's nothing left to kill. You

do not think that you can remember sleep.

Well anyway, the rabbis kibitzed about whether each of the Plagues that (God) delivered onto Egypt came with #Wrath, #Indignation, #Trouble, and the #MessengersOfEvil, or whether they came with #HisBruningAnger, #Wrath, #Indignation, #Trouble, and the #MessengersOfEvil. A full half of the Passover story involves a bunch of rabbis sitting around and kibitzing about entirely superfluous shit. And now, we are kibitzing about the kibitzing. This completes #TheGreatCircleOfKibitzing, which along with #TheGreatCircleofGuilt, are the most important hashtags of the Jewish faith to transmit from parent to child. Hashtags are cringe, your child reminds you. Yes they are, child, #yestheyare.

There are other fringe benefits to the recitation of a Passover Seder. We affirm our ties, mediated as they may be, to a collective ethnic history that at least some of us share, and others of us fetishize. We also get to say 'delivered us from the house of bondage' a number of times, and to observe an awkward self-cancelling silence upon having to mention Rabbi Jose of Galilea (ssssh DONT DO IT), and to be happy that we don't have enough clout to be cancelled. We can discuss the 'Rod of Moses' and give each other salacious winks. Also, we learned that the soothsayers said.

To help us understand our connection to the Passover Story, we are given four sons to use as models. Is it a coincidence that there are four sons in the Polenberg family? Hey I'm just spitballing here. Each of these sons asks a different question about the Passover story, and each is given an answer about belief.

The first son asks, 'Why has God given us these customs?' Then he revs his Cybertruck, which he won't let them recall. Give him what he wants, for he affirms the system. Teach him to manipulate it for his benefit. Fuck those regulatory bootlickers, he thinks, I'll show them. His company, with a plan to produce revolutionary AI-powered genitals, might even ship a few. You will tell him that you know a thing, and then he will mansplain

that thing back to you, to the very last detail.

The second son asks, 'So what do you really think of this God thing anyway, and all these rituals where we have to wait so long to eat such weird food?' And while he used to say 'what's with that stuff in the Windex bottle, anyway?', now he just looks pissy. "I'm just asking questions! I AM JUST ASKING QUESTIONS!" he spits and spits. By whispering 'You' instead of 'I,' to his lifesize Bari Weiss "pillow", he makes it clear that he's on that sauce again. Do not engage him about gender-affirming care in any manner. His takes are colder than the nipple on a witch's tit, colder than a bucket of penguin shit.

The third son asks 'Wuzzat?' He's not very bright. Pat him on the head and say 'God brought us out of the house of bondage so we can all just keep on keepin' on, kid. Send him an animated GIF of a cat licking its butt, and you will laugh and laugh and laugh.

The fourth son can't even ask a question. Put a screen in his mouth. Put on Barbie Dreamhouse Adventures. (It's on Netflix.) Turn the volume up way loud.

Please pause for a second to fill The Third Cup, unless you haven't drank the Second Cup yet, in which case, oy, you slacker! Just drink the Second Cup as your Third Cup. Everyone needs a hug. But you are going to need some drank in your cup so you can spill it out when it's Ten Plagues time. The Third Cup is filled from the bottle of weird shit.

So, about the Jews: Regardless of what Freud thought, and perhaps in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, let's posit that something really did happen. It started when the Jews migrated to Egypt, possibly because of a drought. They were then enslaved by the Egyptians because, par for the Jewish course, they excelled without becoming assimilated in their society. Being enslaved is pretty suboptimal, so the Jews kvetch up to (God) -- cringe!, and then (God) saves the Jews from Pharoah by visiting these ten plagues on the Egyptians, each worse than the last -- based! This is a good time to point out that there's almost no grief in the Passover ritual. The only time we're supposed to grieve is during our recitation of the plagues. Many Haggadahs don't even bother

notifying us that we are supposed to grieve, though they make us spill out drops of wine without telling us why. Instead, they dwell on the aforementioned kibitz-fest by the rabbis about exactly how many attributes of (God) you could attribute to each plague. (It's also important to point out that the more new, postmodern, and Reconstructionist the Haggadah is, the more they try to make a big deal out of the grief thing. The source text, however, was far more about how badass God was than about how bad we felt for smiting the people who had kept us enslaved.) Either way, the Egyptians were fucked. Will plagues be visited upon the Jews for their technical innovation on playing the role of Pharoah in Israel today?

THE TEN PLAGUES

ALL SAY: YIKES!

Spill a drop of wine for each of the ten plagues

BLOOD

FROGS

VERMIN

BEASTS

CATTLE DISEASE

BOILS

HAIL

LOCUSTS

DARKNESS

SLAYING OF THE FIRST BORN

Sing the ten plagues

DAYENU (OY! IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH FOR US!)

(note: 'ghe' will be substituted as a gender-neutral pronoun where 'he' would have been used in olden times. It rhymes with 'twee'. It is pronounced like the clarified butter Ghee.)

Once again, friends, the continued enshittification of everything

has given us many things over the last year that are fucked up. Far, far, far too many. Probably any single one of them would have been enough for us, right? We will go around the table, and when it is your turn, repeat the last thing that would have been enough, and then add something else that would have been enough for you. Like last year, we can all agree that Donald Fucking Trump would have been enough for us, right? Let's start with that asshole, and go on to the next thing. We'll start with two people who've done this before, so it makes sense. Also we will use the genderless pronoun 'ghe', for whatever you think created any of this shit, just FYI.

**If ghe had given us Donald Fucking Trump
And ghe had not given us _____
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH FOR US**

Take turns reading responsively as each person adds one more thing that it would have been enough if we had not had. End once around the table, with **IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FUCKING ENOUGH, OK?**

NOT SO MUCH, REALLY

All read:

In previous incarnations of A Passover Seder, we would enact our own death by drinking a suspicious-looking blue liquid out of a Windex bottle, or maybe something even more sus out of a single-serve Purell bottle. OK, we're still not going to do that, even out of a perverse nostalgia. Because no matter how much worse the world gets, and, damn, it sure shows a remarkable ability to keep getting worse, we can still work on making it better, and if we are not actively making it better, hopefully we're at least trying to not make it worse. So let us say, (Hence The Irony!)

Drink the Third Cup, you yutz.

WE NOW RETURN TO A PASSOVER STORY

The three important symbols of the Passover Meal are...

THE PASSOVER OFFERING THE MATZAH THE BITTER HERBS

Point to the Offering:

The Passover Offering reminds us that God gave us a chance to spare our first-born children. It also gives us a convenient name for the holiday. The Jews marked their doors with blood, and God told his subcontracted forces to launch their drones, which used machine learning, computer vision, and mass spectrometers to understand the chemical signature of lamb's blood, which generated a target list with 70 to 75% accuracy. Drones eliminated 100% of the target list, and some of the Jews were able to livestream, and others were able to escape.

Point to the Matzah:

The Matzah is here to remind us that we had to tear-ass out of Egypt to get the jump on Pharaoh and his posse, who were all saddled up to bust a cap into us. If we had waited for it to rise, we woulda been slaughtered. So no bread, no gluten, no vaccines (JUST KIDDING! VACCINES!), no means no.

Point to the Bitter Herbs:

These bitter herbs are here to remind us that being in slavery sucks. Stick a fistful of those bad boys in your mouth. This year, if you even bothered taking them out from last year, or the year before, go stick two fistfulls up your ass instead. And don't be getting any of your friends to help you with that, you gotta do it yourself. And imagine that the water you'd use to wash them down (or up, as the case may be) is owned by a multinational corporation which is charging you exorbitant fees for it. Then imagine that the water also comes from runoff from a factory farm and the hormones have caused you to grow the opposite gender's sexual organs, which is admittedly kind of awesome, but you can't help feeling a little ambivalent about the whole thing. Then imagine that it's also mixed with fracking water, which has made those organs distended and numb, and your hands shaky. Also know that you will go to prison if these genitals are discovered by the authorities, and you don't know how you will avoid their cameras. Cup those organs in your hands, while you still have time. Squeeze them gently. Lovingly.

MATZAH, KVETCH, CHECK!

Get a piece of Matzah. Before eating that nasty biz, all read:

Thank you, (God), for giving us something to kvetch about. Matzah, it is dry! And bland! So is suffering! Who likes to suffer? Nobody, but at least you can kvetch about it, which makes it better. For you, at least. So let us kvetch, (Hence The Irony!)

BITTER, ANYONE?

Fuck Facebook, god that was cringe. Put some bitter herbs and charoset on a spoon. Then read the prayer, then eat that stuff up nice..

Thank you, (God), for saving our ass again. We eat the bitter herbs tonight to remember how bad it was before you saved our asses, but temper it with sweetness because we've suffered enough. Let us remember that we will never be aware of how enslaved we are, and that we enslave others by doing nothing but living our own privileged lifestyles. Free Palestine! And let us say, (Hence the Irony.)

HILLEL, OR, MAKE YOUR OWN PASSOVER STORY

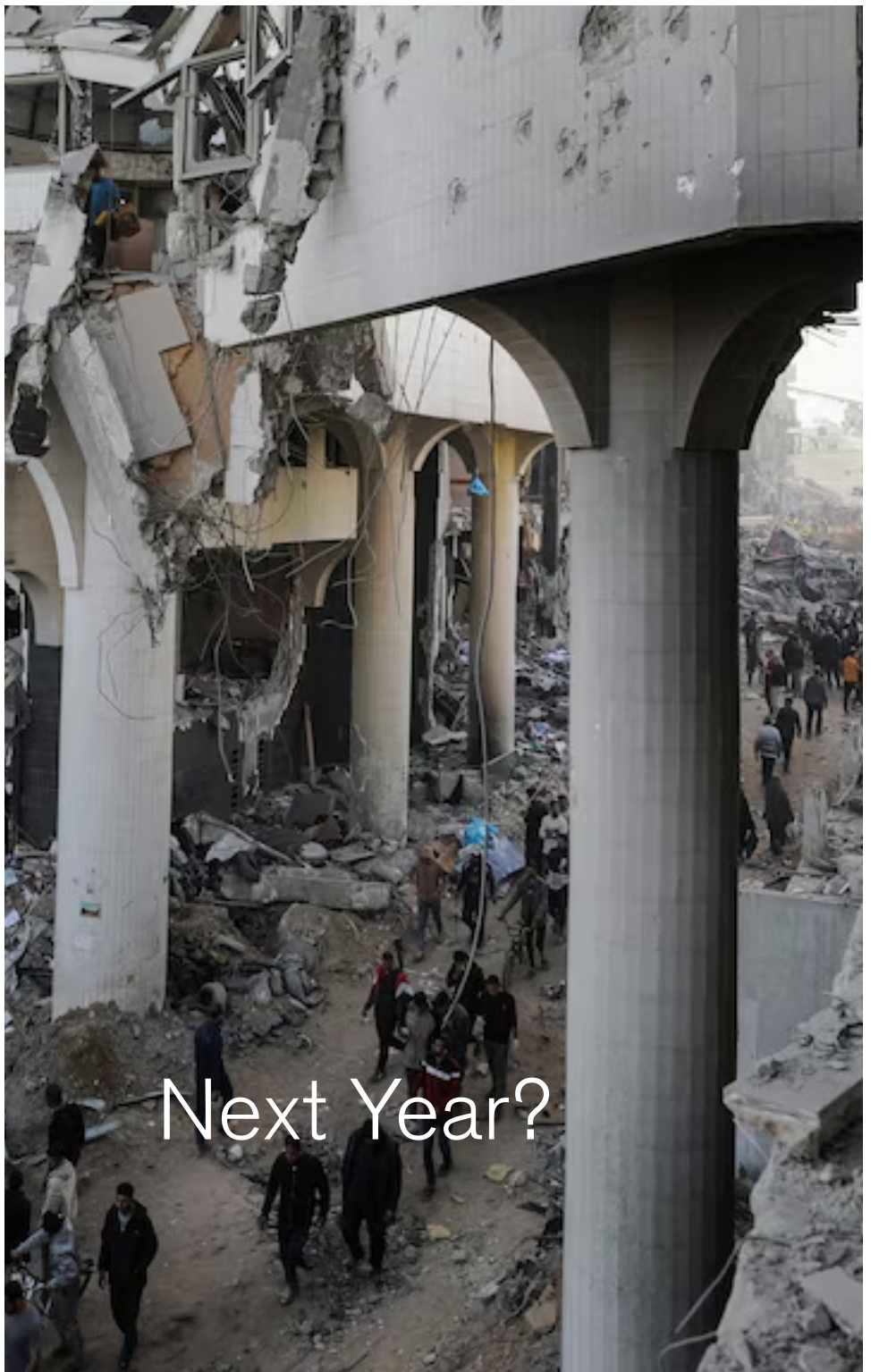
Before the prayer, make a Hillel Sandwich, which is just matzah and bitter herbs, you stoner. Also, fill the Fourth Cup. And fill out the Mad Lib. Say the prayer together. Oy, so many things to do!

THE FOURTH CUP

Thank you, (God), for allowing us to live another year, to pursue our hopes and aspirations, to attempt to strive at the edge of our periphery and stride, unafraid, into the void of mystery. A wise man said: People come and go, and forget to close the door, and leave their stains and cigarette butts trampled on the floor. And when they do, remember me. Some of them are old, and some of them are new, and some of them will turn up when you least expect them to, and when they do, remember me, remember me. So let us say, (Hence The Irony.)

Drink the Fourth Cup

THE FESTIVAL...DESSERT!



Next Year?