



**A PASSOVER SEDER 2025**

## ***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, maybe ask the AI to make the food for you? Or some pictures of the food. 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? What happened while I was sleeping? Is the morning wiser than the evening, or is it perhaps only slightly shittier? Oh wait, there's Gypsy Starshine and his girlfriend Utopia, and they've brought some gooooooood vibes. Stop freaking out, rub your itchy eyes, grab the satchel, arrive at the Seder.

## ***FOCUS, MY FRIEND, FOCUS***

We need your help! Again! (I know, I know, sorry!) Don't you think America needs a new motto? Maybe a catchy slogan! Maybe with like a logo or a kind of awesome picture to really spell it out? Let's come up with some kind of awesome thing for this awesome new America we've got!

## ***ORDER OF A SEDER***

1. The First Cup
2. Dirty, Dirty, Dirty
3. The Greening
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 extremely legal cannabis. With it we can forget the things that we need help forgetting. With it we might gain an important illusion of critical distance, or maybe we'll just get stupid. So let us not trust in this critical distance, for the more we smoke, the smaller the chance we will transcend, 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 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. You could have! So let us say, ('Hence The Irony!')

**Leaning on the left side, if you blaze that shit, smoke the first cup. 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. You think the blood will come off, just like that?**

***THE GREENING***

The 'master' of the 'house' takes a bit of parsley or a similarly 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 they are 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 reciting the story we are liberated. We get drunk, kick back, and recline to help this along, and give ourselves unearned pats on the back along the way. This particular Seder

has always been a struggle to create a sense of the sacred within the profound miasma of bullshit of the capitalist world that we live in, and if it can't quite get there, it can at least drum up some sacred hahas, and we can be in community and genuinely grateful that we are able to tell some kind of story together. If we celebrate this while people who claim to represent us commit atrocities in our name, how can we claim to be free at all? As the dumbest, cruelest fuckers imaginable cement their grip on power, with the possibility of not much stopping them from ruining the lives of millions, and as the effects of climate change grow even 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 scroll, doomscroll, try not to doomscroll, try not to just, like, doom, try not to think about what just happened today, or just try super hard like, not to think. Tonight we sit around a table with a bunch of people who we may or may not know, enacting a ritual which we may or may not have enacted before. (How can we stop the fucking yutzies in power from turning the American government into a wealth extraction system for billionaires?)

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. (What's the amount of accumulated capital after which a person cannot be moral?)

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. (So let's just say you sort of had the rule of law as a nation, or at least pretended to for a good deal of the middle class. Then you don't. How do you get it back?)

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. (Did you ever see Emmet Otter's Jugband Christmas? Well it's awesome, and there's this part where the bad kids in town have brought their band, the Riverbottom Nightmare Band, to the talent show. Do you think Russell Hoban, the writer, was actually looking into a crystal ball and seeing the future when he had them sing "We don't wish to learn, but we hate what we don't understand?")

## ***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, the band is playing my jam and I don’t care what you think, homes, I gotta 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 a tribe of people who were either lucky 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 propaganda that everyone really is still out to get us. We tell the story looking forward to a time when we can again take our safety and the safety of our loved ones for granted, and when others around us will not use these stories as justification to inflict suffering on others, or to try to shut down any criticism of their immoral actions.

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, and at the same time they would be very worried, as they know they would be setting off the DEI alarm at the AI Job Removal Factory, and they, like so many Americans, live paycheck to paycheck. 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 not foolish to think that this is all probably a bunch of hokum, and your mama did not raise any fools. That's right, mama! 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 putatively 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 that you live in a house made of fire. Through a hole in the blazing roof you see an eagle fly overhead. The eagle is carrying a stack of hundred dollar bills. You see its majestic talons closed around the money. They squeeze. Blood begins to pour from the sticky stack of Hamiltons. The river of blood drops through the roof and puddles at your feet. You fall to your knees at the edge of the pool. Your pants have begun to ignite. The eagle flies through the smouldering hole into the house and lands at the other edge of the pool. You look into

the eagle's eyes and realize that it has Ronald Reagan's face. Ronald Reagan's face stares through you, pretending to see it all, and then he says "Everything is OK, my child, everything is A-OK."

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. Also, they are obsolete, reminds the child. Yes we are, my child, #yesweare.

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 silence upon having to mention Rabbi Jose of Galilea (ssssh DON'T 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. Pretty awkward that there are no daughters, though, huh? Anyway 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 another body plate flies off his Cybertruck at 70MPH, narrowly missing a young family in a Honda Civic. Give him what he wants, for he affirms the system. Teach him to manipulate it for his benefit. As he dies from an easily preventable disease, unvaccinated and unrepentant, his second to last breath will whisper the word "Freedom". You will tell him that you know about a thing, and in his last breath, 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 never wanted that stuff anyway," he stammers, "It was made in fucking China!". By whispering 'You' instead of 'I,' to his talking foamcore Peter Thiel puppet, he makes it clear that he's back on X talking about his new Valknut tattoo. 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 highly tariffed Chinese-manufactured ersatz 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. Play Cruel Summer (Taylor's Version). Turn the volume way up 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 probably in the face of overwhelming evidence to the

contrary, let's just say some of this stuff really happened. It starts when the Jews migrate to Egypt, maybe because of a drought. Then they're enslaved by the Egyptians because, par for the Jewish course, they excel without becoming assimilated in their society. This sucks, 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! We take a quick moment for empathy and grief for the Egyptians here, the only such moment in the story. Many Haggadahs don't even bother notifying us that we are supposed to care, 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 inject empathy into the text. 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 absolute barbarism in playing the role of Pharoah in Israel today? Or upon America for supporting it?

## *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: A gender-neutral pronoun 'ghe' will be used in this section. 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 for the last person, and then add something else that would have been enough for you. Like basically for more years that I can bear to count, we can all agree that That Fucking Guy, You Know, The Giant Asshole, would have been enough for us, right? Let's start with him, and go on to the next thing. We'll begin with two Seder regulars who've done this before, so it makes sense. Use whatever pronoun you want for whatever you think created any of this shit, just FYI, including the traditional 'ghe'.

**If ghe had given us That Fucking Guy**

**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, we can be in community with each other and make each other's lives better. 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, whose AI algorithm had been trained on 100 bibles' worth of lambs blood, and maintained a target list with guaranteed 20 to 25% accuracy. Drones eliminated 100% of the target list. All military-aged males were eliminated.

**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, or the year before that, 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 those herbs down (or up, as the case may be) is controlled by a multinational corporation which is charging you exorbitant fees for it. Then imagine that the water is runoff from a factory farm and the hormones that they've fed the cows have caused you to grow the opposite gender's sexual organs. This is kind of awesome but does not exactly feel consensual. Then imagine that the water was mixed with fracking water, which has made those organs distended and numb, and your hands shaky. Then imagine that you will go to prison if these genitals are discovered by the authorities, and you don't know how you will avoid their gender surveillance systems. Cup those organs in your hands, before the patrols can see the readouts. Squeeze them, squeeze them gently.

### ***MATZAH, KVETCH, CHECK!***

**Get a piece of Matzah. Before eating that dry 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. 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. 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?**

