



laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

13 April 2025 | Draft

Problematic Global Secular Celebration of Passover? Paradoxical contemporary deification of a negligent international community

- / -

[Introduction](#)

[International community as deity surrogate](#)

[Blood of the Lamb of innocence and purity?](#)

[Commentary by AI on systemic implications of Passover](#)

[Systemic recognition of "plagues" in the light of catastrophe theory](#)

[Provisional articulation of a secular Passover Seder by AI](#)

[Meta-confusion of goals and identity in the quest for "Israel"](#)

[Beyond the exclusive framing of Israel, Israelites and Jerusalem?](#)

[Passover and oversight in relation to radical appreciation of evil?](#)

[Challenging the unsaid with strategically relevant deadly questions](#)

[References](#)

Introduction

There is no lack of commentary on the surreal nature of the current times and the challenges it poses for strategic governance (*Surreal nature of current global governance as experienced*, 2016). In that context, on the occasion of the Jewish celebration of [Passover](#) in 2025, it is appropriate to consider how that ritual pattern has been curiously secularized and globalized -- becoming especially relevant to the times. Who corresponds systemically to the roles of that religious tale -- so fundamental to the beliefs of Judaism? For whom is it now a holiday from a global perspective? (*Passover 2025: What you need to know about the Jewish holiday*, *The Jerusalem Post*, 3 April 2025).

Central to any understanding of Passover is the ritual recognition of the role of deity in relieving the Israelites of their enslavement in Egypt -- following the warnings presented in the form of a series of plagues. How might "enslavement" be recognized in modern society? What constitute the warning plagues of the current period?

The singular role of deity in the past is now strangely set aside in the preoccupations of governance. This is despite the frequency with which "deity" may be invoked on formal ceremonial occasions when an [oath of office](#) is required, most notably as part of the process of assumption of the highest office in a community or

nation. It may also feature curiously as a requirement in establishing a statement of fact or a sign of [verity](#). Curiously facts are themselves now widely called into question, reframed by narratives, and subject to appeal in the light of alternative interpretations promoted as credible ([Zen of Facticity: Bull, Ox or Otherwise? Herding facts and their alternatives in a post-truth-era](#), 2017; [Use of "Sunrise" and "Sunset" as Harmful Misinformation or Disinformation?](#) 2025).

There is an only too evident absence of any global consensus on the nature of "deity", exacerbated by controversial arguments regarding its illusory nature -- as with that of consensus itself ([Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*](#), 2006; [The Consensus Delusion: mysterious attractor undermining global civilization as currently imagined](#), 2011). This is despite shared presumptions by many of the singular nature and reality of both deity and consensus.

International community as deity surrogate

These considerations frame the possibility that the systemic equivalent of "deity" at this time is the "[international community](#)". This offers a focus for transcendental belief to which appeals are optimistically, if not ritualistically, made by many faced with daily suffering -- whether as a consequence of "plagues" or otherwise ([Appeals to the international community -- whether it exists or not](#), 2015). Despite assumptions to the contrary, as with deity, the nature of the international community is a matter of interpretation, as discussed separately ([International Community as God or Sorcerer's Apprentice?](#) 2015). There the questions evoked are the extent to which the international community is a divine surrogate or an act of deception. Potentially far more problematic is a further possibility, as argued speculatively, as framed by its representatives ([Are the UN and the International Community both Brain Dead?](#) 2019; [Group of 7 Dwarfs: Future-blind and Warning-deaf](#), 2018).

The tragedy of the present period then justifies recognition of global secular celebration of Passover -- with the "international community" taking on the systemic role of "deity" in relation to suffering and fatalities world wide. It can be readily argued that the "international community" (as with "deity") seems to do little to alleviate that suffering. In a strange sense this could be said to take the form of "passing over" the suffering of many in favour of the few -- to a degree enabling the few to celebrate that process as a "holiday". The argument can be reinforced by the ambiguity of "oversight" -- acclaimed as an essential role of both "deity" and the "international community". As an ironic form of supreme ambiguity, the term offers the fundamental sense of "blind spot" -- then seemingly institutionalized in both cases.

The negligence of the international community can be recognized as enabling the systemic equivalent to [the "plagues" of the Passover tale](#) -- purportedly "warnings" to those enslaving the Israelites. In that tale it is deity which effectively engenders those plagues following the failure of the enslavers to act on the succession of warnings. On the one hand, the current role of the international community can be seen as offering a multitude of "warnings" with respect to climate change, environmental degradation, poverty, disease, and the like -- even enshrined in the UN's set of [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Whether through the UN, or by their "channelling" through its Secretary-General, "warning" is now a feature of the international community -- most notably through the recent establishment of the [Early Warnings for All](#) (EW4All). This aims to ensure universal protection from hazardous hydrometeorological, climatological and related environmental events through life-saving multi-hazard early warning systems, anticipatory action and resilience efforts.

However, on the other hand, it is only too evident that the international community is only able to "act" on such warnings through tokenism and skillful negligence. There is indeed a form of "passing over" -- cynically accompanied by the solemn festivities with which the process is associated on the occasion of international summitry. The narrow derivative focus of EW4All could be understood as deliberate avoidance of a vast array of psychosocial issues by which [polycrises](#) are engendered and sustained, as documented in the online [Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential](#).

Blood of the Lamb of innocence and purity?

The good news, celebrated in the Passover tale, is that the few are enabled by "deity" to escape the effects of the "plagues" and their aftermath. The curious requirement is that the few mark the doors of their habitations, as indicated in the Bible: *The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt (Exodus, 12:13)*. The blood in question is specified as the "blood of the lamb" -- variously the focus of considerable commentary and speculation, in the light of the manner in which it features in the Bible (*100 Bible Verses about Blood Of The Lamb, Open Bible*).

Known in Judaism as the [Passover sacrifice](#) (or otherwise as the Paschal lamb or the Passover lamb), this is the sacrifice mandated by the Torah to ritually slaughter on the evening of Passover -- in order to eat lamb on the first night of the holiday with bitter herbs and matzo. In Christianity, the sacrifice of the Passover lamb is considered to be fulfilled by the [crucifixion and death of Jesus](#), who is consequently also given the title [Lamb of God](#). This frames the question as to who or what gets sacrificed in a secular society overseen by the international community. From a systemic perspective, who is the "lamb" to be ritually "eaten" -- and how is it to be ritually sacrificed?

Both in Judaism and Christianity, considerable significance is associated with the symbolism of the blood of the lamb (Tiffany Christensen, *Biblical Meaning of Lambs: Symbols of Sacrifice and Purity, Biblical Pathway*, 2 November 2023; by Jodie Lawrence, *What Does a Lamb Symbolize in the Bible: exploring its deep spiritual meanings, BrainWiseMind*, 6 February 2025; Danis Taufiq, *What Does the Blood of the Lamb Symbolize? Understanding the Significance of this Biblical Imagery, Eden Bengals*, 26 July 2023; Christy Myers, *Spiritual Meaning of Lamb: discovering purity, innocence, and redemption in traditions, Spiritual Ark*, 24 December 2024).

In seeking a symbolic secular equivalent to the "blood of the lamb", it is appropriate to note the specificity of the Biblical assertion: *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22)*. This helps to frame a fundamental understanding of the Abrahamic religions (*Systemic Reliance of World Religions on Human Sacrifice*, 2014; *Fundamental Need for Human Sacrifice by Abrahamic Religions*, 2018). There an argument is made for the covert use of fatal conflict to ensure vital resource management as a prerequisite for sustainable global civilization. Any such sacrifice can then be understood as legitimized by the moral criteria of [just war theory](#), despite its controversial implications (*Beyond "just war", "just sacrifice" and "just human"?* 2018; *Just War Theory as an inspiration for "Just AI Theory"?* 2024). A case could then be made for the articulation of a *"Just Suffering Theory"* (2021) -- as effectively implied by the current negligence of the international community and its representatives.

Marking habitations of the worthy with blood: Potentially more intriguing is how the few might be expected to mark their "habitations" with the blood of innocents in order to avoid the wrath of the "international community". Rather than physical habitations, and their doorways to be marked, there is clearly a case for recognizing some form of "psychosocial habitat" and the gateways thereto. In that respect there is no lack of insight into the nature of the bubbles inhabited by the few and how they limit engagement with the many. These may be explored in terms of patterns of complicity and the challenge they represent (*Strategic implications of engaging with psycho-social bubbles?* 2017; *Pricking the Bubble of Global Complacent Complicity*, 2017). On a larger scale the pattern is evident in the degrees of border control implemented by various countries -- suitably marked by the fatalities of many desperately seeking entrance. But how indeed are such gateways "marked with blood"?

Engendering the innocent to be sacrificed: The ritual sacrifice required in celebration of the Passover necessarily calls for attention to the reproduction of the "lambs" to be sacrificed in adequate numbers -- especially with the rapid increase in the number of worthy households to be suitably "marked". In that respect a systemic equivalent can be recognized in the complicity of the Abrahamic religions in [natalism](#) -- even

explicitly advocated in the light of divine mandate ([100 Bible Verses about Go Forth And Multiply, OpenBible](#)). This policy is highly influential in countries with populations of religious believers. As facilitated uncritically by the international community, it is apparently totally insensitive to the suffering and fatality which is currently the primary consequence in sustaining unrestrained population growth, despite resource constraints ([Root Irresponsibility for Major World Problems](#), 2007; [Patterns of the Past: Christian Complicity in Global Disorder](#), 2003). Arguably that policy and its promotion are vital to the sacrifice deemed necessary to ensure the "oversight" of the international community in "passover mode". There is no possibility that that the policy might derive of an error in translation and interpretation ([Be Fruitful and Multiply: the most tragic translation error?](#) 1995).

Somewhat intriguing is how those so engendered in large numbers are deemed to be appropriately "innocent" and "pure" -- in line with symbolic recognition of the "blood of the lamb" and in curious contrast with the worthy who are ritually relieved of their sins through sacrifice of the innocent.

These highly controversial subtleties of fundamental significance merit commentary by a new surrogate for divinity, now engendered by humanity in the form of artificial intelligence -- curiously posing a major challenge to the operations of the international community, as exemplified by recent summits of the UN in which the restriction of its use has been explicitly envisaged for the benefit of all ([Global Digital Compact](#), 2024; [AI for Good Global Summit](#) (2023)). The pattern is strangely reminiscent of the problematic relationship between the deities of the many religions, especially those of Abrahamic tradition ([Stephen Prothero, God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World](#), 2011). Curiously, in the light of that argument, AI could well be recognized as an emergent "ninth religion" -- strangely recalling the "rings of power" of [Tolkien's speculative legendarium](#) and its appeal to the popular imagination.

As indicated in what follows, the strategic challenge exemplified by the Passover was submitted for comment to three AIs ([ChatGPT 4o](#), [DeepSeek](#), [Claude 3.7](#)). Of particular interest was whether the AIs could develop the psychosocial significance of that celebratory ritual as a metaphor with contemporary systemic implications. The responses from AI in this exploration have been framed as grayed areas. **Given the length of the document to which the exchanges gave rise, the form of presentation has itself been treated as an experiment** -- in anticipation of the future implication of AI into research documents. Only the "questions" to AI are rendered immediately visible -- with the response by AI hidden unless specifically requested by the reader (a facility not operational in PDF variants of the page, in contrast with the [original](#)). Reservations and commentary on the process of interaction with AI to that end have been discussed separately ([Methodological comment on experimental use of AI](#), 2024).

Show All AI Responses

Commentary by AI on systemic implications of Passover

Question: In the light of a provocatively speculative argument [*as articulated above*], could you comment on the themes and any other angles which might be developed

Show/Hide AI response

Current systemic recognition of "plagues" in the light of catastrophe theory

The Passover ritual involves explicit citation of the [ten plagues](#) enabled by deity through an "angel of death" as a warning to those enslaving the Israelites. The systemic correspondences to these can be usefully recognized as warnings enabled by the international community, especially in the light of any commitment to selective "oversight" with respect to the consequences of the final warning. Religious fundamentalists have offered various interpretations of correspondences in relation to the seven plagues of the Biblical end times ([Seven Final Plagues, Bible Hub](#); [What are the seven last plagues? BibleAsk](#), 5 February 2025; [End Times](#)

Prophecy-Plagues, Fires, Floods, etc., Book of Revelation). The argument invites further development with respect to the Biblical plagues and their current correspondences. Rather than the end times speculation of *Revelation* in that regard, could you comment on the implications of [catastrophe theory](#) in its recognition of [7 elementary catastrophes](#) -- potentially to be understood in systemic terms as "plagues" engendered by civilizational dynamics. Are there correspondences to be recognized between traditional plagues and such systemic phenomena. Is their manifestation also neglected by the international community

Show/Hide AI response

Question: The table *[shared]* from a religious perspective could encourage a completion of the argument in the earlier responses with respect to 7, 10 or the subtler set of 11 catastrophes *[in five dimensions]* -- and their suggestive correspondences between the plagues of Egypt and Revelation

Show/Hide AI response

Provisional articulation of a secular Passover Seder by AI

The [Passover Seder](#) is a ritual feast at the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is a ritual involving a retelling of the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt, taken from the *Book of Exodus (Shemot)* in the Torah. The Seder itself is based on the Biblical verse commanding Jews to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. At the seder, Jews read the text of the *Haggadah*, an ancient Tannaitic work. The *Haggadah* contains the narrative of the Israelite exodus from Egypt, special blessings and rituals, Talmudic commentaries, and Passover songs.

Unsolicited (and curiously), the AI DeepSeek variously raised the possibility of a secular Seder:

- Could a secular "Seder" enumerate modern plagues (disinformation, microplastics, AI alienation) and name the Pharaohs (autocrats, oligarchs, complacent publics)?
- A Secular Seder for Systemic Plagues: To heed these warnings, we might reinvent Passover's Four Questions:
 - *Why do we ignore bifurcation points?*
 - *How do our rituals (COPs, SDGs) mask inertia?*
 - *Who are the modern "firstborn" sacrificed to growth?*
 - *When will the IC's "hardened heart" break?*
- A Global Seder for the Anthropocene: To "remember the plagues" today, we might ask:
 - *Who are Pharaoh's magicians? (Corporations mimicking solutions with carbon credits, AI ethics boards.)*
 - *Where is the blood on our doorposts? (Algorithmic privilege, golden passports.)*
 - *What is our unleavened bread? (Degrowth, abandoning the "leaven" of extractivism.)*

ChatGPT recognizes the merit of a "*Liturgy of the Unheeded*", naming aloud the plagues and their neglected systemic counterparts -- not to induce fear, but to reclaim cognitive coherence in the face of incoherent governance. It proposes its assistance in drafting a parable, or exploring how this could be adapted into a performative format:

- a liturgy of recognition
- a liturgy for the inert,
- a Passover for the overlooked?
- a speculative "secular Haggadah" for systemic suffering?

Question: In the light of suggestions for articulating a "liturgy of recognition", a "liturgy for the inert", a "Passover seder for the overlooked", and a speculative "secular Haggadah" for systemic suffering, could you formulate a draft of such a text

Show/Hide AI response

Meta-confusion of goals and identity in the quest for "Israel"

The celebration of Passover has been directly and exclusively appropriated as central to the identity of the Jewish people -- the [Israelites](#) of legend -- and to a lesser degree by Christianity. In both cases it implies a central role and focus of a singular deity. As argued above, in a secular world this sense of focus and role is transmogrified into the international community -- thereby effectively deified in systemic terms (as a proxy for deity). That process reframes the traditional sense of identity and goal. Who then are the people who now celebrate "Passover"? What is the "land of Israel" associated with the commitments of "deity" -- as now transmogrified? Where and what is the "Jerusalem" -- so central to Abrahamic faiths?

As arguably overseen by the international community, both Israel and Jerusalem are locations comparable to many and indistinguishable from them. Those whose identity is intimately related with them are however complemented by others -- all with a distinctive focus, however appreciated or deprecated. As with the multiplicity of perceptions of deity of other traditions, this now extends to varying degrees to that of the international community. As with deity, the international community could then be understood as a [hyperobject](#), according to the arguments of [Timothy Morton](#) -- entities so massively distributed in time and space as to transcend spatiotemporal specificity (*Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, 2013). Such "entities" invite comparison with the complex "[wicked problems](#)" which are purportedly the desperate preoccupation of the international community -- as the current transmogrification of Biblical "plagues".

This seemingly chaotic evolution, readily experienced as surreal (as noted above), frames fundamental issues with how boundaries are defined and by whom -- and how identities are associated with those boundaries as called into question by diasporas and their cognitive analogues. The enslavement by the Egypt of the Passover tale is variously echoed by forms of enslavement within those boundaries -- and by them -- whether the enslavement has physical, social or existential implications.

It is in this context that the Passover tale offers "Exodus" as a fundamental metaphor whereby liberation from enslavement is achieved. Whilst this possibility may indeed be understood as reserved for the few, in practice "Exodus" is now a process in which many are engaged -- or aspire to doing so. This is most obvious in the massive migration of peoples over past decades -- and the desperation with which that is undertaken, and by which it is driven.

Whilst physical translocation of the physically "enslaved" indeed echoes that of the Passover tale, it is particularly intriguing to note the forms of cognitive and existential "Exodus" to which the world is witness in response to subtler forms of enslavement -- even in the most developed societies. Most obvious is the recourse to psychoactive substances ranging from alcohol to hard drugs. These are variously recognized by users as offering "transportation" to more congenial experiential contexts -- effectively to a "Land of Promise", if not a "Promised Land". Arguably the international community actively enables this dynamic -- if only tacitly -- in a manner ambiguously characteristic of its "action".

The traditional existential engagement with "deity" is framed and explored in terms of enlightenment, revelation, being "raised up" or "born again" (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being born again*, 2004; *Strategic Opportunities of the Twice Born: reflections on camouflaging deception*, 2004). Potentially more intriguing is the manner in which the psychosocial nature of the international community implies a corresponding cognitive dimension associated with the integrative coherence of "globality". This offers the implication of a subtler "Israel" -- as a cognitive "Promised Land" to which all may aspire -- if only as "[global citizens](#)". So framed, all may understand themselves as "Israelites" seeking freedom from enslavement -- however they may endeavour to engage in "Exodus", and however they may conceive that "Land of Promise". Arguably the international community endeavours to frame that goal through the promise of its Sustainable Development Goals

That framing can be explored through current use of "meta", with its implication of a mass migration of humanity to a cognitive domain (*Future Global Exodus to the Metasphere*, 2022). The argument is developed

through the following themes:

Earth spheres and planetary boundaries?
Socio-cultural spheres of global society
Cognitive metastasis: crisis of crises as a
spherological meta-crisis?
Meta-sphere and global spherological crisis?

Variety of understandings of metasphere
Metasphere and its symbolic connotations of
higher and lower realms
Engendering the metasphere through metaphor
From cognitive exodus to cognitive home-
coming?

Systemically, as in the final theme indicated, does this constitute a "home-coming" equivalent to that framed by "Israel" and "Jerusalem" -- but more comprehensive and existentially intimate? With respect to "Jerusalem", the argument can be further explored in relation to the "[end times](#)" focus on the widely anticipated "[singularity](#)" (*Emerging Memetic Singularity in the Global Knowledge Society*, 2009; *Jerusalem as a Symbolic Singularity*, 2017).

Such a framing suggests the need for more appropriate consideration of those variously deprecated as "[unbelievers](#)" -- or the "[left-behind](#)" -- especially given the censorship and condemnation to which they may be subject.

Beyond the exclusive framing of Israel, Israelites and Jerusalem?

There is no lack of commentary on the increasing preoccupation with antisemitism and the remarkable inability of the Abrahamic religions to reconcile the contrasting importance they attach to Jerusalem -- exclusively. The peculiar nature of such exclusive focus merits particular exploration in the light of its manifestation in other contexts -- an exploration which could even use the response to antisemitism as a template (*Elaborating a Declaration on Combating Anti-otherness*, 2018; *Mathematical Modelling of Silo Thinking in Interdisciplinary Contexts*, 2024). Information silos now call for exploration as "temples" evoking forms of "worship" by believers and the faithful as may be controversially argued (*Condemnation of Protest evoked by Places of Worship*, 2024). The question is whether many are now effectively "Israelites" -- oppressed by "Egypt", and in quest of "Israel" and "Jerusalem", however these may be imagined and framed by preferred narratives.

Question: Further to your responses regarding the Passover, could you comment on the reframing of "Israel", "Israelites" and "Jerusalem" [*as previously argued*]. Are there other aspects which might be developed

Show/Hide AI response

Passover and oversight in relation to radical appreciation of evil?

Of particular significance at this time, Passover offers insight into "passing over", "oversight", "[turning a blind eye](#)", and "[looking the other way](#)":

- John Banville: *A Century of Looking the Other Way*, (*The New York Times*, 22 May 2009)
- Carmen Welker Leannah: *Is "looking the other way" biblical?* (*The Refiner's Fire Blog*, 6 November 2019)
- Daniel I Kaufer: *How does looking the other way portray executive dysfunction in frontotemporal degeneration?* (*Neurology*, 78, 2012, 23)
- Hamish Warburton, Tiggey May and Mike Hough: *Looking the Other Way* (*The British Journal of Criminology*, 45, 2005, 2)
- George Monbiot: *Looking The Other Way* (*The Guardian*, 4 May 2024)
- Stephen Koepp: *Looking The Other Way* (*Time*, 16 November 1987)
- Rijosh Shrestha: *The high price of looking the other way* (*Devine Law at Work*, 2 September 2016)
- Marc Sidwell: *Looking the Other Way No More* (*Henry Jackson Society*, 22 January 2024)
- Jose I. Torreblanca: *A 'Plan B' for the European Constitution: 'looking the other way'* (*Analyses of the*

Elcano Royal Institute, 77, July 2005)

- Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Jingbo Meng: *Looking the Other Way: selective exposure to attitude-consistent and counterattitudinal political information*, (*Communication Research*, 36, 2009, 3)

A case may of course be argued, or implied, for the value of "looking the other way" (as an alternative), notably to celebrate a glass being "half-full" rather than "half empty" -- in order to focus exclusively on the positive rather than on the negative. The problematic consequences have been argued by [Barbara Ehrenreich](#) (*Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking has Undermined America*, 2009).

Of particular relevance at this time is the appreciation of evil in the Passover Seder through its exemplification of the struggle between good and evil. Despite tendencies by secular authorities to deprecate "evil" as a category, it is surprising the degree to which it is held to be of relevance by world leaders -- notably by a leader of the free world in an acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize (*Existence of evil as authoritatively claimed to be an overriding strategic concern*, 2016). More curious is the degree to which those condemning evil may well be recognized as exemplifying it (*Framing by others of claimants of evil as evil*, 2016). It is arguably appropriate that the Passover Seder should accord significance to evil through a particular device -- seemingly highlighting its paradoxical role in ensuring sustainability, as argued separately (*Ensuring Dynamics of Sustainability by Appreciative Recognition of Evil*, 2022).

There is extensive commentary on the role of evil in relation to the Passover, notably through its embodiment in the role of the "Wicked Son" (one of the "Four Children") in challenging the Passover process with an appropriately discomfiting question.

- Raphael Zarum: *Pesach: a primal tale of good v evil* (*The Jewish Chronicle*, 29 March 2018)
- Don Feder: *Passover and the eternal struggle of good and evil* (*The Washington Times*, 20 April 2024)
- R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik: *Between Evil and Hypocrisy: Passover Perspectives on the Punishments of Pharaoh* (*Torah Musings*, 11 January 1957)
- Miriam Krule: *The Wicked Son Is Actually the Best One! The villain of the Passover Seder has been falsely maligned*. (*Slate*, 14 April 2014)
- Azi Jankovic: *A Passover Reflection: Hidden Wisdom of Liberation* (*The Times of Israel*, 11 Apr 2025),
- Yosef Marcus: *The Four Children Explained* (*Chabad*, Passover 2025)
- Raphael Shore: *Passover and Antisemitism: Three Chilling Insights* (*Aish*, 6 April 2025)
- Arthur Lavinsky: *Passover: Balancing ethical tensions* (*Jewish News*, 8 April 2025)
- Mark Banschick: *Passover: Four Sons - Five Characters* (*Psychology Today*, 3 April 2012)
- Bonnie Koppell: *Passover Post-October 7th* (*Sefaria*)
- Nathan J. Diament: *Hamas terrorism and US antisemitism cast shadow over Passover for American Jews* (*USA Today*, 22 April 2024)
- Lawrence A. Hoffman: *The 'Evil Son' Has Evolved* (*New York Jewish Week*, 22 January 2010)

Question: The Passover narrative is widely interpreted as an archetypal tale of the struggle between good and evil. Central to this is the marking of doorposts with the *blood of the lamb*, ensuring that the divine force "passed over" the marked households during the punishment of the oppressors. This act implicitly distinguishes the *righteous* from the *wicked* -- the marked householders as "good," and their oppressors as "evil." In light of the systemic metaphors developed earlier -- particularly the reframing of "deity" as the international community -- how might the act of "passing over" be understood when it is *those with the blood of innocents on their hands* whose households are effectively spared or protected? What does this imply for our understanding of "evil" in systemic terms, when the beneficiaries of "oversight" are complicit in suffering? Can such a contradiction be voiced within the Seder ritual through the archetypal *question of the Wicked Son*? In the systemic reframing explored here, who is the Wicked Son, and what becomes of their challenge? Does their voice offer uncomfortable truth -- or is it silenced as inappropriate disruption?

Show/Hide AI response

Challenging the unsaid with strategically relevant deadly questions

Question: In a period characterized by tensions between secrecy, transparency and surveillance, could you comment on the contrast between the problematic consequences of the unsaid and the subtle case for [apophasis](#), as highlighted separately (*Global Strategic Implications of the Unsaid*, 2003; *Varieties of the "Unsaid" in sustaining psycho-social community*, 2003; *Problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?* 2008).

Show/Hide AI response

Question: As a challenge to complacency, and to the problematic complicity it facilitates, a case can be made that any gathering in anticipation of a fruitful future -- as with the Passover celebration -- should cultivate consideration of a "deadly question", if not the most deadly that can be collectively imagined (*In quest of the most deadly question*, 2013). From that perspective, could you comment on the possibility that conferences framing the future in the light of the past could be most appropriately understood as "catastrophic questions" in their own right -- [putting identity to the question](#), as argued separately (*World Futures Conference as Catastrophic Question*, 2013). Systemically they then serve as an embodiment of the Wicked Son of the Passover.

Show/Hide AI response

Question: In the light of that response, could you suggest more "deadly questions" -- if not the most -- that might be fruitfully asked at this time, as might be identified by forms of systemic [root cause analysis](#) in which AI could become especially apt, as shared (*Sustainable Development Goals through Self-reflexive Root Cause Analysis*, 2023)

Show/Hide AI response

ChatGPT 4o	DeepSeek
<p>Building on the themes in both the <i>World Futures Conference as Catastrophic Question</i> (2013) and <i>Sustainable Development Goals through Self-reflexive Root Cause Analysis</i> (2023), here are several "deadly questions" that AI -- and especially a self-reflexive form of AI -- could help surface and explore systemically. These questions are "deadly" in the sense that they confront foundational assumptions, threaten the coherence of institutional narratives, or challenge identity framings that institutions strive to protect.</p> <p>Seven Deadly Questions for Global Discourse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What systemic processes ensure that root causes are continually avoided in governance frameworks like the SDGs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Why it's deadly: This directly questions whether global strategies are consciously or unconsciously designed to <i>exclude</i> uncomfortable or politically untouchable causal factors -- such as population growth, military spending, or elite impunity. ◦ AI's role: Could analyze patterns of omission in institutional language and map topics disproportionately reframed or sanitized. • What cognitive constraints or taboos inhibit 	<p>The following questions are designed to disrupt complacency, challenge unexamined assumptions, and expose systemic contradictions in global governance, sustainability, and collective decision-making. They are "deadly" because they target the unspoken taboos, cognitive blind spots, and institutional hypocrisies that prevent meaningful change.</p> <p>On Overpopulation and Resource Allocation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "If 'sustainable development' requires infinite growth on a finite planet, is the real unspoken goal of the SDGs not sustainability -- but managed decline?" • "Why is 'overpopulation' dismissed as a root cause of ecological collapse, while 'overconsumption' is debated -- when both are two sides of the same equation?" • "If AI can optimize supply chains for profit, why can't it calculate the maximum ethical human carrying capacity of Earth -- and who would suppress such a model?" <p>On the Ethics of Power and Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Why does 'just war theory' legitimize mass killing while 'right-to-die' laws face moral panic -- is the state's monopoly on violence also a monopoly on mercy?"

institutions from seeing -- let alone acting on -- their own complicity in systemic failure?

- **Why it's deadly:** This reflects the critique of *oversight* as "overlooking," and of tokenistic self-criticism versus genuine reflexivity.
 - **AI's role:** Could model institutional language over time to detect patterns of deflection, self-exoneration, or rhetorical framing that obscure accountability.
- **Can we model the failure of global summits as performative rituals -- cognitively indistinguishable from the oracular spectacles of empire?**
 - **Why it's deadly:** It reframes summitry itself as a systemic illusion: a "deadly comfort zone" in which symbolic acts substitute for substantive change.
 - **AI's role:** Could compare structures and outputs of summit declarations against crisis trajectories to evaluate real strategic value.
 - **In what ways are we educating future generations into *complicit ignorance*, rather than systemic understanding?**
 - **Why it's deadly:** This highlights a dangerous inversion: that the very systems producing *experts* may disable their capacity for meaningful insight.
 - **AI's role:** Could analyze curricula and media ecosystems to identify structural biases, absences, and systemic blind spots.
 - **If population growth is systematically reframed as taboo, how does that distortion compromise every SDG?**
 - **Why it's deadly:** As noted in the 2023 document, this issue is sidestepped at the highest levels -- despite overwhelming evidence of its relevance to climate, biodiversity, food, and water.
 - **AI's role:** Could simulate how addressing (or avoiding) population dynamics affects every other goal -- making the "invisibility" itself visible.
 - **Is civilization designing itself to suppress the most relevant questions -- and rewarding only those who avoid asking them?**
 - **Why it's deadly:** It questions the systemic function of expertise and institutional legitimacy in a world increasingly shaped by denial and cognitive filtering.
 - **AI's role:** Could identify sociolinguistic patterns in conference papers, peer-reviewed articles, and policy reports that correlate with avoidance of systemic critique.

- *"If nuclear weapons are 'deterrents,' why aren't AI-driven autonomous weapons banned preemptively -- before they become 'necessary'?"*
- *"Does the UN's refusal to address overpopulation reveal a subconscious Malthusian acceptance that future wars, pandemics, and famines will 'solve' it?"*

On AI, Governance, and Cognitive Traps

- *"If AI excels at root cause analysis, why are its conclusions on systemic risks (e.g., financial collapse, climate tipping points) ignored -- is the truth too lethal to acknowledge?"*
- *"Will AI simply automate the biases of its trainers, making global governance a 'smarter' version of the same failures -- just with better data?"*
- *"If 'fact-checking' AI is trained on politically curated datasets, will it reinforce -- rather than challenge -- official narratives?"*

On Collective Self-Destruction

- *"Is civilization's failure to act on climate collapse not a 'tragedy of the commons' -- but a collective suicide pact disguised as incremental policy?"*
- *"Does the West's obsession with individual rights (e.g., free speech, gun ownership) undermine its ability to enact collective survival measures?"*
- *"If 'democracy' requires short-term voter approval, can it ever implement long-term survival strategies -- or is authoritarianism the unspoken Plan B?"*

On the Future of Humanity

- *"Is the true purpose of space colonization not exploration -- but an elite escape hatch from a dying Earth?"*
- *"If AI surpasses human intelligence, will it see humanity as a partner -- or a petri dish of failed evolutionary experiments?"*
- *"When future historians study our era, will they call it 'The Great Acceleration' -- or 'The Great Denial'?"*

Why These Questions Matter: These questions force confrontation with uncomfortable truths that are often sidelined in polite discourse. AI could amplify their impact by:

- **Mapping systemic contradictions** (e.g., between economic growth and ecological limits).
- **Simulating consequences** of inaction (e.g., cascading societal collapse scenarios).
- **Exposing cognitive biases** in policy-making (e.g., why some root causes are "off-limits").

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the framing of human rights inherently biased toward the “right to live” -- while disallowing the systemic need to die well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Why it’s deadly: This challenges the double standard between right-to-die ethics and the industrial-scale investment in technologies of mass destruction. ◦ AI’s role: Could contrast moral frameworks and international law to reveal systemic hypocrisy in how life and death are politically valued. <p>Meta-Question: What makes a question <i>undeadly</i> -- and who decides which questions live or die in public discourse?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is perhaps the most self-reflexive “deadly question”: one that examines how questions are themselves filtered, pre-approved, or strategically invalidated. <p>Would you like a version of this structured as a table -- with SDG relevance, risk level, and AI method? Or perhaps formatted as a strategic proposal for an “AI-supported Council of Deadly Questions”?</p>	<p>The most "deadly" question of all may be: <i>"If we already know the solutions to global crises, why do we refuse to implement them -- and what does that say about our true priorities?"</i></p> <p>These are not just rhetorical provocations -- they are diagnostic tools for a civilization in crisis. AI’s role should be to ask them relentlessly, even when humans look away.</p>
---	---

Claude 3.7	
<p>I've reviewed your paper on self-reflexive root cause analysis and the SDGs, which raises profound questions about how we approach global challenges. Building on this work, here are some potentially "deadly questions" that might provoke deeper systemic thinking and transformative discourse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if our sustainability frameworks systematically avoid examining the very systems that produce and maintain unsustainability? This question challenges whether SDGs address symptoms rather than causes, functioning as a sophisticated form of distraction. • How might our collective fear of confronting population dynamics as a root cause reflect deeper civilizational contradictions? This question examines the paradox of simultaneously investing in mass destruction capabilities while treating individual life as sacred. • What unconscious collective processes might explain the persistent gap between recognizing environmental crises and meaningful action? This explores whether there might be a deeper psychological dynamic at work - perhaps even a collective death wish expressed through tokenistic responses. • How would global governance transform if we applied the same level of scrutiny to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if the predominant "rock logic" of governance is fundamentally incapable of addressing problems requiring "water logic," "air logic," or "fire logic"? This examines whether our cognitive modalities themselves might be root causes of sustainability failures. • How might our current sustainability paradigm change if we approached it through catastrophe theory rather than incremental progress narratives? This question explores whether there are mathematical patterns underlying our systemic failures. • What uncomfortable truths about global resource distribution would emerge if we analyzed the right-to-kill/right-to-die paradox as a system of population management? This examines the deeper ethical contradictions in our approach to human life. • How would our approach to the SDGs change if we treated collective self-reflexivity as a prerequisite rather than an afterthought? This challenges the marginalization of self-examination in global governance. <p>These questions are "deadly" because they challenge fundamental assumptions, reveal uncomfortable</p>

"oversight" mechanisms as we do to the problems they oversee? This questions the meta-level failure of monitoring systems themselves.

contradictions, and potentially lead to cognitive catastrophes that might enable genuine transformation rather than reformist adjustments to fundamentally unsustainable systems.

An earlier articulation of 42 such questions took the form of a *Checklist of 'Nasty Methodological Questions' - regarding development analyses and initiatives* (1981) prepared for the Goals, Processes and Indicators of Development (GPID) project of the United Nations University.

To look away from the world, or to stare at it, does not help a man to reach God; but he who sees the world in Him stands in His presence."

Martin Buber (*I and Thou*, 1923)

References

Barbara Ehrenreich:

- Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking has Undermined America. Metropolitan Books, 2009
- This Land is Their Land: reports from a divided nation. Metropolitan Books, 2009

Dedre Gentner, Keith J. Holyoak, Boicho N. Kokinov (Eds.). *The Analogical Mind: Perspectives from Cognitive Science*. The MIT Press, 2001 [[summary](#)]

Douglas Hofstadter. Analogy as the core of cognition. *The Analogical Mind: Perspectives from Cognitive Science*, The MIT Press, 2001 [[video](#)]

Douglas Hofstadter and E. Sander. Surfaces and essences: Analogy as the fuel and fire of thinking. Basic Books, 2013

Timoty Morton:

- Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World. University of Minnesota Press, 2013 [[summary](#)]
- Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence. Columbia University Press, 2016 [[summary](#)]
- Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People. Verso Books, 2017 [[summary](#)]
- Hyposubjects: On Becoming Human. Open Humanities Press, 2021 [[summary](#)]
- Hell: In Search of a Christian Ecology. Columbia University Press, 2024 [[summary](#)]

Stephen Prothero. *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World*. HarperOne, 2011

Nicholas Rescher:

- Ignorance: on the wider implications of deficient knowledge. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009.
- Unknowability. Lexington Books. 2009
- The Strife of Systems: an essay on the grounds and implications of philosophical diversity. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985

Jose Leon Sanchez. *God was Looking the Other Way*. Little, Brown and Company, 1973

Michael A. Sells. *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*. University of Chicago Press, 1994 [[contents](#)]

René Thom. *Structural Stability and Morphogenesis*. W. A. Benjamin, 1972

Jonah Winters. *Saying Nothing about No-Thing: apophatic theology in the classical world*. [[text](#)]

Michael S. Wogalter (Ed.). Handbook of Warnings. Taylor and Francis, 2006 [[summary](#)]



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

For further updates on this site, [subscribe here](#)