

Ten Plagues

Contributed by [Religious Action Center](#)

Source: Earth Justice Seder

We dip our finger in our wine and place one drop on our napkin for each plague, to diminish our joy with the memory of the sorrow of our enemies. This year, as we remember the plagues cast upon the Egyptians, we also remember 10 modern plagues, that have befallen the entire human race. We take one drop out of our cup of wine for each plague, because our joy is diminished as humankind suffers.

From the Religious Action Center's "10 Environmental Plagues"

Climate Change – Burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, raising our global temperature, increasing the risk of coastal flooding, and threatening nearly every part of our lives.

Deforestation – Trees are our most important natural resource, yet a forest area the size of 20 football fields is lost every minute to paper production.

Water Pollution – The United States dumps billions of tons of chemicals into our water every single day, causing health problems for millions of Americans.

Lead Poisoning – Lead enters our ecosystem through industrial air pollution, corroded piping, and faulty irrigation practices. Without intervention, lead can cause kidney problems and developmental disorders in children and can lead to stillbirths and miscarriages in pregnant women.

Habitat Destruction – The leading threats to the diversity of species in the United States are habitat destruction and degradation. In fact, 80% of the coastline in the lower 48 states has been developed, thus increasing the rate of extinction to 1000 times the background rate.

Mountaintop Removal – Mountaintop removal strip mining is the practice of blasting off the tops of mountains in order to mine coal deposits underneath. When it rains the residue from these mountains form sludge causing huge mudslides in West Virginia and polluting drinking water.

Radiation Poisoning – Each year countless numbers of Americans are exposed to higher than normal levels of radiation due to nuclear waste and improper x-ray technology. Even small levels of exposure can cause cancer and immune system malfunctions.

Factory Farms – According to the EPA, waste from hogs, chicken, and cattle has polluted 35,000 miles of rivers in 22 states and contaminated water in 17 states. Additionally, factory farms do not treat God's creatures with the respect that Judaism demands that they receive.

Over-fishing – Our current fishing practices are decimating fish populations, throwing off natural food chains and allowing invasive species like algae to bloom. In fact recent studies have shown that if current fishing practices continue all fish stocks could collapse in 50 years.

Acid Rain – Acid rain is caused when human chemicals like sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) mix with water vapor in the earth's atmosphere and return as precipitation, thereby destroying forests, poisoning wildlife, and affecting human health.

For more information on the environmental justice, please visit rac.org/enviro.

For all Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism resources, please visit rac.org/Passover.

