JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE

LABOR SEDER

MARCH 31, 2019 ▲ 24 ADAR II 5779 ▲ ADAS ISRAEL

IN EVERY GENERATION

YOU MUST SHOW UP AS IF YOU WERE SET FREE FROM MITZRAYIM

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We have come together at this time for many reasons. A traditional Passover seder is a festive meal in which we remember and reenact the ancient Jewish story of liberation from slavery in Egypt. Over the centuries, thousands of different versions of the Passover haggadah, or “narrative,” have been written. This haggadah has been prepared to bring the Jewish, labor, and activist communities together to retell the story of the Exodus in a time many of us feel we are actually living that story. Like the story of our time, the Passover story is one of a tyrannical leader, persecution, oppressive policies, impossible work demands, misery, destruction, and finally, we pray... a successful struggle for freedom.

*Adapted from the Jewish Labor Committee Passover Haggadah, Third Edition, Spring 2002*

Fifty years ago, American democracy was in crisis—caused by its inability to go beyond “civil rights” to cure ourselves from the “original sin” of racism, and its inability to end the Vietnam War that was convulsing the country. This kind of Seder is an important way to create communities of resistance and to raise our knowledge and our consciousness. But resistance cannot end there. Like Jesus on the first “Palm Sunday” and Dr. King in Birmingham, we must take prayer into the streets. Like the dogged millennia of rabbis, we must keep creating alternative communities even, or especially, when the pharaohs and Caesars oppress us. Like Moses facing Pharaoh and Elijah facing King Ahab, we must name the ways in which the powers and the princes bring ecological disasters—plagues—upon our peoples, and we must create islands of alternative sources of renewable energy, both chemical and political.

These Seders were themselves moments of freedom, where old and young could learn from and with each other, where they could talk freely about how to win and shape their freedom. They were moments of living in what Dr. King called the “Beloved Community” —a “Promised Land” beyond all boundaries. And along with many other forms of struggle in concert with the Spirit, they helped give birth to new spiritual communities—embodied in Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity.

Welcome! The Jewish people have been preparing for this seder for thousands of years.

For some of us this is the first time. Some of us have sat at a seder table dozens of times with hundreds of people. No matter your journey to this moment, we are here together to hope, struggle, and glimpse liberation.

We are here in Washington, DC, in 2019, in a specific moment, resisting the rise of fascism at home and abroad. We are on the traditional lands of several native peoples, including the Nacostines and the Piscataway, who were forced to move many times and finally to leave here by English settlers starting as early as 1680. For generations, this city was a planter society, home to wealthy enslavers and the people they held in bondage. This city was also shaped perhaps more than any other U.S. city by free Black people—as well as the contempt that white elites held, and sometimes still hold, for them. In every generation that people have lived here, they have fought for freedom.

We stand in a long line of those who worked for justice, both as Jews and as the people of this place. This is the theme of this year’s seder, which comes directly from the haggadah. B’chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k’eelu yu yatzah mi’Mitzrayaim, the haggadah tells us. In every generation we must each see ourselves as though we ourselves were freed from Mitzrayim.

Torah calls us to act on the memory of being vulnerable, feared outsiders. In the Jews United for Justice community, we live this out by working with people who are calling out today from the narrow and oppressive places of our society. As Jews, our memories of oppression, our story of liberation, and our history of being liberation workers in many movements and lands are fundamental to who we are and how we must live.

So tonight, we weave together the stories of many generations. As we move through the seder we will celebrate our ancestors, our elders, ourselves, and our future.

We also celebrate two monumental occasions:

This year is the 50th anniversary of the first Freedom Seder, the spiritual ancestor of a thousand seders like this one all over the world. Rabbi Arthur Waskow, who created the Freedom Seder, wrote:

“This kind of Seder is an important way to create communities of resistance and to raise our knowledge and our consciousness… These Seders were themselves moments of freedom, where old and young could learn from and with each other, where they could talk freely about how to win and shape their freedom.”

*In our haggadah tonight we use this ancient name, which means “the narrow place” and suggests constriction and oppression, instead of “Egypt,” to avoid allusion to a modern country that is as much a place of struggle for liberation as any in our world today.*
This year is also JUFJ’s 20th anniversary. Ninety years after the birth of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a visionary rabbi of the Civil Rights era, a small group of activists studied Rabbi Heschel’s teachings with local rabbi, David Shneyer. Together they decided that study must lead to action and they founded Jews United for Justice. The Labor Seder is one of our longest-running annual events, and is called that because so many of our founders were rooted in the labor movement. Because of those roots, standing with workers for good pay and benefits, respect, and a voice on the job has been a mainstay of JUFJ’s work even as our campaigns have broadened and multiplied. Twenty years later, JUFJ is a vibrant community of thousands that is deeply embedded in the activist and advocacy communities of DC, Montgomery County, Baltimore, and, increasingly, the entire state of Maryland.

Tonight we look back at twenty years of history—a generation in the sociological sense. We honor the people who have shaped this organization. We celebrate the changes we have worked for, the laws and policies we helped create, the consciousness and conscience that we strengthened together.

We look ahead to the next twenty years. In the next generation we promise to show up with the resolve of a people who were once denied our power. When we look back on these times and tell our young people what we did to resist, make change, and repair our world, may we all be proud. Thank you for having been with us, for being with us tonight, and for showing up tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.

🎵 HINEI MA TOV / HOW GREAT IT IS 🎵
(new melody by Mikey Pauker, new translation by Dr. Koach Baruch Frazier)

[call and response chorus] x2

Hinei ma tov u’ma na’im
Shevet achim gam yachad.

How great it is for all my siblings
to hang out on this day!

Hinei ma tov u’ma na’im
Shevet achayot gam yachad.

How great it is for all my siblings
to hang out on this day!
hadlakat nerot / candle lighting

reader:
In the light of the Passover candles,
We celebrate the spirit of freedom,
Our candles a beacon of liberation
For our people, for all people.
It is our task to make from fire
Not an all-consuming blaze
But the light in which we see each other.
Each of us distinct, yet
Each of us bound up in one another

adapted from seder for a better world by the workmen’s circle

the lighting of the candles separates the shadow from the light, shabbat from the rest of the week, normal days from holy days, spring from winter, justice from oppression. it marks a moment of difference. may the light of the candles guide us in our pursuit of justice and show us the future that we are building together.

as the candles are lit, we say together:
we light these candles to illuminate our work for justice and liberation.

shehecheyanu / arriving in gratitude

the shehecheyanu blessing gives thanks for the arrival of any long-awaited occasion such as a holiday or a new beginning, and honors the sacredness of each moment that arises anew. though the moment we are living through is hard, how blessed we are to be together, in a community committed to the ongoing fight for justice, compassion, and love.

with gratitude for this moment and for each other, let us say together:

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלוהינו, מלך העולם,
שאניュננו וחקינו ואנו נגננו ליום הזה.

baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam,
shehecheyanu vekiyemanu v'hiqiymanu l'zman hazeh.

blessed are you, source of all life, spirit of the universe,
who has given us life and kept us strong, and brought us to this time.
Blessing Over the First Cup

All are invited to pour a little grape juice or wine into their neighbor’s glass.

READER:

As is appropriate for free people relaxing over a shared meal, we drink four cups of wine or grape juice during the seder. Tonight the cups honor each of four generations of community leaders who inspired, created, sustained, and carry on the work of our justice movement.

The first cup is for our ancestors, those who came before us in the work of repairing the world. Our ancestors dreamed of a better world and they worked for those dreams: they organized, resisted, walked off the job, raised money, raised kids, spoke truth to power, migrated, ran for office, fed their communities, taught their friends, sued, sat down in the streets, marched. They joined forces with other dreamers of every class, race, and religion. When they won, they rejoiced. When it was hard, they had each other, and we hope, a sense of humor. Like the Israelites at the Red Sea, they sang, they danced, they loved.

We raise our first glass to all those who came before us:

ברוך אתה יא-לוהי מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha’olam, borei p’ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Drink the first cup.

“...[O]n April 4, 1968, [Dr. Martin Luther] King was killed — and the next day, riots broke out in Washington. [Rabbi Arthur] Waskow and fellow white activists deeply immersed in the struggle for civil rights in the District spent the rest of the week huddled in a makeshift command center, trying to ferry supplies to black communities under curfew as the National Guard took over the streets of the city.

Eight days after the assassination, the Jewish holiday of Passover began. Waskow trudged wearily back to his home in Adams Morgan for the Passover Seder. As he passed a military vehicle, with its machine gun pointed outward, he had something of a religious experience.

“My guts began to say: ‘This is Pharaoh’s army,’”

“The Freedom Seder: The anti-racism dinner party that changed American Judaism”

Washington Post, March 29, 2019
Here, and throughout the text, we are highlighting some of JUFJ’s community leaders.

**JOELLE NOVEY, LEADER SINCE 2001**

I’ve been involved with JUFJ for a long time, and I was with JUFJ in 2003 for the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, welcoming and hosting hundreds of immigrants and allies who had traveled across America. JUFJ made signs for everyone to wear with our immigration histories. I was proud to stand with my community and with those new Americans wearing my own sign: “My great-grandparents were immigrant workers from Lithuania.” Now, nearly two decades later, I continue to work with JUFJ to advocate for the Maryland Trust Act, which would ensure that everyone, no matter the color of their skin or their immigration status, can access community services without fear, and that police serve and protect all our communities.


Our family has been involved in JUFJ for over a decade. When Max moved to DC 14 years ago, JUFJ was a door-opening organization—literally. Max got involved with JUFJ’s 2005 living wage campaign and knocked doors in my new city. Years later, after our first child was born we showed up after a call went out to fill the DC Council hearing room for the first Paid Family Leave hearing. We organized friends with other babies to participate, and, before they spoke their first words, Benjamin, Adam, and Milo made their debut in the Washington Post in a photo that we have seen again, and again, and again, as JUFJ has fought to win, defend, fund, and implement paid family and medical leave. We saw the law threatened, but the JUFJ community continued to stand up for DC families at every turn. Now, our daughter can follow in her brother’s footsteps and start rocking her JUFJ onesie in the campaigns to come.

**CAROL STERN, DONOR SINCE 1999, LEADER SINCE 2017**

As a longtime JUFJ donor, as soon as I had more availability, I started dedicating my time to volunteering with JUFJ. After years of email action alerts and reports of local wins, I jumped in with both feet and a full heart. This year I led my Maryland District 16 contingent at JUFJ’s lobby night in Annapolis and in meetings with our legislators before the state legislative session began. Both were amazing events for me. Because I was able to raise enthusiasm in my synagogue for JUFJ and these activities, we had excellent turnout and very appreciative legislators. I am now very connected to my legislators and their staff, which allows me easy access to them for lobbying our issues. I felt so proud when the Maryland State Senate voted to overturn Governor Hogan’s veto of earned sick leave after our coalition’s six years of advocacy. I won’t forget the power and joy we felt the moment legislation passed, ensuring that 700,000 people could finally just stay home if they are sick.
**Havruta / Meeting**

Relationships are at the heart of community organizing. Before we continue, we'll take a few minutes to get to know our tablemates.

Please take turns sharing with your table:

- Your name and where you live
- How you are connected to JUFJ or came to be at this seder
- An ancestor (personal, historical, or mythical) who inspires you

**Maggid / The Telling**

**Avadim Hayinu / We Were Enslaved**

**READER:**
The ancient story of our ancestors is interwoven with the stories of every generation.

**ALL:**
We were slaves to Pharaoh in the land of Mitzrayim, and the Holy One took us out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Holy One had not freed our ancestors, we and our children and our children’s children might be there still.

**READER:**
All of us are descended from ordinary people who dreamed and fought for a better future. We live in a world shaped by their wild successes even as it is still imperfect. We are the fulfillment of their dreams just as we are the ancestors of future generations who will inherit the world we make today.

**ALL:**
As Emma Lazarus, Sephardi-American activist, and poet of the Statue of Liberty wrote, “Until we are all free, we are none of us free.”

And as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “no one is free until we are all free.”

**READER:**
Jewish tradition teaches: Lo alecha ham’lacha ligmor v’lo atah ven chorin l’hibatel minenah: we are not required to finish the work but we cannot quit either. The enslaved Israelites stood up to Pharaoh and fled Mitzrayim—but we are still none of us truly free.

This work will not be completed in our lifetime. And yet, each step toward freedom, toward a more just society, is worthwhile. By remembering what we have already done, we grow stronger for the next step.
Avadim Hayinu / We Were Slaves
(Traditional)

וּעֲבָדִים הָיִינ
עַתָה - בְנֵי חוֹרִין

Avadim hayinu, hayinu
Ata b’nai horin, b’nai horin
Avadim hayinu, ata, ata, b’nai horin
Avadim hayinu, hayinu, ata b’nai horin, b’nai horin

(Once we were slaves. Today we are free people!)

READER:
How did the Israelites come to be enslaved? Like many immigrant families, Joseph and his brothers came to Mitzrayim in search of safety and sustenance. They needed food during a great famine in their homeland.

At first, they were welcomed fully. But as time passed and the Pharaoh who had welcomed them died, they came to be feared as strangers and threats. The new Pharaoh plotted to minimize the imagined threat by oppressing the Israelites with harsh labor in the fields and cities, in agriculture and construction.

Pharaoh’s xenophobia turned murderous. He sought to rip families apart and stamp out the hope of the next generation. Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, “Every boy that is born to the Israelites shall be thrown into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

In those days of terror, women resisted. The midwives Shifra and Puah helped Israeliite mothers birth safely. Children were hidden. When one women’s baby son could no longer be hidden at home, Yocheved put him in a basket and placed it among the reeds of the Nile. His oldest sister, Miriam, watched. Parents and children separated… a story we still know all too well.

Pharaoh’s daughter Batya went to the river to bathe and found the baby. She named him Moses, which means “drawn from water,” and vowed to raise him as her own. Miriam stepped out of the reeds and offered her own mother as a nursemaid—and so the baby was raised both a child of slaves and a child of privilege.

Jeff Rubin, Leader since 2013

After months of working to stop opponents of Montgomery County’s $15 minimum wage bill from exempting all different groups and workers from the law, I finally stood among JUFJers and other community leaders as more than 100,000 of my neighbors were granted a higher minimum wage. Then, with the rest of JUFJ Maryland and our coalition partners, we worked to win a minimum wage across the whole state. It means so much to me to be a part of this continued growth of both JUFJ and economic justice policy in the region.
**Karpas / Green Vegetable / Hope**

The parsley on our seder plate symbolizes spring and renewal. We dip it in salt water to remember the tears of anguish, and also of hope, shed by our ancestors and all downtrodden peoples. Sometimes our tears water the sprouts of action, as it is written in Psalm 126: hazor’im b’dimah, b’rinah yiktzoru. Those who plant tears will reap joy.

Our suffering and our hope are intertwined. One enslaved woman’s baby, threatened with death, finds safety in the arms of a princess.

**Take a piece of parsley and dip it in the salt water in the cup on your table.**

We say together:

> בָרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאַדָּמָה.

*Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha’olam, borei p’ri ha-adamah.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.

**Yachatz / Breaking the Matzah**

Matzah is an iconic Passover symbol. Paradoxically, this bread of affliction that we ate as enslaved people is also the bread of liberation eaten by people entering freedom. The bread is unleavened because the Israelites fleeing Pharaoh had no time for their bread to rise. We break the matzah and keep one half before us so as that we tell the story of our affliction, we see a visible symbol of brokenness before us.

*Each table is invited to break the matzah on the plate in front of you.*

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**Shelley Moskowitz, Leader since 2000**

I moved to DC in 1987 to work on federal policy issues, but it wasn’t until I found JUFJ in 2000 that I even realized there was a hole to fill – that I needed to take action for justice where I live and do it Jewishly. I am proud to have helped JUFJ grow from a rowdy toddler of an organization to the vibrant young adult it is now. So much has been accomplished… I’m especially proud of the way we do our work at JUFJ—It’s always been important to me that we have an organizational culture worthy of our mission—grounded in our text and tradition, willing to take risks and to take care of each other.
**Seder Plate**

Each food on the seder plate represents an aspect of the ancient Exodus story.

**Matzah** is an iconic Passover symbol and something of a paradox. This bread of affliction—that we ate as slaves—is also the bread of liberation—eaten by people entering freedom. The bread is unleavened, because the Israelites fleeing Pharaoh had no time for their bread to rise.

The **maror**, or bitter herb, represents the bitterness of the enslaved Jewish people’s lives.

The **karpas**, or green vegetable, symbolizes the arrival of spring and hope for the future.

The **charoset**, a sticky mixture of fruits and nuts, recalls the mortar the Israelite slaves used to make and hold together the bricks they used in their work. Jews around the world use a dazzling variety of fruit and flavors to make charoset. The deliciousness of the charoset reminds us that all work—even hard labor—should have meaning, dignity, and value.

A **roasted shank bone** or **beet** symbolizes the Passover sacrifice, a lamb whose blood served as a sign to spare the Israelites during the final plague. The Hebrew word for this bone, zeroa, is the same word the haggadah uses to describe God’s outstretched arm (**zeroa netuya**) that delivered us into freedom. Tonight we vow to extend our own arms and commit ourselves to ending injustices.

The origins of the hard-boiled **egg** are mysterious. Over time the egg has come to symbolize springtime—the continuous cycle of life and fertility.

The **orange** is a modern addition, by Susannah Heschel, symbolizing the fruitfulness of including all the “segments” of our community—women, queer and trans Jews, Jews of Color, Jews with disabilities, and others who were historically marginalized. May we repudiate oppression and exclusion as if we are spitting out bitter seeds.
Time passed, and Moses grew up. He watched the enslaved Israelites toil. One day it all changed: he saw one of Pharaoh’s overseers beating one of the Israelite slaves and a rage rose in him. Moses killed the overseer and fled Mitzrayim. A lifetime of privilege melted away in the face of the violence of oppression. Sometimes we need to be confronted with an unacceptable status quo before we are ready to act for justice.

As the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote: “We must affirm that every human life is a reflection of divinity, and every act of injustice mars and defaces the image of God in man.” For as Torah teaches, “God created humans in God’s own image, in the image of God, God created them” (Genesis 1:27)

Arba Kushiyot / Four Questions

The traditional four questions ask about the ways tonight is different from all other tonights. Today, we weave together some traditional answers with JUFJ’s answers to how we’ve organized for justice and equality over the last two decades.

ALL:
On all other nights we eat leavened bread or matzah. Why on this night only matzah?

Matzah is the bread of affliction—the simple food of a people with few resources and no time to cook. But is also the bread of liberation—eaten by people rushing to freedom. There was no time to let the dough rise as the Israelites prepared to leave Mitzrayim.

Matzah is a symbol of necessity. Whether you are surviving day to day or leaving behind the life you’ve known, you must work with the resources you have. Community organizing, too, is about working with what we have—as little as flour and water—to gather ordinary people who can together make power yield to conscience. In a world full of injustice, with finite resources, JUFJ’s commitment to making change compels us to be thrifty and inventive.

ALL:
On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. Why on this night do we make certain to eat bitter herbs?

Maror, the bitter herb, reminds us of the bitterness of our ancestors’ enslavement—and of the bitter struggles that we face today. May the day soon come when the bitterness of poverty and racism cease, when everyone in our region has what they need to live and thrive, and a real voice in democracy no matter the color of their skin, where they are from, or how much money they have.

The JUFJ community works to show up proudly as Jews to bring about that day. We vow that the bitterness of injustice will not leave our tongues as long as anyone is forced to taste it. We are committed to using our power to amplify those who have been systematically shut out, silenced, or ignored.
**ALL:**
*On all other nights we dip food only once, if at all. Why on this night do we dip twice?*

First we dip our parsley in salt water to mingle tears with new life and renewal. Then, we combine *maror*, the bitter herb, with *charoset*, a sweet fruit and spice mix. The *charoset* symbolizes the mortar our ancestors used in their forced labor.

Although our society and our world feel heart-sickeningly broken, JUFJ’s organizing strives to be optimistic and pragmatic. Our fear, anger, and frustration are real. But when we season them with hope, determination, and vision—not erasing what’s hard but embracing it—they fuel our work for change.

Dipping and mixing also represents our diversity as a community. Tradition teaches that we left *Mitzrayim* and stood together at Sinai with a “mixed multitude.” In our JUFJ community today, we are religious and secular Jews, non-Jewish fellow travelers and allies, people of many genders and sexualities, white Jews and Jews of Color.

Every single person in this room has the capacity to create change, take action, bring others into our community, follow and lead, and continually hone our knowledge and skills. We are—each one of us—needed.

**ALL:**
*On all other nights we eat sitting up. Why on this night do we recline?*

Long ago, the wealthy rested on couches during their feasts. Slaves were not allowed to rest, even while they ate. Though we didn’t bring couches into Adas Israel, today we celebrate the freedom to be together as a community. Connection, food, discussion, and rest are all vital to continuing our struggles for freedom in a world where many are still oppressed.

Community means more than friendships. It means our liberation is bound up in the liberation of others. JUFJ works in partnership with all kinds of people and organizations because none of us has the power to make change alone. We must build relationships of mutual respect, humility, and commitment— and also take time to be together as human beings to enjoy each other and be our whole selves.

May this seder help us all get up tomorrow ready to continue the struggle for justice.

**Koreich / A Sandwich of Symbols**

Hillel, an early Jewish proto-rabbi, began the custom of making a kind of sandwich from the Passover foods. Remembering his innovation, we make sandwiches out of matzah, *maror* and *charoset*, tasting freedom in one bite. Everyone is invited to make a sandwich, or eat any of the Passover foods on the table, or have some dessert and fruit if you haven’t yet.
**Blessing Over the Second Cup**

*All are invited to to pour a little grape juice or wine into their neighbor’s cup.*

This second cup is for our own elders, the people who founded Jews United for Justice and led our first campaigns.

JUFJ was founded by a small group of people who heard the call of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel to work for social justice in our time. They emerged from a process of deep learning from each other, ready to show up in their generation.

We welcome one of JUFJ’s co-founders, Rabbi David Shneyer.

**STORYTELLER: RABBI DAVID SHNEYER**

We raise our second glass to those who founded and sustained JUFJ in its early years, nurturing the seed of what it was to become.

בָרוּךְ אַתָה יְיָ אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָפֶן

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha’olam, borei p’ri hagafen.

**Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe,**  
**Creator of the fruit of the vine.**

*Drink the second cup.*

**READER:**

Back in *Mitzrayim,* our story continues:

Years went on. The Israelites cried out for freedom. Moses in exile heard that cry—whether through the miraculous presence of the Divine or a nagging conscience inside—and knew he had to return and face Pharaoh. He asked himself, as many of us have, “who am I to be able to do this?” Yet we are all of us capable of being part of the struggle for liberation. We do not stand alone.

Moses went to Pharaoh and cried, “Let my people go!” Pharaoh refused. God responded with escalating tactics—a series of ten plagues. The ten plagues devastated *Mitzrayim* and opened the way to our people’s liberation.

When unjust power is entrenched, it takes struggle to uproot it. All the people of *Mitzrayim* suffered because Pharaoh would not free our people- and our joy at liberation must always be tempered with awareness of the costs and collateral damage.

Today we list ten struggles plaguing us all today and invite everyone to imagine that we are Pharaoh, facing a choice and being pressured to act. We dip a finger in our glass and take out a drop for each plague. Our happiness cannot be complete while injustices persist. May these plagues push us to act.
**Esser Makot / The 10 Plagues**

1. Racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, and hate  
2. Homelessness, eviction, displacement, and un-affordable housing  
3. Corruption and money in politics  
4. Private profit before human lives  
5. The criminal injustice system  
6. Exploitive low-wage jobs  
7. Inequitable educational systems  
8. A broken immigration, asylum, and refugee system  
9. Gender-based violence and discrimination  
10. Environmental destruction

**READER:**
Only after the tenth and most devastating plague, the killing of the first-born sons of Mitzrayim, did Pharaoh relent. The Israelites packed and fled. No time to let the bread rise, no time to sweep the floor, no time to let the news sink in. Like many of us, our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, or before, and like today’s refugees and immigrants, they went out of Mitzrayim.

Once the Israelites left, Pharaoh changed his mind yet again. He gathered his armies to give chase. Soon the Israelites stood with the Red Sea before them and Pharaoh’s armies bearing down behind.

Sometimes there is nothing to do but to make a new way forward. Tradition teaches that Moses stretched his staff out over the water and that one person, Nachshon, perhaps followed by his tribe, walked into the sea. Only when he was up to his nose and about to have to swim did the waters open up. The Israelites followed through the parted waters onto dry ground.

**ALL:**
We honor those today who let go of everything but freedom, who ran, who revolted, who fought, who became other, by saving themselves.

— *Marge Piercy, Ashkenazi-American poet, novelist, liturgist, and activist*
Dayeinu / It’s (Never) Enough!

Though *dayeinu* means “it would have been enough,” we know that each step toward our liberation was necessary but not sufficient. Today we celebrate some of JUFJ’s history and sing in anticipation of steps yet to come. Winning is important, even when it is not the end of the story! When we and our partners win, we move real resources, build power, engage and excite people, change the narrative about what’s possible, and set a precedent for a more powerful next step.

**READER:** In JUFJ’s earliest years, we fought for hotel workers’ rights and parking worker rights. Our “Yes In My Backyard” campaign played a critical role in expanding new affordable housing policies to the entire District. We helped dramatically expand DC’s Emergency Rental Assistance Program to keep families in their homes and out of shelters. Years later, we are fighting for new kinds of worker rights and even better housing policy and funding.

**ALL RESPOND:** *Dayeinu!*

**READER:** In the early 2000s, JUFJ was a leader in the Montgomery County campaign for a living wage. We won in 2002. In 2005, we helped pass legislation in DC requiring city contractors to pay their workers a living wage, which is currently set at $14.50 per hour.

**ALL RESPOND:** *Dayeinu!*

**READER:** In 2008, JUFJers helped win a domestic workers bill of rights in Montgomery County, a groundbreaking, precedent-setting law. For the first time in US history, domestic workers and nannies won the right to a written contract that specifies wages, sick leave, paid vacations and more. Like dominoes, New York State passed its own domestic workers law in 2010, followed by Hawaii and California in 2013, Massachusetts in 2014, Oregon and Connecticut in 2015, and Illinois in 2017. A national bill is in the works for 2019.

**ALL RESPOND:** *Dayeinu!*

**READER:** In 2012, JUFJ Dreamed for Equality. We organized the Maryland Jewish community to speak out and vote for marriage equality and immigration tuition equity. This was the first time in US history that marriage equality was won at the ballot box.

**ALL RESPOND:** *Dayeinu!*

**READER:** From 2013 to 2017, our community was hard at work raising the minimum wage. JUFJers helped raise Maryland’s minimum wage to $10.10 in 2018, and Montgomery County’s to $15 in 2021. In DC, we helped win an $11.50 minimum wage in 2013. It will rise to $15 in 2020.

**ALL RESPOND:** *Dayeinu!*

**READER:** Judaism asks us to support our cities and towns with our material resources. At JUFJ, we want fair taxation that asks more from those of us with the ability to pay. In 2011,
our Invest in DC campaign won new higher-income tax brackets, so people who earn a lot pay more taxes. That brought in $27 million of new money for vital city services. In 2014, we helped expand sales taxes to more of the things affluent people buy, like yoga classes and gym memberships. In 2016 we organized Montgomery County homeowners around a property tax increase on high-value homes in order to fund key social programs. And just a few weeks ago we beat back a DC tax cut that would have given away millions of dollars to affluent homeowners.

ALL RESPOND: Dayeinu!

READER: No one should have to choose between their job and their health or their family. From 2011 to 2013, JUFJ was a driving force behind the expansion of DC’s paid sick leave law and making it enforceable. In 2015, we won paid sick leave in Montgomery County, and in 2018 we won sick leave for everyone who works in Maryland. Tens of thousands of people can finally take a paid sick day. And in 2016, we led the fight to win Paid Family and Medical Leave in DC. Starting soon, thousands more of us will be guaranteed paid time off to be with new babies and loved ones who are ill.

ALL RESPOND: Dayeinu!

READER: In 2019 and beyond, this community continues to show up. We’re working for racial equity in policing and local legislation; for affordable, universal childcare and pre-K with good pay for early educators; for city and county budgets that reflect our moral values; and for keeping ICE out of our communities and ensuring immigrants are always welcome here. We celebrate our potential and the possibilities yet to come in the next 20 years. Together we are creating the world we want to live in.

ALL RESPOND: Dayeinu!

READER: Let us all sing...

🎶 Dayeinu 🎶
(Traditional)

אלו הזנו ומטירנו ... דיוינו
אלו ביינו את השבת ... דיוינו
אלו ביינו את התורה ... דיוינו

Eelu hotzee’anu mee-Meetzrayeem ... Dayeinu
Eelu natan lanu et ha’Shabbat ... Dayeinu
Eelu natan lanu et ha’Torah ... Dayeinu

If God had taken us out of Mitzrayim ... Dayeinu
If God had given us Shabbat ... Dayeinu
If God had given us the Torah ... Dayeinu
BLESSING OVER THE THIRD CUP

All are invited to pour a little grape juice or wine into their neighbor's cup.

The third cup is for the present moment, for ourselves, for the community gathered at these tables, in the streets, in the hearings, in the phonebanks, and in the meetings.

In the 20 years since its founding, JUFJ has grown from a small group to a vibrant community of thousands, with a deep commitment to local organizing and to working in partnership across lines of difference.

As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote, “there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings, that indifference to evil is worse than evil itself, that in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.”

And as the great Black lesbian feminist author and activist Audre Lorde wrote, “Life is very short and what we have to do must be done in the now.”

We take responsibility for what must be done now. We are all ages, all colors, all kinds of backgrounds and stories. We are door-knockers, phone-callers, testifiers, sign-holders, fund-raisers, regular folks, policy wonks, parents and grandparents, aunties and friends and colleagues. And together we are what makes change possible.

We raise our third glass to each other, and the love, support, and resilience we share.

ברוך אתה ה’ אלוהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הґפן

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Drink the third cup.

BERT RITVO, LEADER SINCE 2009

I joined JUFJ as an inaugural member of the DC Jeremiah Fellowship in 2009. The program transformed me and inspired me to be part of JUFJ as a donor, campaign leader, board member, and business organizer. I moved to Colorado in 2017, but the strength of this community and my connection to the alumni from the Fellowship across the country and world have kept me involved.
Action and Havruta: Table Discussion

Turn to your table captains for instructions. Use this text as a framework for your conversation.

In the traditional Ashkenazi haggadah we say “b’chol dor vador chayav adam lir’ot et atzmo k’ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim: in every generation we are obligated to see ourselves as though we personally came out of Mitzrayim.”

But Rambam, the medieval Jewish philosopher, had a slightly different version of the text. Instead of the word lir’ot, to see, Rambam’s version uses the word l’har’ot, to show or present. In Hebrew, the two words are the spelled the same except for one extra letter. With that small twist, Rambam’s version says that in every generation we are obligated to show ourselves as though we personally came out of Mitzrayim, not just that we are obligated to see ourselves that way. Most Sephardi haggadot use this version.

What difference does it make? What is the difference between seeing ourselves as having gone through a certain experience and showing ourselves that way?

Seeing ourselves in a certain way is about an internal sense of identity, one that might or might not result in action. Showing ourselves to others takes work; it’s an outwardly-directed activity. To really show ourselves to the world as people who have known persecution, action is required.

— Rabbi Elizabeth Richman

Discussion Questions:

• What thoughts or feelings does this text spark for you?
• What are some of the ways you have shown yourself to the world this year?
• What are some of the ways you want to push yourself to show up for justice in the coming year? What, if anything, is standing in your way, and how could you overcome that?

Chelsea Rudman, Leader since 2012

After completing my year as a Jeremiah Fellow, I joined the core team for JUFJ’s Paid Sick Days campaign in DC. As a Jeremiah Fellow, I learned the power of organizing and community building. We learned strategies for making change in our region that I was excited to put to work in order to ensure that workers in DC no longer had to choose between getting healthy or keeping their jobs. In 2014, I stood in front of the 14th Street Busboys and Poets to collect signatures for the campaign. While talking to voters, I realized how much work it would take to truly get the city on board. Victory isn’t guaranteed unless we follow through, and I’m proud to continue showing up with JUFJ.
Fran Zamore, Leader Since 2016-17

After attending a small JUFJ house meeting, I was excited to learn that there was a local organization advocating for social and racial justice issues. I knew that before I jumped headfirst into the advocacy work, I wanted to continue educating myself and other white people on racism. A JUFJer I met at that first meeting followed up, asking to go to lunch to chat more about my ideas. They acknowledged that my desires were felt by others and we brainstormed a series of reading and discussion groups.

With organizational support and collaboration, we created a four-part racial justice discussion group that I have since adapted and continued with my synagogue community. Participating in this group was my first step of many as a JUFJ leader. I had never before been involved in local politics and never participated in targeted lobbying efforts. Through my involvement, I went to Annapolis for the first time, met my local Council Members, called and wrote to my local and state representatives. I am more engaged with the political process and feel hopeful about the future. Had I not been invited to get to know another leader and JUFJ better, my role in the organization might look really different. I am so grateful for a place where community and relationships are valued at the heart of the change-making work we do.
**Blessing Over the Fourth Cup**

*All are invited to pour a little grape juice or wine into their neighbor’s cup.*

The fourth cup is for the young leaders in our community. We owe it to them to make a better present and future.

Young people are the leaders of the future and already the leaders of today. Youth movements are leading the way on preventing gun violence, fixing a broken immigration system, stopping disastrous climate change, and so much more. Young people can remind those of us who have grown cynical how things should be, for they have vision and the bravery to call for their ideals. It’s time to take our youth seriously. JUFJ is tremendously proud of all the young people who have canvassed, testified, called, and organized for change with us.

**STORYTELLER: ARIANA BRENIG**

We raise our fourth glass to the young people who are leading the way:

בָרוּךְ אַתָה יְיָ אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָפֶן

**Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha’olam, borei p’ri hagafen.**

**Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.**

Drink the fourth cup.

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**EMMA RAFAELOF, LEADER SINCE 2016**

Over the past three years, I’ve been involved with JUFJ a variety of roles. My first experience was on the 2016 Affordable Housing campaign, when I showed up to help Close the Carried Interest Loophole and advocate for housing and homeless services. After continued involvement and participating in the 2017 Labor Seder, I learned about racism’s effect on the DC budget and felt myself truly become a part of this awesome, compassionate, and invested community. This past year, I joined a team of other DC leaders exploring the options for which campaign JUFJ would work on next in DC. The highlight of the work was the Community Meeting in November 2018, where we got to engage with the JUFJ community on the research that we did and get their feedback.
Elijah and Miriam

We remember the young women of the Exodus story for their defiant spirits and their swift action. The midwives Shifra and Puah refused to follow Pharaoh’s commands. Yocheved, Miriam, and Batya together defied Pharaoh’s cruel decree. After the Israelites crossed the Sea of Reeds, Miriam led the women in spontaneous song. According to rabbinic legend, as long as Miriam lived a well of water accompanied the wandering Israelites through the wilderness.

Legend says that the prophet Elijah appears in every generation to see if we have yet made a truly just society. Elijah reminds us to keep alive the vision of a world radically perfected, loving, and just. How can we welcome that future? Each of us has something invaluable and unique to offer, something only we can bring to the table. How will we offer ourselves? How will we welcome each others’ offerings? How can we be like Miriam, Shifra, Puah, Nachshon, Yocheved, and Batya in our times? We sing together...

*Miriam Haneviah* / *Eliyahu Hanavi*  
(Traditional with new lyrics by Rabbi Leila Gal Berner)

*Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu HaTishbi, Eliyahu HaGiladi*  
bim’herah be’yameynu, yavo ei’leinu  
im mashiach ben David, im mashiach ben David.

Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah the Giladite  
May he soon come to us, with Mashiach the son of David.

*Miriam ha-ne’vi’ah, oz v’zimrah b’yadah.*  
*Miriam tirkod itanu l’hagdil zimrat olam.*  
Soon she will bring us to the waters of redemption.
Nirtzah / Conclusion

READER:
Our challenge this year, as every year, is to feel as if we personally went free from Pharaoh. To show up as if the memory of enslavement was still bitter in our mouths, and the sweetness of freedom as real as fresh fruit. This year, may we work for justice and liberation for all people here in our homes, our city, our county, our state, our country, and our world.

We promise to each other:

ALL:
We are cultivating hope in our hearts.
We are building understanding and connection between people.
We are working for a vision of racial justice, economic justice, civil rights and democracy, and human rights for all.

READER:
The Passover seder ends with a statement of hope: Lashanah haba’ah Birushalayim! / Next year in a redeemed Jerusalem. The ancient phrase expresses our longing for redemption. Next year in our own region may we look back on this year with pride in the journey we have traveled together.

And let this year be the powerful first year of the next generation—the first of the next twenty years of organizing and action together as a community. Where will you be in twenty years? Where will we be? What will we win together? What will you have done to bring about that day?

We conclude our seder with thanks for our food, for our community, and for this work.

Let us sing together:

🎶 B’rich Rachamana 🎶

ברוח רחמנא,מלכאת דעלמא מריח דהלא פיתא

B’rich rachamana malka d’alma marei d’hai pita

Blessed is the merciful One, Ruler of the world,
Provider of this bread.

🎶 Sanctuary 🎶

Oh Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary
pure and holy, tried and true
and with thanksgiving, I’ll be a living sanctuary, for You
**Song: We Rise**

by Batya Levine

We rise... humbly hearted  
Rise... we won’t be divided  
Rise...with spirit to guide us  
Rise!

Chorus:  
In hope, in prayer, we find ourselves here  
In hope, in prayer, we’re right here! (x2)

We rise, all of the children  
Rise, elders with wisdom  
Rise, ancestors surround us  
Rise!

(Chorus)

We rise, up from the wreckage  
Rise, with tears and with courage  
Rise, fighting for life  
Rise!

(Chorus)

We rise... humbly hearted  
Rise... we won’t be divided  
Rise...with spirit to guide us  
Rise!
Our Gratitude

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to the people and organizations who made today’s seder possible:

Rabbi David Shneyer and Ariana Brenig for sharing their stories with us.

Rabbi David Shneyer and Aaron Shneyer for leading us in song.

All of the staff and clergy at Adas Israel Congregation for hosting us so lovingly and graciously year after year.

Scott Brown captured this evening in photos.

Susan Leviton created the beautiful poster and cover art. susanlevitonarts.com

Bonimot Tzedek planned our children’s program and are leading the future of our work.

Veteran Compost will collect our food waste, plates, utensils, cups, and napkins to turn them into compost that will enhance our local soil.

SEIU for supporting the printing of this haggadah. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) unites 2 million diverse members in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. SEIU members working in the healthcare industry, in the public sector and in property services believe in the power of joining together on the job to win higher wages and benefits and to create better communities while fighting for a more just society and an economy that works for all of us, not just corporations and the wealthy. seiu.org

With massive appreciation to our seder volunteers (list as of 3/24/2019):

Adam Graubart  Dani Stagg  Lauren Spokane  Robert Barkin
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Dan Block  Judith Beltz  Rebecca Barson  Zachary Libow
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And many more! Thank you!

This haggadah was conceived, written, and compiled by Yael Horowitz, Elizabeth Heyman, Rebecca Ennen, and Rabbi Elizabeth Richman with enormous inspiration and excerpts from the Freedom Seder Haggadah by our friends and colleagues at Jewish Community Action in Minnesota, and their Executive Director, Carin Mrotz.

2019 design by Chase Carter
2019 Labor Seder Sponsors

Thank you to all our sponsors who made this year’s seder possible.

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Temple Emanuel
Temple Shalom
Temple Sinai
The Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor
The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 400
Washington Hebrew Congregation
A Green and Just Labor Seder

We try to minimize our environmental impact and maximize our support of responsible labor practices.

- The seder is Metro and bus-accessible to encourage public transit use.
- Our water pitchers and tablecloths are reusable.
- The tableware we are using is all compostable and will be composted along with food our waste. We thank Veteran Compost for collecting our waste and turning it into compost that will enhance our local soil.
- JUFJ supports local and unionized businesses. Our postcards were printed by a union shop. This haggadah was printed by SEIU (thank you!). Our posters were printed by a local shop (ecoprint.com) that buys 100% wind power, offsets 100% of carbon emissions, and donates to reforest the swamps of Madagascar.
- All written materials have been printed on recycled-content paper, and all used paper will be recycled.

Please pay attention to the clean-up instructions and help us keep the seder sustainable: composting and recycling work best when they are not contaminated with trash!

Source Your Seder Ethically: A Green and JUST PASSOVER AT HOME

To find more resources for a sustainable pesach season, including recipes, guides on how to source your food ethically, supplements to your haggadah, and more, visit:
hazon.org/jewish-food-movement/holidays/passover/

For more union-made products and services—and updated info—visit labor411.org and search under Washington, DC.

Food

It’s easy to get your groceries from unionized stores, where employees have a real voice on the job, and better pay and benefits. We also encourage shopping at locally-owned kosher suppliers.

Visit aflcio.org/passover and unionlabel.org to learn which national brands are union made.

Costco: Organized by the Teamsters, with living wages, good benefits, and promotion from within

Giant: Organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400

Safeway: Organized by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400

Moti’s Market (motismarket.com)

Shalom Kosher Market (theshalomgroup.com)

KOL Foods (kolfoods.com): Local, organic, and grass-fed glatt-kosher meat. Order online!

ROC Diner’s App (https://rocunited.org/diners-guide)

SEDER PLATES, MATZAH COVERS, 
KIDDISH CUPS, YARMULKES/KIPPOt, ETC.
Fairly-made and beautiful ritual gear puts freedom and dignity on the table.
Fair Trade Judaica: fairtradejudaica.org/product_category/passover-pesach/
FTJ is building a fair trade movement in the Jewish community, linking values of human dignity, self-sufficiency, and environmental sustainability with fair and livable wages, no child labor, and safe working conditions.

HACHNASAT ORCHIM: WELCOMING GUESTS
If you don’t have room for out-of-town guests, or if you are traveling, find a socially responsible unionized hotel, where employees are better protected from wage theft, abusive work schedules, and sexual harassment at fairhotel.org

THE ESSENTIALS: CHOCOLATE AND BOOKS
It wouldn’t be Passover without sweets and some reading materials to learn, teach, and argue from!

Equal Exchange (shop.equalexchange.coop/pages/pesach)
Offers Fair Trade, Kosher for Passover chocolate in partnership with Fair Trade Judaica (on reverse) and T’ruah, helping us say “from slavery to freedom!” and really mean it.

More than 1.8 million children in West Africa are involved in growing the cacao that goes into most of the major chocolate brands found at mainstream grocery stores. UNICEF says hundreds of thousands of these children, many of them trafficked across borders, are ensnared by slavery, human trafficking, abuse, and dangerous working conditions.

Powell’s Books (powells.com)
Largest independent bookstore in the US, workers are members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 5.

Most of our area’s wonderful local bookstores will happily order haggadahs for your seder. Contact your bookstore ASAP to support local business instead of online mega-retailers with bad labor practices.

COOKING AND EATING
Need plates for extra guests? New cooking and serving gear?

All-Clad (all-clad.com): Pots and pans made in PA by members of the United Steelworkers (USW) Local 3403.

Anchor Hocking (oneida.com): Glassware, baking dishes, storage containers made by members of the United Steelworkers (USW).

Corningware (corningware.com): Cookware and tableware made by members of IBT Local 714 and various locals of the United Steelworkers (USW).

Cutco (cutco.com): Knives, tools, etc. made in NY by members of the United Steelworkers (USW) Local 5429.

Fiesta (fiestafactorydirect.com): Ceramics made in WV by members of Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastic and Allied Workers Local 419M.

Pyrex (pyrexware.com): Glassware made in PA by members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 53G.

For great compostable disposables, check out Leafware, Go Green in Stages, Let’s Go Green, and World Centric.
About Jews United for Justice

Since our founding in 1998, JUFJ has led Jews across Greater Washington and Baltimore to act on our shared Jewish values by pursuing justice and equality in our local community.

One day, everyone in the Washington-Baltimore region will have what they need to live and thrive, and a real voice in democracy, no matter the color of their skin, where they are from, or how much money they have. Our government will focus on equity and justice, and will respond to the needs of poor and working people, whether Black, brown, or white, who had once been systemically barred from resources and power. We work so that our Jewish community is a proud and valued partner in bringing about that day through multiracial, multifaith, cross-class movements working for social, racial, and economic justice.

Through organizing campaigns, education and training forums, and largescale events, JUFJ builds relationships and mobilizes the Jewish community to demand and win meaningful change for all area residents. Our work is grounded in Jewish text and tradition, and the historical Jewish experience of both persecution and privilege. JUFJ helps Jews live out our sacred, shared tradition of tikkun olam by working in solidarity with local partners for a more just and equal region and world.

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www.seiu.org