



# AND WE



# CRY OUT



EX 2:23



**JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE  
2020 LABOR SEDER**

*original art by Ellen Weinstein*

## **ARBA KUSHIYOT / FOUR QUESTIONS**

The traditional four questions ask about the ways tonight is different from all other nights. Today, we weave together some traditional answers with JUFJ's answers to how we organize for justice and equality in our region.

### ***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. When you are surviving day to day or leaving behind the life you've known or living through a pandemic, 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, racism, and pandemic ceases; 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 and reminds us that the bitterness of slavery was sweetened by the hope of freedom.

Although our world and our region are heart-sickeningly broken, JUFJ's organizing strives to remain 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 trying to work with 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 our community 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, especially in this moment.

**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 may not be eating on couches today, we celebrate the freedom to observe these seders, even in these constrained circumstances. Whether virtual or in person, 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 connect as human beings.

May this seder help us all get up afterward, ready to continue our work for justice.