



# AND WE



# CRY OUT



EX 2:23



**JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE  
2020 LABOR SEDER**

*original art by Ellen Weinstein*

## **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 at times, “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.

Although it is most certainly a plague, we have not included the novel coronavirus in this list of ten plagues. This disease was not brought upon us — or anyone else — as punishment, in the way Torah tells us the ancient plagues were visited purposefully on our oppressors. We are all in this together. Instead, we recite a list of societal plagues that have magnified and multiplied the devastating effects of this pandemic.

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. Private profit before human lives
3. Exploitative low-wage jobs
4. Homelessness, eviction, displacement, and un-affordable housing
5. Corruption and money in politics
6. The criminal injustice system
7. Inequitable educational systems
8. A broken immigration system and a tattered social safety net
9. Gender-based violence and discrimination
10. Environmental destruction