

JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE 2024 LABOR SEDER
“LET ALL WHO ARE HUNGRY COME AND EAT”



original art by Michele Rosenthal

WELCOME (BACK) TO JUFJ'S SEDERS

Each spring from 2002 to 2019, the JUFJ community came together at the Labor Seder in or around DC to retell the story of Passover and take action on local issues in our community. Starting in 2014, we added the annual Social Justice Seder in Baltimore. In 2020, our seders were canceled at the last minute due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are excited to be resuming them this year!

PAST LABOR SEDERS

2005: Jews in American Labor
2006: Economic Justice
2007: Green and Just Celebrations
2008: Voting Rights
2009: Fair Pay for Day Laborers
2010: Social Safety Net
2011: Everyone Deserves a Good Job
2012: Immigrant Roots, Immigrant Rights
2013: Let My People Go Home Sick
2014: It's Time for the Dough to Rise
2015: None of Us is Free Until All of Us are Free
2016: They embittered their lives with harsh labor
2017: Out of Mitzrayim, Into the Streets
2018: Let My People Vote

2019: In Every Generation
2020 (canceled): And We Cry Out

PAST SOCIAL JUSTICE SEDERS

2014: A Focus on the Criminal Justice System
2015: Environmental Justice and the Curtis Bay Incinerator
2016: Let My People Go...Home!
2017: Coming Through a Narrow Place: Seeking Police Accountability in Baltimore
2018: Shelter of Peace: A Seder on Migrant Justice
2019: Common Resource, Common Need: A Seder on Water Justice
2020 (canceled): No Time To Care: A Plague on Our Communities

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE OUR SEDERS POSSIBLE!

The Labor Seder team: Nathaniel Berman, Ruth Bordett, Dan Mauer, Chris Moldes, Mo Pasternak, and Alex Samuels, staffed by Rabbi Miriam Liebman

The Social Justice Seder team: Carol Goldstein, DeDe Jacobs-Komisar, Noah Mitchel, Arlene Ogurick, Ben Sax, and Adam Weingast and Hannah Zinker from Repair the World, staffed by Sarah Hiller

The Festival Center in DC, who hosted the Labor Seder, especially Bill Mefford and Claire Gholston

Beth Am Synagogue in Baltimore, who hosted the Social Justice Seder, especially Alex Pomerantz and Asella Medina-Smith

Michele Rosenthal, whose beautiful art is on the cover of this Haggadah

The DC street vendors campaign, convened by Beloved Community Incubator, who partnered with us on the Labor Seder, particularly Geoff Gilbert, Bianca Vazquez, and the vendors

The Maryland Youth Justice Coalition, who inspire and lead us to act to make Maryland a more just place for everyone, regardless of age or race

Our speakers, sponsors, volunteers, and all of JUFJ's staff, who collectively brought this seder to life

Everyone who is attending this seder today, and who believes in our power to create a better, more just Maryland and DC. We are honored to be working alongside you!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Outstretched Arm:

Adas Israel Congregation
Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community
Larry Baizer
Tzedek Beth Am

Mighty Hand

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Chevrei Tzedek Congregation
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First Shift Justice Project
Jewish Labor Committee
Nikki M.G. The Power Expert
Rabbi Miriam Liebman and Akiva Fishman
Ruth Ellen Goodman
The Krieger-Cohen Family

Liberator:

Dan Mauer and Shoshana Gitlin
DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI)
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THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Beloved Community Incubator
Tzedek DC
Beth Am Synagogue
Bolton Street Synagogue
Hinenu: The Baltimore Justice Shtiebel
Maryland Office of the Public Defender
Repair the World
Racial Justice NOW!

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. We wrote this haggadah to bring together individuals connected to Jewish, labor, and activist communities. Together, we will retell the story of the Exodus in a time many of us feel we are actually living that story. Themes of tyrannical leaders, persecution, oppressive policies, impossible work demands, misery, and destruction echo in contemporary society. But through collective effort, we can work toward the other theme promised by our story: a successful struggle for freedom.

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

B’CHOL DOR VA’DOR / IN EVERY GENERATION

We have all taken our own journeys to this moment. For some of us, this year marks the first time we have attended a seder, or the first time we have celebrated a seder in community with non-Jews. Some of us have sat at a seder table dozens of times with hundreds of people. No matter your familiarity with this tradition, we are here together to hope, struggle, and glimpse liberation.

The traditional haggadah exhorts us: *B’chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k’eelu hu yatzah miMitzrayaim*: In every generation we must each see ourselves as though we ourselves were freed from Mitzrayim¹.

The Torah calls us to act on this memory of being vulnerable, feared outsiders. In the Jews United for Justice community, we work with people who seek justice in 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. In the next generation we promise to show up with the resolve of a people who were once denied our power—and build a movement with those who are currently denied theirs.

Since 2002, JUFJ has been running an annual Labor Seder focusing on workers’ rights. After a four-year hiatus due to COVID 19, we are back together to once again bring light to the struggle for workforce and workplace equality. This year we are partnering with Beloved Community Incubator and highlighting their campaign to decriminalize street vending in Washington, DC and to recognize street vendors as a vital part of our DC community.

Labor — how we work, where we work, who we work with — permeates every part of our lives. Each one of us has the right to work free from harassment. Yet our government continues exploiting workers rather than enabling that very right. Overwhelmingly, when immigrants and working class people of color try to access our systems they are met with disdain and disrespect. At its core, the seder is about liberation. Today we hope to come one step closer to liberation for all and actively work towards dignity in work and dignity in community.

“Seder” means “order” in Hebrew—and it usually has a very strict progression. As we move

¹ 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.

through the seder, we walk in the footprints of our ancestors: those who first met together to build a communal space to remember and celebrate past liberatory struggles. They gave us the template we use to reconstruct that space every year through rituals, stories, food, and rejoicing. Today, we will be doing an abridged version, but we honor the generations past by rededicating ourselves to the work they began, and honor the generations to come by teaching them our shared history.



HINEI MAH TOV



Hinei mah tov umah na'im

Shevet achim/achayot/lamim gam yachad.

(How good and pleasant it is for brothers/sisters/nations to sit together!)

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 Worker's Circle)

In Jewish tradition, the lighting of candles separates the shadow from the light, Shabbat from the rest of the week, holy days from ordinary days, spring from winter, justice from oppression. It marks a moment of difference and an opportunity for reflection. 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:

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:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי א-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב

*Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel yom tov.*

**Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe,
who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to kindle the festival light.**

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 almost too hard for words, we are grateful to be experiencing it together, in whatever form that means for us this year, as part of a community committed to the ongoing fight for justice, compassion, and love.

Let us say together:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי א-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנָן הַזֶּה

*Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam,
shehecheyanu vekiyemanu vehigianu lazeman 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.**

HAVRUTA / MEETING

Relationships are at the heart of community organizing. Let's take a few minutes to connect with the other people at our seder or with our own selves:

Share your name and how you are connected to this community or came to attend this seder. Then, please share a favorite Passover memory or a question you have about the holiday.

KADESH / BLESSING OVER THE FIRST CUP

All are invited to pour a little grape juice or wine into your glass. Do not drink it until after the blessing is recited.

READER:

“I will bring you out from the Labors of the Egyptians.” Exodus 6:6

The first cup commemorates those who were brought out of Mitzrayim, the narrow place. We remember those who persevered in hard times and 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. We honor those who fought and won to decriminalize street vending and especially the vendors who paved the way to help others thrive. 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. 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:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

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 while reclining.

KARPAS / HOPE

The parsley on our seder plate symbolizes spring and renewal. Although the world changes and we hope to continue changing it, we nevertheless rely on tradition to root our experiences in the experiences of our ancestors, just as a sprig of parsley is a new plant that has sprung from the seed of an older one. We dip the parsley 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. We say together:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

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. Called the “bread of affliction” that we ate as enslaved people, it is also paradoxically 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 middle matzah and keep one half before us so as we tell the story of our affliction we see a visible symbol of brokenness before us.

All are invited to break the matzah now, keeping one half on the plate and reserving the other half to serve as the afikomen, the portion to be eaten after the meal.

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, the 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 mimenah*: 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.

What does this work look like today? Rabbi Dr. Ariel Evan Mayse challenges us by asking: "Do we strive to treat all people, including workers and laborers, as full members of our community, expansively defined, with dignity, honor, and compassion? Furthermore, do we have the courage to draft economic policies in light of these values? Have we the mettle to make choices, as consumers, to drive them forward?" Leveling the economic playing field is a crucial goal in this struggle to afford all the opportunity to live and thrive in their communities with a sense of respect and dignity.

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. Just these past few years, we've taken enormous strides towards realizing our dream of a repaired world. After a years-long fight, DC street vendors succeeded in having DC's street vending laws changed in 2022. Now, street vending is decriminalized, and local street vendors should no longer need to fear police interactions and harassment. The licensing process has also been streamlined, lowering barriers for vendors to legally participate in our local economy, and regulations have been relaxed, with vendors now able to sell fully-cooked packaged food from their own kitchens.

The fight is not yet over, as the bureaucratic hurdles remain formidable, but vendors have demonstrated their collective power to influence decision making and affect real change in their own lives. Only together can we make it through.



AVADIM HAYINU / WE WERE SLAVES



עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ
עַתָּה - בְּנֵי חוֹרִין

*Avadim hayinu, hayinu
Ata b'nai horin, b'nai horin
Avadim hayinu, ata, ata, b'nai horin
Avadim hayinu, ata, 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. There are many here whose families and many in the vending community who came to new lands in search of a better future full of economic opportunity and free from persecution.

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

Pharaoh's xenophobia eventually 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 tyranny. The midwives Shifra and Puah helped Israelite mothers birth safely. Children were hidden. When one woman, Yocheved, could no longer hide her baby son at home, she put him in a basket and placed it among the reeds of the Nile. His oldest sister, Miriam, watched.

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 their mother as a nursemaid — and so the baby was raised both a child of slaves and a child of privilege.

Discussion Questions:

- What identities do you hold?
- How do those identities intersect? How do they conflict?



THE SEDER PLATE

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



The **maror**, or bitter herb (horseradish), represents the bitterness of the enslaved Jewish people's lives. We add a second bitter herb, **chazeret**, to the Seder plate.



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 constant renewal of life.



The **orange** is a modern addition, by Susannah Heschel a contemporary Ashkenazic-American scholar, 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.

READER:

Time passed, and the enslaved Israelites toiled and cried out to God. Moses himself was compelled to act when he saw one of Pharaoh's overseers beating one of the Israelite slaves and a rage rose in him; he killed the overseer and fled Mitzrayim. His lifetime of privilege melted away when he witnessed the violence of oppression. Moses later returned and demanded that Pharaoh release his people. Pharaoh eventually acquiesced, and the Israelites bravely set out into the wilderness to find freedom and build a new world where they would not be subject to such violence. In the face of injustice, they were ready to act and to face the unknown together.

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).

Discussion questions:

- How can we best try to live this value?
- What other ideas compel you in your work as activists?
- What was the moment/moments that made you become an activist?

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, eaten by people rushing to freedom.

Matzah is a symbol of necessity. When you are surviving day to day, or fighting systemic oppression, 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 come together to make power yield to conscience. In a world full of injustice, with finite resources, JUFJ's commitment to making change compels us to be strategic 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. This includes the street vendors in our community who regularly face struggles like fluctuating income, harsh weather, and unnecessary barriers to work with dignity.

May the day soon come when the bitterness of illness, poverty, and racism 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 community's power to amplify those who have been systematically shut out, silenced, or ignored, both within the Jewish community and across our region.

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 unquestionably broken, JUFJ's organizing remains 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 represent 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. Dipping and mixing also represent our diversity as a community. 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 and remind ourselves that we, like our ancestors, can overcome oppression. Connection, food, discussion, and rest are all vital to continuing our struggles for freedom in a community 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, like Beloved Community Incubator, 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 and liberation.

KOREICH / A SANDWICH OF SYMBOLS

Hillel, an early Jewish sage who lived both in Jerusalem and in exile in modern-day Iraq, 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 and reflect with your tablemates on your own visions of what freedom looks and tastes like.

BLESSING OVER THE SECOND CUP

All are invited to pour a little grape juice or wine into your glass. Do not drink it until the blessing is read.

“[I will] deliver you from [the Egyptians’] bondage.” -Exodus 6:6

The second cup is for those still in bondage, those who are still fighting for equal rights. While we have come a long way in the fight for vendors’ rights, we still have a long way to go. We must push the DC government to enforce the policies that have passed and to create cleaner, clearer processes for obtaining licenses. We must work to change the city’s Clean Hands legislation which makes it so that a person cannot work or obtain licensing for certain industries, including street vending, if they have outstanding fines and fees.

READER:

We raise our second glass to those whose rights have not yet been actualized.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri ha-adamah. 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 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. And just as Moses had help from his brother Aaron in facing the cruel Pharaoh, 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.

We continue today to face as a community and as a society many plagues that deny justice to

the oppressed. As Rabbi Heschel said, “We are all Pharaohs or slaves of Pharaohs. It is sad to be a slave of Pharaoh. It is horrible to be a Pharaoh.” As we list ten plagues facing our city today, we commit ourselves to continuing our collective struggle for justice and liberation.

In addition to these plagues, we recognize that we have also been facing a very literal plague in COVID 19, which has caused untold suffering for countless people and magnified many existing inequities.

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 Islamophobia
2. Putting private profit before human lives
3. Exploitative low-wage jobs and at-will employment
4. Homelessness, eviction, displacement, and unaffordable housing
5. Unfair taxation that lets the wealthiest not pay their fair share
6. The criminal injustice system
7. Inequitable educational, childcare, and caregiving systems
8. A broken immigration system and a tattered social safety net
9. Gender-based violence and discrimination
10. Environmental destruction and the lack of environmental justice

READER:

Only after the tenth and most devastating plague, the killing of the first-born sons of *Mitzrayim*, did Pharaoh relent and order the Israelites to leave his land. 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.

Once the Israelites left, Pharaoh changed his mind yet again. He gathered his armies to give chase. Soon the Israelites stood with the ancient Sea of Reeds² 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.

Discussion question for your table:

- What plagues would you add to the list above?

ALL:

We honor those today who let go of everything but freedom, who ran, who revolted, who fought, who became other...

- Marge Piercy, *Ashkenazi-American poet, novelist, liturgist, and activist*

2. This is traditionally assumed to be the modern Red Sea.

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. 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.

Let us sing:



אלו הוציאנו ממצרים...דינו

אלו קרע לנו את הים...דינו

אלו נתן לנו את התורה...דינו

Eelu hotzi'anu mi-Mitzrayim ... Dayeinu
(If God had only taken us out of Egypt ... Dayeinu)


Eelu kara lanu et hayam ... Dayeinu
(If God had only split the sea for us ... Dayeinu)

Eelu natan lanu et ha'Torah
(If God had only given us the Torah ... Dayeinu)



MODERN DAYEINU

We now celebrate DC street vendors' many successes over this last year, even as we redouble our efforts for the struggles we face ahead, as we sing this modern version of Dayeinu that recognizes some of the steps in our ongoing struggle to secure justice:




If street vendors have a fair chance, to help their families advance...Dayeinu

If licensing works as it should, we'll improve vendors' livelihood...Dayeinu

If fully cooked food can be sold, delicious meals we'll all behold...Dayeinu

If law enforcement isn't involved, our core challenges can be solved...Dayeinu



ELIJAH AND MIRIAM

BLESSING OVER THE THIRD CUP

All are invited to pour a little grape juice or wine into your glass. Do not drink it until the blessing is recited.

“I will redeem you with an outstretched arm.” Exodus 6:6

The third cup of wine is for collective redemption.

There is a Midrash, a Talmudic tale, that says: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi goes to the prophet Elijah and asks, “When is the Messiah coming to redeem us?” To which Elijah responds, “Go ask him yourself. He’s sitting at the Gates of Rome.” The Gates of Rome are where the most abject, the most destitute of society dwelled.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi finally does find the Messiah, who tells him that he is coming today. Furious, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi goes back to Elijah and says, “The Messiah lied to me! He said he is coming to redeem us today but redemption has not come.” To which Elijah responds, “No, redemption is coming today if you are ready.” We cannot wait on the Messiah for redemption. We need to play an active role in our own redemption and that of those around us.

The Messiah could have chosen to dwell anywhere, but he lived at the Gates of Rome. As we drink this cup of wine, let us continue to work towards the liberation of all people at our own Gates and beyond.

We raise our third glass to each other, and the love, support, and resilience we share in working towards redemption.¹

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן

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 third cup.

READER:

This piece is excerpted from a conversation between Abigail Pogrebin and Rabbi Jeffrey Sirkman.

“We are going to open the door for Elijah, and if we ever needed the Messiah to come... we need it now. A great scholar — Harvard theologian Harvey Cox — writes about Elijah being the perennial no-show, and that’s the lesson. The lesson isn’t that Elijah is going to come; the lesson is that you’re going to open the door, there’s no Elijah, now what are you going to do?

Well, you have to live as though you are Elijah’s emissary. You have to bring hope to a world

I A version of this blessing was prepared for the Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum seder this year.

that is dark. What do Jews do when the world is dark? ... [W]e are going to look at a no-show again — Elijah's not going to be at the door — and we are going to say, OK, we know you didn't come, but we are going to try to act and live as if you did.”

(Rabbi Jeffrey Sirkman, *The Forward*, March 2020)

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. This 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.



ELIJAHU HANAVI



אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי בְּמַהֲרָה יָבוֹא אֵלֵינוּ עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

*Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu HaTishbi, Eliyahu HaGiladi
bim'herah ve'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.

מְרִים הַנְּבִיאָה עַז וְזִמְרָה בְּיָדָהּ
מְרִים תִּרְקֹד אֶתְנוּ לְהַגְדִּיל זִמְרַת עוֹלָם
מְרִים תִּרְקֹד אֶתְנוּ לְתַקֵּן אֶת-הָעוֹלָם
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ
אֶל מֵי הַיְּשׁוּעָה

*Miriam ha-ne'vi'ah, oz v'zimrah b'yadah.
Miriam tirkod itanu l'hagdil zimrat olam.
Miriam tirkod itanu l'taken et ha-olam.
Bimheyrach ve'yameynu hi te'vi'einu el mey ha-ye'shuah, el mey ha-ye'shuah.*

Miriam the prophet, strength and song in her hand
Miriam, dance with us to grow the world's song.
Miriam, dance with us to repair the world.
She will bring us to the waters of redemption, speedily and in our days.



WE RISE
(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!

We rise, all of the children
Rise, elders with wisdom
Rise, ancestor 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!

BLESSING OVER THE FOURTH CUP

All are invited to pour a little grape juice or wine into your glass. Do not drink it until the blessing is recited.

“And I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God.” Exodus 6:7

Within the phrase “and I will take you to be my people” is a promise of protection. The fourth cup is for the youngest leaders in our community. We owe it to them to make a better present and future, to protect them and our world.

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.

READER:

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

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן

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.

TZAFUN / HIDDEN (EATING THE AFIKOMEN)

For centuries, many seders have included the custom of hiding the afikomen for younger participants to seek it out as a way to help them stay engaged throughout the lengthy conversation.

It is surprising that such a popular symbol of the Passover seder is a broken piece of matzah. Rabbi Harold Schulweis teaches that “brokenness is a symbol of incompleteness. Life is not whole. Passover deals with a past redemption; the redemption is not over. There is fear and poverty and sickness. The broken matzah speaks to our times, shakes us by the shoulders and shouts into our hearts, ‘Do not bury your spirit in history. Do not think it is over, complete.’”

May this final piece of matzah and tonight's discussion serve as motivation for us to pursue justice for street vendors, domestic workers and other exploited workers.

BARECH

We continue our seder with thanks for our food, for our community, and for this work. Gratitude is a central concept in our tradition and even the origin of the word Jewish. Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis explained that the Torah prescribed for us a way of life in which we must be constantly focused on the blessings that are part and parcel of everyday living, such as the delicious food we enjoyed tonight.

Now, let us sing together:



**BRICH RACHAMANA/
BLESSED IS THE COMPASSIONATE ONE**



בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא, מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא, מְרִיבָּ דְהַאי פִּיתָא

*Brich rachamana
malka d'alma
marei d'hai pita*

Blessed is the Compassionate One, Ruler of the world, Creator of this bread.

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 were 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, hopefully one day 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 equity, 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 Habnuyah!* / Next year in a redeemed Jerusalem. The ancient phrase expresses our longing for a perfected world. May it come speedily and in our days.

ABOUT JUFJ

Our Mission

Jews United for Justice advances economic, racial, and social justice in Maryland and DC by educating and mobilizing our local Jewish communities to action. We move our region closer to equity and justice by advancing issue-based campaigns that make real, immediate, and concrete improvements in people's lives and build the power of working-class and poor communities of color. Through these campaigns we develop leaders, build our Jewish grassroots community, shift the consciousness of our community, and build the collective power needed to undo systemic racism and inequality.

Our Vision

One day, everyone in DC and Maryland 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.

Our Commitment to Racial Equity

Plant justice, reap goodness, till your ground, and seek the Divine. Only then will righteousness rain down upon you. — Hosea 10:12

Racial equity work includes actively uprooting racist and white supremacist systems and behaviors internally and across our region, while simultaneously digging deeper to strengthen our institutional and interpersonal relationships. As with any garden, in order to see the fruits of our labor we must first plant our seeds and carefully tend to them, knowing that while some may never grow as we hoped, others will sprout and flourish. Like the prophet Hosea, we intend to fill our garden with justice, harvest goodness, and hope that one day righteousness will rain down upon all people. Creating lasting change is an ongoing process.

Over the past four years, JUFJ staff, board, and leaders have been engaged in an intentional process of racial equity assessment and growth. We have begun to implement racial equity recommendations on transparency, stakeholder engagement, DEI education, and campaign selection. Growth is not a linear process and we know that we will always have work to do to live into our racial equity commitments.

OUR CORE STRATEGIES

In 2018, we produced a strategic plan identifying our core strategies of making change and our priorities for the next five years. To download the complete plan, visit jufj.org/strategic-plan.

Make Systemic Change in Our Region

Advance economic, social, and racial equity in our region by winning policy change that makes a real, immediate, and concrete improvement in people's lives.

Develop Our Leaders and Engage Our Community

Create a cadre of Jewish leaders who will advance transformational social change and use community organizing to mobilize the broader Jewish community in creating a more just and equitable region.

Build the Power of Our Field

Invest our time, voice, and relationships to help strengthen the social change field in our region and the Jewish social justice field nationally, and to bring additional resources and visibility to our partners.

Strengthen Our Institution

Build JUFJ's institutional capacity so we can support and sustain this work over the long term.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF CHANGE

Issue campaigns make change and build a better democracy.

We organize our Jewish community for multiple kinds of action:

- Core campaigns
- Targeted actions
- Leadership development
- A community of meaning and purpose

We work in partnerships rooted in trust and shared goals.

We are committed to racial equity and ending structural and systemic racism.

OUR VALUES

IMPACT THAT ADVANCES EQUITY

We are deeply committed to addressing the social, racial, and economic inequity in our region. That commitment drives our strategy and our campaigns to make real, immediate, and concrete improvements in people's lives and to change the rules of our democracy so it lives up to its promise.

RELATIONSHIP

Relationships – among staff, volunteer leaders, partners, elected officials – are at the center of our work. We focus time and attention on striving to build relationships characterized by meaningful and authentic connection, trust, mutual respect, and understanding. These relationships are the foundation for the teamwork, partnerships, and community that power

and sustain our work. They also help us learn and grow, providing a space for us to receive and share hard but important feedback when something isn't going right.

INTEGRITY

We are committed to the integrity – honesty, humility, reliability, responsibility, and respect – that is central to building the trust and relationships that drive our work. We know that every action we take is an opportunity to act with integrity and further deepen the trust we've built, but also that integrity can be damaged in a careless moment. We commit ourselves to integrity while knowing that we are imperfect people living in an imperfect world that requires compromises, and that we will continue to learn and grow.

BALANCING THE PROPHETIC WITH THE PRAGMATIC

We are clear-eyed about the political and strategic realities around us, and we balance that with our vision and hope for the world we want to create. We make strategic and sometimes difficult choices to focus our work on efforts that have a real chance to succeed and on areas where we can make the greatest impact.

ROOTED IN JUDAISM, PLACE, AND HOPE

As we advance our work, we find strength, focus, and resilience in:

1. **Judaism:** This includes the myriad religious, cultural, ethical, historical, community, family, and other experiences of Jewishness that ground and connect us to each other and to our traditions.
2. **Place:** The different communities in which we work have varied histories, political and organizational ecosystems, communities, strengths, and challenges. Though we seek opportunities to link our work across the whole region, we prioritize campaigns and strategies that are right for each of our individual jurisdictions.
3. **Hope:** Hope is a Jewish value. Organizing out of hope invites our communities into this work and offers us the strength and resilience we need to continue fighting for the world as it should be. We believe that change is possible and we act on that conviction.

DISMANTLING ANTISEMITISM

Every person — no matter our religion, where we come from, or what we look like — deserves to live with freedom, safety, and belonging. At JUFJ, we know that whether we're walking down the streets of our neighborhoods or through the doors of our holy spaces, freedom and safety for any of us depends on the freedom and safety of all of us.

When facing antisemitic violence and incidents, Jews aren't alone. JUFJ organizes in solidarity with other communities who have a shared interest in dismantling white supremacy.

Antisemitism is part of the same machinery of division and fear as racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and more. To dismantle this machinery of fear,

we must work together in deep relationships. The center of JUFJ's work is building relationships with our Jewish and non-Jewish community members and organizational partners that are characterized by meaningful connection, trust, mutual respect, and understanding across our differences. When we respond to antisemitic speech or actions in DC and Maryland, we attempt to do so in ways that break down the systems of oppression that endanger all marginalized communities.

When Jewish people join together with our neighbors across difference, as we have in the past, we can shut down the fear factory and protect each other. When one of us is targeted, we'll continue to show up for each other, educate ourselves and each other about the different ways our communities are targeted, and reject anyone who tries to use fear to divide us. **Together we can build a region that fulfills the promise of freedom and safety for all of us, no exceptions.**

COLLABORATIVE FOR JEWISH ORGANIZING

Since 2019, JUFJ has played a lead role in convening the Collaborative for Jewish Organizing, which brings together nine Jewish organizing groups working in 16 states.

JUFJ's role in this effort emerged from our 2018 Strategic Plan, which committed to building the power of our field, including the national Jewish social justice movement. Together with our sister organizations across the country, we wondered if we could support each other to grow our local impact. And we believed that together we could make a case to funders to invest in our collective impact.

Together, we've secured almost \$4 million in funding for Jewish organizing, helping JUFJ and our partners add and retain staff at this crucial time, enabling collective staff development for our organizers, and providing rapid response communications support to our Collaborative.

We are proud to lead this strategic initiative, and proud of the trust that our partners have put in JUFJ to do so. The Collaborative for Jewish Organizing members are:

- Carolina Jews for Justice (North Carolina)
- Detroit Jews for Justice (Michigan)
- Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (Massachusetts)
- Jewish Community Action (Minnesota)
- Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (Illinois)
- Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (New York)
- Jews United for Justice (Maryland and Washington, DC)
- Bend the Arc (many states)
- The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (many states)

The Collaborative for Jewish Organizing team includes Susan Lubeck, Cole Parke-West, and Shira Wolkenfeld.

OUR STAFF, BOARD, AND LEADERS

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THANK YOU TO OUR LEADERS

Thank you to JUFJ's DC, Montgomery County, and Baltimore Leadership Councils, and our Maryland Core Team for leading JUFJ's work in each jurisdiction with such passion and commitment. We appreciate you for your many contributions in guiding our efforts, helping make tough decisions, and leading our teams carrying out critical work.

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Ben Sharp

Chag sameach from
T'ruah! Next year
may we all be free!



202-644-9043 Intake@firstshift.org

First Shift Justice Project empowers workers in low wage jobs to exercise their rights related to caregiving and parenting.

We are proud to partner with Jews United for Justice in working to ensure that all D.C. workers have access to paid leave from work!

Firstshift.org



Wishing Everyone
A Good and Meaningful
Passover!

Bolton Street Synagogue wishes
JUFJ a Sweet and Justice
Filled Passover and Year Ahead!



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Services every Shabbat @ 9:30 am

Chag Pesach Sameach to JUFJ
and all who are hungry and have
come both to eat, and to tell the
story of the historic labor walk
out of Enslaved Laborers and
Pyramid Builders Local Union
One!

Ed Rehfeld

Continue your legacy with Jews United for Justice

Tzedakah (righteous giving) is part of Jewish life and death. It is not on you to finish the work, but your tzedakah can help keep the work going. Thank you for supporting JUFJ in your legacy plan.



Everyone needs a will. Having a plan in place, regardless of your wealth, ensures that your wishes are known and saves your loved ones stress.

With a valid will, you choose who gets your property, you name guardians for your children, you provide a home for your pets, and more.

If you choose to leave JUFJ a bequest in your will, you give money from your financial legacy to Jews United for Justice. This costs nothing today, but provides sustained support to JUFJ for years to come.

It's a powerful way to create a lasting impact on economic, racial, and social justice in the our region by educating and mobilizing our local Jewish communities to action.

Visit FreeWill.com/JUFJ to create a free will in 20 minutes.

Have you already created a bequest? Please, let us know at FreeWill.com/Record/JUFJ.
Questions? Reach out at Jill.Rabbino@JUFJ.org



Chag Sameach
-Anita Lampel



Laura, we are grateful for your creativity, thoughtful care of our community, and commitment to the work of JUFJ in Baltimore over the past 10 years and before that, in DC. Thank you for devoting your time and talent to developing rich community building and education programs in our region. Without your vision and dedication, there would not be as strong a playbook for a Social Justice Seder in Baltimore.

With love, The Baltimore Leadership Council



Beth Am Synagogue's social action committee, Tzedek Beth Am, is proud to sponsor JUFJ's Social Justice Seder.



Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community is happy to support JUFJ and its work towards true freedom for all. Pesach Sameach! Tzedek, tzedek tirdof!

Am Kolel, based in Rockville, is an independent Jewish community devoted to meeting unmet needs in the Jewish community and responding to social and environmental issues with a progressive voice. It is directed by Rabbi David Shneyer.

www.AmKolel.org



READY TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE IN BALTIMORE?

Join Repair the World Baltimore's vibrant community of Jewish young adults dedicated to tackling urgent city needs.

With a focus on food, education, and environmental justice, we're on a mission to make an impact. Serve in solidarity with your neighbors, addressing critical issues like food insecurity and educational disparities. No matter your background, join us to learn and take action through a Jewish lens. Strengthen your service with learning opportunities rooted in Jewish values.



Sign up to serve now and let's create positive social change together!



Composting for this year's JUFJ seders is provided by



through which Jewish communities are joining with neighbors of all traditions to go green and respond to climate change.

Count the #ClimateOmer with us this spring: ipldmv.org/omer

Go solar at home in the DC area (bit.ly/IPLsolarswitch24) or in Baltimore (energyprograms.civicworks.com/ipl)

**JEW'S UNITED
FOR JUSTICE**

**THINK JEWISHLY.
ACT LOCALLY.**

FUEL JUFJ'S CAMPAIGNS:



JUFJ.ORG

This haggadah was printed in house by JUFJ's unionized staff.