

**JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE 2024 SOCIAL JUSTICE SEDER  
"LET MY PEOPLE GROW"**



*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**

Anita Lampel and Dan Metlay  
Bolton Street Synagogue  
Chevrei Tzedek Congregation  
Ed Rehfeld  
Fabrangen  
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)  
Debbie and Michael Amster  
Gabe Kravitz and Yael Smiley  
Har Sinai Oheb Shalom  
Joanna Silver  
Lauren-Nadelman family  
Lisa & Elad Firnberg  
Nancy and Ed Kutler  
Rabbi Gilah Langner  
Sally J. Scott

### **Redeemer**

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Lester B. Baltimore  
Rebecca Barson  
Karen Caplan  
Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin  
Margot Friedman and Amy Cotton  
Rabbi Tyler Dratch  
Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich  
Debra Fried Levin  
Matt Frumin  
Tracie Guy-Decker  
Amanda Jaret & Björn Westergard  
Rachel Kassman  
Ruti Kadish  
Debra Katz  
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The Kirschner family  
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Daniel Michelson-Horowitz  
H Rubinson  
Susan London Russell  
Benjamin and Jennifer Sax  
Margie Simon  
Carol Stern and Miriam Eisenstein  
Fran Zamore

## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

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

## **WELCOME**

As an inclusive community centered around Jewish values and social justice, we welcome everyone to Jews United for Justice's Social Justice Seder in Baltimore. As is traditionally said at the Passover seder: "Let all who are hungry come and eat!" To that we add, "Let all who are eager come and act!"

Your table captain (please raise your hands, table captains!) will help to guide you through today's seder. Whether you have been directly affected as a child in the criminal legal system, as we'll hear about today, or you're learning about youth justice issues for the first time, whether you've been to dozens of seders, or never attended one before, you can both contribute to and learn from today's program. We hope to end the seder feeling like a *kehillah kedoshah*, a sacred community, who work together to stand up for the rights of all our neighbors.

Before we begin our discussion of youth justice in Maryland and its impact on our communities, we wish to acknowledge the physical place where we find ourselves today. In the name of justice, we acknowledge that we hold our seder on native lands of the Piscataway, Nentego, Lenape, Susquehannock, and Pamunkey peoples.

We also wish to acknowledge and thank JUFJ's co-host for this event, Beth Am Synagogue, who have so generously shared their space with us today. This building dates back to 1922, when it was built by Chizuk Amuno Congregation, which moved to its present location on Stevenson Road in 1962 at a time when many congregations were following their members from the city out to the suburbs. A founding principle of Beth Am, which means "House of the People," is to remain in Baltimore City and to be a vital and stabilizing anchor in its Reservoir Hill neighborhood, an economically and racially integrated community. In keeping with the synagogue's focus on social justice, Beth Am and its congregants continue to work in partnership with community residents to enhance a beautiful and diverse historic neighborhood.

## **WHY A SOCIAL JUSTICE SEDER?**

The Passover seder serves many purposes. First and foremost, it is a ritualized celebration of the biblical Israelites' dramatic journey from slavery to freedom. But even from its earliest days, the seder was never just about history. As the format of the seder was finalized in Mishnaic and Talmudic times (50 BCE - 500 CE), rituals were included to make each participant feel as if they personally are experiencing the journey from slavery to freedom. The Passover seder is also a lens through which to see the modern world around us.

We know too well that the fight for justice and freedom is a fight that is continuous throughout history and across the globe. The Passover seder teaches us that just as we alone could not free ourselves from *Mitzrayim* (the narrow place, or ancient Egypt), we have an obligation to fight for the freedom of all peoples in every generation. The injustices of the world are many, but the Passover story reminds us, in the words of the ancient Jewish book of ethics Pirkei Avot and the back of our JUFJ shirts: "It is not your duty to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

Together, this Passover, let us use our collective power to further the cause of justice and freedom.

## WHY A PASSOVER SEDER ABOUT YOUTH JUSTICE IN MARYLAND?

Children's ability to flourish and the violence that prevents them from flourishing are poignant Passover themes. Our story begins with the Pharaoh's murderous decree: to kill all Israelite baby boys. It ends with God's killing of the first-born Egyptian boys. This is a tragic reminder that children — some of the most vulnerable people in our society — are often the first in any community to suffer when the community is under threat. From the ancient violence recounted in the Passover story until today, we continue to encounter the idea that children are the problem, and that they need to be removed from society.

However, today we will flip that narrative and will learn that one of the central teachings of this holiday is the sacred obligation to protect the dignity and rights of all children: The Torah explicitly commands us to teach children the Passover story, and the Seder includes rituals for children. On Passover we remember that there is something sacred about being a child, a sanctity that is violated when laws and systems are created to criminalize children or to treat them as adults.

At our seder we read four different children's impressions of the Passover account, four interpretations of liberation. We learn from a *chacham* ("a wise child"), a *rashah* ("a wicked child"), a *tam* ("a simple child"), and even from one *sh'ayno yodeah lishol* ("a child who doesn't know how to ask"). And tonight, we hope to learn from an absent fifth child, *mi sh'lo hayah poh* ("one who is not here"), the one who sits behind bars, without support, without hope, and without any recourse. Tonight, we declare, as our ancestors did over a millennia ago: "All children belong to the future."

## CANDLE LIGHTING

As we come together for JUFJs Social Justice Seder, we take time to light candles. 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.

We also say the *shehecheyanu*, a blessing of thanks for bringing us together again this season, at our first Social Justice Seder gathering since 2019.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ 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 day.**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֵל-לֵהִינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי 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 granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.**

## TABLE CONVERSATION

*Take a few minutes to meet everyone at your table. Introduce yourself and share:*

- Your name
- Your pronouns if you wish
- What brought you to today's Social Justice Seder
- One thing you are curious about or hoping to learn about Youth Justice in Maryland

## B'CHOL DOR VA'DOR / IN EVERY GENERATION

In every generation, each person is obligated to see ourselves as if we had personally left *Mitzrayim*. This obligation ensures that we remain empathetic to anyone experiencing oppression and slavery, and that we work in solidarity with those seeking liberation. Each time we reconnect to our history, we find new meaning and hope in our story of liberation. In addition to remembering the Passover story, today we also remember some of the history of the struggle for youth justice in Maryland.

Maryland's juvenile justice system dates back to the end of the 19th century with the passage of "An Act to Establish a House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents" in 1830 and the establishment of the House of Refuge in 1855<sup>1</sup>. In the 1960s, Maryland became one of the first states, along with Pennsylvania and Mississippi, to charge children as adults in first-degree murder cases.

In the 90s, in the wake of the national Crime Bill, Maryland legislators doubled down on punitive measures towards children, continually expanding the list of charges that result in a child being automatically sent to the adult system. Today, that list is 33 charges – the largest in the nation.

In 2020, Human Rights for Kids ranked Maryland as one of the worst states in the nation for how we treat kids, stating that Maryland had "made little to no effort to protect the human rights of children in the justice system and is likely in violation of international human rights standards." At that time, Maryland had no due process protections for children, no minimum

<sup>1</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yhtwydrc>

age for juvenile court, no ban on solitary confinement for children, and more.

But just as the history of mistreatment of children in Maryland is long, so is the history of those working to build a better Maryland for kids and communities. The youth justice movement in Maryland has been building power and momentum across Maryland. In 1922, public concern about the treatment of children in Maryland prompted the Governor to appoint the Children's Code Commission. The Commission, instigated by the League of Women Voters, found that children as young as 2 and a half years old were being committed to reform school. The advocacy and findings of the Commission, paired with public pressure, resulted in key reforms in what happened to children in Maryland.<sup>2</sup>

100 years later, in 2022, Maryland passed landmark youth justice legislation, righting some of the wrongs highlighted in the 2020 Human Rights for Kids report – ensuring that children can talk to an attorney before a custodial interrogation by police, establishing a minimum age for entering juvenile court, and more. The fight for youth justice has passed from generation to generation. The ACLU of Maryland's Youth Justice Lobby night, just a few months ago, reflected this: the 200-strong participants included both adults and children united in the fight for justice. Next year, we know that this movement can pass the Youth Equity and Safety (YES) Act, and can finally undo the injustices created in the 1960s and 1990s by no longer automatically charging children as adults.

## **KADESH - FIRST CUP OF WINE**

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

As is appropriate for free people relaxing over a shared meal, we drink four cups of wine or grape juice during the seder.

Our tradition of drinking four cups of wine comes from four expressions of redemption found in Exodus 6:6-7: "I will bring you out;" "I will deliver you;" "I will redeem you;" and "I will take you as a nation." With these words, God promises Moses freedom for the Jewish people. When we drink each cup of wine, we remember God's promise.

Today as we drink our wine, remember that we are honoring young people who are not free to be with their friends and family, much less to relax over a meal. We will dedicate each cup of wine to visions of the promise of freedom for incarcerated children or children who are caught up in the justice system. Every dedication will open with a poem written by an incarcerated young person, taken from the Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop.

Free Minds builds community to foster personal development and systems change for justice-involved youth and adults through the literary arts, workforce development, trauma healing, peace-building, and member-led advocacy. You can read more poems at [freemindsbookclub.org](http://freemindsbookclub.org).

Our first glass is inspired by the poet HW, and their yearning for freedom, their desire to be seen, and their wish to appreciate every moment of freedom.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/19djj/html/djff.html>



## IF I WERE FREE

BY HW

If I were free, I would cherish  
every breath I breathe.

If I were free, I would cherish  
every hug, and every kiss for everyday that I missed.

If I were free, I would show the world  
my presence is love, for I am blessed from above.

If I were free, I would prove people can change.

And we shouldn't be punished forever for things we did at a young age.

If I were free, I would cherish every moment  
outside of this cage,

If I were free...

We raise our first glass to young people who yearn for freedom and those who work to get them there:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ 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.*

## **YACHATZ - THE BREAKING OF THE MIDDLE MATZAH**

There are three symbolic pieces of matzah in the center of a seder table. The breaking of the middle matzah is one of many rituals that transform the food of the seder into symbols of meaning. We are told that the matzah is the bread of affliction, of poverty and persecution, of stretching one meal into two.

In tearing the matzah in half, we shake ourselves out of complacency. We express the anger and fear that occurs when our basic human needs are not met, when our humanity is not respected. We recognize that the basic rights of children are not respected when they are automatically charged as adults: children are denied access to education, at risk of facing violence, and even placed into solitary confinement. With the physicality of tearing, we move through anger so we can shift into action. The breaking of the matzah is a small act of empowerment.

### **HA LACHMA ANYA**

*Someone at each table hold up or point to the matzah on the table **as we say together:***

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in *Mitzrayim*. All who are hungry, let them come and eat. All who are in need, let them come and celebrate Passover with us. Now we are here; next year may we be in the land of Freedom. Now we are enslaved; next year may we be free people. Now children in Maryland are charged and incarcerated as adults; next year we successfully advocate to pass the YES Act to end this cruel practice in Maryland.



## THE SEDER PLATE

The Seder Plate contains foods that are traditional symbols of Passover, each helping us to remember and recreate different aspects of the Passover story. Hold up each symbol as you read the corresponding explanation. Take a moment to discuss the items and what symbolism relating to youth justice you find in them.



**Maror** (bitter herb) - *Maror* can bring us to tears, but it can also wake us up. When we eat *maror* and remember the bitter taste of slavery, we are reminded of the need to be awake to injustice. In the words of Rabbi Shmuel Zalman, “No matter how lofty your involvements, you must never fail to hear the cry of a child.” We also add a second bitter herb, **chazeret**, to the Seder plate.



**Karpas** (green vegetable) - *Karpas* reminds us of the importance of cultivating life. Just as a plant needs water, air, sun, and soil to grow, the YES Act provides a system that offers kids the resources necessary for growth. When a child is placed in an adult prison, there is no room for growth.



**Charoset** - This mixture of nuts, fruit, and wine symbolizes the mortar used by Israelite slaves to build Pharaoh’s palaces. In today’s Maryland, even those who do not build still participate in construction through taxes that fund government investments in construction. Yet so much of what is incentivized or funded goes to building an architecture of oppression: jails, highways that divide communities, luxury spaces for the wealthy amidst a shortage of affordable housing. Only organized communities can build a future that has a place for everyone.



**Shank Bone/Beetroot** - Lamb’s blood was used to mark the doors of the Israelites to protect them from the Angel of Death. In the United States, race is used to mark individuals and communities, determining who is privileged with opportunities and who is not. Racial disparities among children are present throughout the carceral process. Black youth are not only more likely to be arrested than white youth, they’re less likely to have their cases diverted (or resolved outside of the formal justice system), and more likely to receive harsher sentences. As the angel of death passed over the doors painted with lamb’s blood, we must ask: *Why is it that we have a racist system that treats one group of society differently than another?*



**Egg**- A symbol of the potential of the young people in our community, particularly the Black children who are so often targeted by the police. Youth of color are subject to increased surveillance and harsh penalties as children that restrict their life opportunities as adults. What would our state look like if we abandoned these practices and ensured all children have a chance for a good education?




**Orange**- The orange on the seder plate symbolizes our commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer folks, and our dedication to work towards a more fruitful community where all are welcome at our table. The orange was added to the Seder plate in the 1980s by Jewish feminist scholar Susannah Heschel, who noted that an orange belongs on the Seder plate as much as any marginalized person belongs at our Seder table. It is an unfortunate reality that violence and discrimination against folks in the queer community is extremely common. This is no different in the juvenile justice system, where queer youth, and especially queer youth of color, are significantly overrepresented. Researchers estimate that 20% of children in the system are LGBTQ+ compared with 9.5% of those in the general population.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/03/02/lgbtq/>

## ARBA KUSHIYOT / FOUR QUESTIONS

Traditionally, the Four Questions are asked by a child or the youngest person at the Seder. Each question highlights something that is different about what we are doing at the Seder tonight, as opposed to “all other nights.”


*Sing Together:*



מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הלַיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?

*Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mi'kol ha'leilot?*

Why is this night different from all other nights?



Throughout the Seder, we do a number of things we don't do on any other nights. The main reason for this is to prompt questions, specifically from children at the table, keeping them attentive and engaged as we retell the story of the Exodus from *Mitzrayim*.

Tonight, this section is a reminder to be like children at the Seder when it comes to social justice — question things that seem wrong. Don't accept injustices in the system that others may take for granted. Keep asking questions, questions such as:

- When do children become adults?
- How does incarcerating youth as adults rob them of their childhood?
- What happens to us when we remove children from society?
- In what ways do we nourish our youth? In what ways do we deprive our youth of nourishment?

Finally, each of us must ask ourselves what we will do differently after this night, to push for youth justice reform in Maryland.

## THE SECOND 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.*

Poet MF's "A New Story" and TC's "The Start of a New End" inspired the dedication of our second cup of wine. These poems illustrate for us not only the circumstances that can lead to incarceration, but also the emotional and personal journey from freedom to incarceration and incarceration to freedom.

## A NEW STORY BY MF

A new community, new surroundings, new peers  
A new school, new anxiety, new fears  
A new hangout, new activities, new dangers  
A new argument, new fight, new anger  
A new blunt, new liquor, new pistol  
A new case, new jail, new system  
A new sentence, new celly, new state  
A new officer, new politics, new hate  
A new mentor, new program, new passion  
A new computer, new laws, news flashing  
A new judge, new evidence, new trial  
A new witness, new acquittal, new smile

## THE START OF A NEW END BY TC

Age one, living life as a toddler lucky enough to have a father and mother  
Age two, growing up getting everything I want  
Age three, feels like I'm getting taller by the month  
Age four, traveling with my family having fun  
Age five, I hopped off the porch, started going outside  
Age six, it became a habit, hangin' around older guys  
Age seven, God took my grandfather up to heaven  
Age nine, got exposed into the street life kinda  
Age ten, started observing everything happening on the block  
Age eleven, I was eager to get out of school, watching the clock  
Age twelve, I watched Apple take his last breath  
Why he gone?  
Age thirteen, got locked up and I caught my first charge

We raise our second glass to young people bravely telling their stories.

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.*

## THE FOUR CHILDREN

The haggadah presents four questioning children who approach the seder in four different ways: the Wise Child, who wants to know the meaning behind all of the traditional laws and rituals; the Wicked Child, who wants to know what the point of all of this is; the Simple Child, who just wants the basics; and the Child Who Doesn't Know How to Ask, who doesn't know where to start. We are taught to meet each child where they are, in providing them with answers.

Tonight, we consider the plights of Four Children in a justice system stacked against them:

The “**Wise**” **Child** is seen as older than their age in a structurally racist system, where Black youth are *five times* more likely to be tried as adults than their white counterparts<sup>2</sup>. Circuit Court Judge Emanuel Brown rejected the transfer of an autocharged teen down to the juvenile system merely because he was tall<sup>3</sup>.

The “**Wicked**” **Child** is deemed a criminal in Maryland’s system, without the leniencies given to other children based on race and socioeconomic status. They have been failed by the system and society and subsequently labeled as wicked, or worse. Anthony Muhammad, aged 15, was told by the judge at his sentencing that he had “permanent incorrigibility,” “irreparable corruption,” and “little prospect of ever being able to come out and function<sup>4</sup>.”

The “**Simple**” **Child** is assumed to have little potential to succeed in life, or to have a future worth saving. Baltimore County State’s Attorney Scott Shellenbger, who railed against the YES Act, repeatedly shouted that children aren’t children in his oral testimony.

The “**Child Who Does Not Know How to Ask**” has no idea how they will advocate for themselves, or survive, in a system built for adults, including after they return to the community. Dazier Wilson, who was charged as an adult and incarcerated at age 16, will return to the community at age 21. “Because she was locked up so young, Wilson said she doesn’t know how to make a doctor’s appointment, apply for a job or pay a bill<sup>5</sup>.”

What can we say to these children?

•••••  
• **TEXT STUDY/TABLE DISCUSSION** •

• *Chevruta* is a Jewish practice of deeply studying a text together with another person to learn •  
• what that text can teach us. Please turn to your neighbors at your table. In groups of 2 or 3, •  
• read the text below, and choose one or two of the following questions to explore together: •

• **The Cry of a Child** •

• When Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch was a young man, he lived in the same house as his father, •  
• Rabbi Schneur Zalman. Rabbi DovBer and his family lived in the ground floor apartment, and •  
• Rabbi Schneur Zalman lived on the second floor. •

• One night, while Rabbi DovBer was deeply engrossed in his studies, his youngest child fell out •  
• of his cradle. Rabbi DovBer heard nothing. But Rabbi Schneur Zalman who was also immersed •  
• in study in his room on the second floor, heard the infant’s cries. The Rabbi came downstairs, •  
• lifted the infant from the floor, soothed his tears, replaced him in the cradle, and rocked him to •  
• sleep. Rabbi DovBer remained oblivious throughout it all. •

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2 Joshua Rovner, “Black Disparities in Youth Incarceration” from the Sentencing Project. [sentencingproject.org/fact-sheet/black-disparities-in-youth-incarceration](https://sentencingproject.org/fact-sheet/black-disparities-in-youth-incarceration)

3 Rachel Baye, Jennifer Lu, Claire Keenan-Kurgan “Judges use ‘arbitrary,’ ‘horrendous’ reasons to keep teens in adult court” from WYPR. [wypr.org/wypr-news/2024-03-20/judges-use-arbitrary-horrendous-reasons-to-keep-teens-in-adult-court](https://wypr.org/wypr-news/2024-03-20/judges-use-arbitrary-horrendous-reasons-to-keep-teens-in-adult-court)

4 Anthony Muhammad “Once part of the problem, we are now part of the solution” from Maryland Matters. [marylandmatters.org/2024/03/06/commentary-once-part-of-the-problem-we-are-now-part-of-the-solution](https://marylandmatters.org/2024/03/06/commentary-once-part-of-the-problem-we-are-now-part-of-the-solution)


5 Baye, Lu, and Keenan-Kurgan




## 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 נתן לנו את השבת ... דינו  
אלו נתן לנו את התורה... דינו



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

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

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

## 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.*

Our third cup of wine is brought to us by the words of poet GD. GD gives us insight into his experience being a child sentenced as an adult and his attempt to seek solace in his interior and intellectual life.

### SMILE

#### BY GD

I was still a juvenile and convicted as a child  
Though sentenced as an adult  
But still I smile...  
I think about my reality and realize just how real it is  
Then I laugh...  
I don't laugh because it's funny  
But because it's “funny” how a young black man could  
So easily succumb to his environment  
But still I grow...  
I've come to know many things, dreamed many dreams



All while living a nightmare  
But still I ponder...  
I've created wonderful things once I considered my intellect  
As a key to unlock the box my mind's been in for years  
So now I know...  
Though life has its adversities, and sometimes it can  
Be a tremendous burden  
I still got to walk that extra mile  
Even if my feet are hurting  
So, I'll continue to smile...

*We raise our third glass to those who foster the imaginations and education of incarcerated young people.*

בָּרוּךְ 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 third cup.*

## **ELIJAH AND MIRIAM**

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?

Miriam's cup was added to many Passover seders in the twentieth century, to recognize the often silent and unnoticed role of women in the Passover story. We fill Miriam's cup with water, not wine, in remembrance of the life-giving well that followed the Israelites through the desert as a reward for Miriam's courage and dedication to her people. As the Talmud states, "If it wasn't for the righteousness of the women of that generation, we would not have been redeemed from Egypt<sup>7</sup>."

*We sing together.*

---

<sup>7</sup> Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 9b

## ELIYAHU HANAVI



אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתְּשֻׁבִי, 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.  
Bimheyrah 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.*

## 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.*

Our final cup of wine comes from a poet with determination and a reminder of what freedom means.

### BEYOND THESE WALLS

BY AD

Beyond these walls is a path that leads  
to contentment, when put in the right environment,  
Beyond these walls is the joys of pleasure  
that can last forever,  
Beyond these walls is the freedom to roam  
without being controlled by others,  
Beyond these walls is peace when you have

let go of the past and now you live amongst  
the free,  
Beyond these walls is justice when you walk  
in the path of the righteous against injustice,  
Beyond these wall is where the stars shine  
bright and the flowers bloom with beauty,  
Beyond these walls is Love, happiness, and  
glory when you finally get the chance to  
share your story.  
Beyond these walls is a future that I seek,  
Beyond these walls is freedom to me...

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

בְּרוּךְ 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 fourth cup.*

## **TZAFUN / HIDDEN (EATING THE AFIKOMEN)**

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

Hopefully, it worked and some of the children have insights they want to share from today's seder. What is something we talked about that you think you will remember?

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<sup>8</sup>.'"

May this final piece of matzah and tonight's discussion serve as motivation for us to pursue justice for children in the criminal legal system.

<sup>8</sup> [myjewishlearning.com/article/the-hidden-matzah](http://myjewishlearning.com/article/the-hidden-matzah)

## 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. 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 food we enjoy.

Now, let us sing together:



בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא, מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא, מְרִיבָה דְהַאי פִּיטָא



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

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

## NIRTZAH / CONCLUSION

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, our county, our state, our country, and our world.

We promise to each other:

We are cultivating hope in our hearts.

We are building understanding and connection between people.

We are working for a vision of youth justice, racial equity, economic justice, civil rights and democracy, and human rights for all.

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 a perfected world. May it come 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!

Thank you for joining us for today's seder on youth justice in Maryland. While our seder has come to an end, the fight for youth justice has not. As we conclude our seder, we individually and collectively ask, how can we bring home the knowledge gained here? How can we incorporate this learning into our own seders and lives, and how can we animate our personal seders to also be inspiring vehicles for change?

## **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](http://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.

### Maryland

Lisa Barkan  
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Jerry Kickenson  
Anita Lampel  
Claire Landers  
Anna Tubiash Levy  
Anna Rubin  
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Jo Shifrin  
Carol Stern

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Ariel Drehobl  
Michelle Engelmann  
Michaela Friedman  
Katharine Landfield  
Shira Markoff  
Mo Pasternak  
Ben Sharp

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



**202-644-9043**      [Intake@firstshift.org](mailto: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!



**BOLTON  
STREET**  
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[www.nikkimg.com](http://www.nikkimg.com)

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*Jews United For Justice from*



*Independent, egalitarian,  
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7750 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, DC 20012  
202-595-9138, [www.fabrangen.org](http://www.fabrangen.org)  
*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](https://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](https://FreeWill.com/Record/JUFJ).  
Questions? Reach out at [Jill.Rabbino@JUFJ.org](mailto:Jill.Rabbino@JUFJ.org)



Chag Sameach  
-Anita Lampel



**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](http://ipldmv.org/omer)

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





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](http://www.AmKolel.org)

**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.