

**COMING THROUGH A NARROW PLACE:**  
SEEKING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY IN BALTIMORE  
JEWS UNITED FOR JUSTICE'S SOCIAL JUSTICE SEDER



BOLTON STREET SYNAGOGUE  
BALTIMORE, MD  
APRIL 2, 2017 // 6 NISSAN 5777

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[BaltimoreJewishGreenandJust@gmail.com](mailto:BaltimoreJewishGreenandJust@gmail.com)  
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IMPACT Silver Spring joins JUFJ in resisting the forces of hatred that are attempting to divide us.

En IMPACT Silver Spring nos unimos con JUFJ en resistiendo  
las fuerzas con el odio que trata de dividirnos.

## WHY A SOCIAL JUSTICE SEDER?

The Passover seder serves many purposes. First and foremost it is a ritualized celebration of the Israelites' dramatic journey from slavery to freedom. But even early on, the seder was never just about history. As the format of the seder was finalized in Mishnaic and Talmudic times, rituals were included to make each participant feel as if they personally were experiencing the journey from slavery to freedom.

This theme of the seder goes beyond the Jewish people's flight from *Mitzrayim* (the Biblical term for Ancient Egypt) and into the recurring fight for justice and freedom, a fight that is persistent throughout history and across the globe. The Passover seder tells us that just as our people experienced slavery, and just as we could not free ourselves alone, we have an obligation to also fight for freedom in every generation. The injustices of the world are many, but the Passover story reminds us of the words of Pirkei Avot: "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 causes of justice and freedom.<sup>1</sup>

## WHY A PASSOVER SEDER ABOUT POLICING IN BALTIMORE?

Passover is a holiday for the celebration of our liberation, but it comes with a nagging question: *how much does our home resemble Mitzrayim, the land of our bondage?* If we're going to answer that question, Baltimore Jews need to look at our hometown systems of policing: the Baltimore City Police Department (BPD) and the Baltimore County Police Department. We can also use the experiences of our own community to better understand policing elsewhere, from departments around the country (such as the NYPD and the Ferguson Police Department) to federal law enforcement (such as immigration policing).

Just like in Moses' time, in some communities today, violence from authorities are both extraordinary and everyday. The cruel and shockingly public deaths of Freddie Grey, Tyrone West, Korryn Gaines, and too many others testify to the biblical power of life and death that police officers wield. Further, 'ordinary' policing has its own impacts, as made explicit in the Department of Justice's report on the BPD: a pattern of unconstitutional stops and searches; an epidemic of excessive force used against Baltimore residents; persistent mishandling of sexual assault cases; and, throughout, bias and targeting of Black people and other people of color. At the same time, our community invests heavily in policing as a system: Baltimore's police force eats up almost half a billion dollars a year, more than we spend on health, housing, parks, and the arts combined.<sup>2</sup>

Passover, as the holiday of our liberation, is a critical time for Jews to examine modern day Pharaohs in our midst. The injuries inflicted on our ancestors, just like the injuries of policing today, can seem (and

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Jewish Labor Committee Passover Haggadah, Third Edition, Spring 2002

<sup>2</sup> "Myra Margolin - Budget and Police Data #IB16." YouTube, uploaded by ignitebaltimore, 13 June, 2015, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp5WhvguHaw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp5WhvguHaw).

sometimes are) all too final. Remembrance demands that the book on injustice not remain shut: that through reflection and action, we can achieve liberation in our city, in our time.

*A note on sources:* You will notice that we reference key concepts, such as intersectionality and mass incarceration, to help us to better comprehend policing and racial injustice. It is also critical that we recognize that this haggadah and the police accountability movement are indebted to thinkers, activists, and social movements of Black peop. We as Jews, and in particular those of us who are White Jews, have a responsibility to contribute to the struggle against racism by educating ourselves in this rich tradition. Take a look at our glossary and sources, look for sources on your own, and ask questions!

## CANDLE LIGHTING

As part of the candle lighting before each Seder, we recite the *shehecheyanu* blessing:

*“Blessed are You, Source of all Life, Creator of the universe,  
who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.”*

On this occasion, as we come together for Baltimore’s 4th Social Justice Seder, we will also light a *yartzeit* (memorial) candle. The book of *Mishlei* (Proverbs) states that “The soul of man is the lamp of Gꝰd.” We use candles to carry on the memory and honor those who we have lost.

Traditionally, we light a *yartzeit* candle on the anniversary of a loved one’s death. However, tonight is different from other nights. We do not mourn just one person, but many.

We light this *yartzeit* candle to memorialize the loss of those who have died from police violence and brutality. We celebrate who they were and mourn who they could have been. We learn in the *Mishnah*, ‘Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world’ (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5). How many worlds have been destroyed by police violence? How many lives, including those of police officers themselves, could have been saved if our police departments were held accountable?

## B'CHOL DOR V'DOR

### Leader:

In every generation the Haggadah tells us that each person is required to see themselves as if they personally experienced the exodus from Mitzrayim. In every generation we must feel the pain of our ancestors' slavery and the overwhelming joy of their eventual freedom.

### All:

The Jewish community is one that knows state-sponsored oppression. From the taskmasters in *Mitzrayim* to the captivity in Rome, from arrests for blood libels to the Spanish Inquisition, Jews have feared government controlled forces. In more recent history, the SS of Nazi Germany and the KGB in the former Soviet Union, the Mukhabarat in Libya and Egypt and until recently Syria,<sup>3</sup> have continued to remind us of what it means to be at the mercy of a violent and oppressive police force.

### Leader:

While the Nazis and the Soviet secret police are no more, unfair and discriminatory policing continues to oppress the community around us. Many members of the Baltimore Police Department are fair, upstanding citizens. However, they are part of a system that is rooted in racism, designed to protect White people and White property. Furthermore, officers lack the training, supervision, accountability, and support to properly serve the people of Baltimore.<sup>4</sup>

### Sing together:

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים

*Avadim hayinu l'Pharaoh b'Mitzrayim*

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<sup>3</sup> Roumani, Maurice. "The Final Exodus of the Libyan Jews in 1967." Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, [jcpa.org/article/the-final-exodus-of-the-libyan-jews-in-1967/](http://jcpa.org/article/the-final-exodus-of-the-libyan-jews-in-1967/). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

Silvera, Alain. The Jews of Egypt. Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 35 No. 2. Frank Cass, April 1999, London (pp.172-181).

Blitz, Adam. "At the Seder." Aeon, 10 May, 2013, [aeon.co/essays/passover-in-damascus-carries-a-bittersweet-savour-of-the-past](http://aeon.co/essays/passover-in-damascus-carries-a-bittersweet-savour-of-the-past). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (2016). *Investigation of the Baltimore City Police Department*, 10-11.



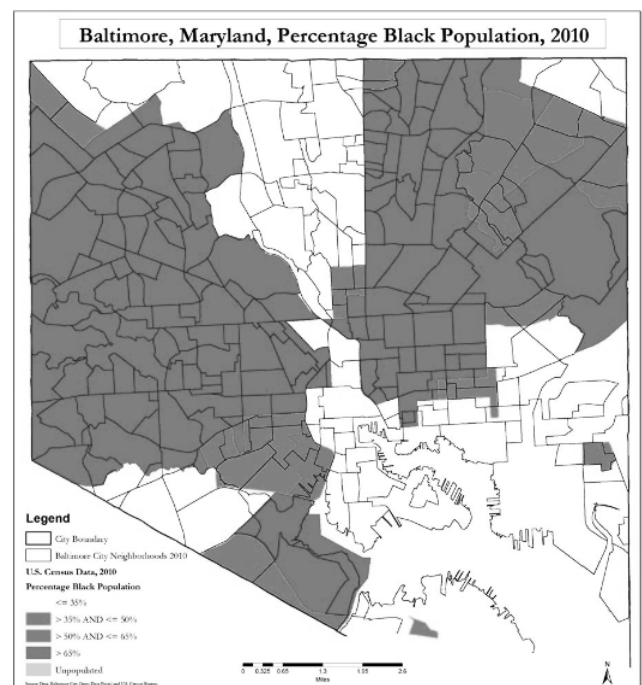
# FIRST CUP OF WINE: **ACKNOWLEDGING OUR HISTORY - WHITE SUPREMACY, REDLINING, AND THE WAR ON DRUGS**

*Fill the first cup of wine or juice.*

**With our first cup of wine we acknowledge some of the history that has led to current policing issues. Chief among these is redlining, the practice of denying home loans in certain neighborhoods to certain groups of people, and the war on drugs, a federal initiative to crack down on drug users and dealers.**

After the abolition of slavery, the southern states lost their system of racial control and the free labor that had been the foundation of the economy. Faced with the need to create a new system to enforce white supremacy, states passed the Black Codes and then Jim Crow. These laws created a new form of forced labor, criminalizing broad categories of activities and then contracting prisoners to work at plantations and other businesses. As a result, the states were able to reinvent racial control, branding Black people as criminals and making their slavery once again legal.<sup>5</sup>

Redlining emerged in the early and mid-20th century as another tool for reinforcing racial control. In 1910 Baltimore was the first city to pass an ordinance segregating each residential block in the city. After that law was deemed unconstitutional, housing covenants were used in neighborhoods like Roland Park to bar Black and Jewish families from owning or renting homes.<sup>6</sup> During this time, government agencies extended home loans to White people, while denying these services to Black families who were confined to hyper-segregated neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup> These neighborhoods, marked in red on maps, were stigmatized as “too ‘hazardous’ for conventional lending,” due to the presence of Black people.<sup>8</sup> As a result of redlining and other related practices, Black people were denied the ability to build wealth and Baltimore was made one of the most segregated cities in the country.<sup>9</sup> Since the 1970’s the neighborhoods of South Baltimore have continuously been at least 90 percent white, while neighborhoods



Source: Investigation of the Baltimore City Police Department (U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division)

<sup>5</sup> Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. The New Press, 2012, 26-31.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Justice, 12, 71.

<sup>7</sup> Pietila, Antero. *Not in My Neighborhood*. Ivan R. Dee, 2010, 61-62

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 67-70

<sup>9</sup> Department of Justice, 12.



such as Cherry Hill, Sandtown-Winchester, and Upton/Druid Hill have been at least 90 percent Black.<sup>10</sup>

Confined to segregated neighborhoods and with limited economic and political power, Black people were uniquely vulnerable to the coming wave of discriminatory and aggressive policing. Over the 1950's and 1960's, as the Civil Rights Movement succeeded in dismantling the explicitly discriminatory Jim Crow practices, it became clear to many whites that a new system of control was needed. During this time explicitly racist policies evolved into calls for "law and order" and then a war on drugs. In 1971 President Richard Nixon declared a rhetorical war on drugs, which Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton proceeded to implement. They launched this war by criminalizing drug addiction, passing draconian sentencing laws (such as mandatory minimums) and expanding funding for an increasingly militarized police. Most states, including Maryland, followed suit by criminalizing growing numbers of non-violent drug offenses, to which they attached increasingly punitive sentencing requirements. Baltimore, in particular, waged the war on drugs with zeal, implementing "zero tolerance" policing practices in the 1990s and 2000s that prioritized making mass arrests on street corners in Black neighborhoods for offenses such as loitering.<sup>11</sup>

While cloaked in race-neutral language, the war on drugs used imagery to appeal to fears of white voters and disproportionately targeted communities of color.<sup>12</sup> In some states, 90% of those admitted to prison for drug offenses were Black or Latino.<sup>13</sup> The war on drugs, which is still being waged today, uses policing to control communities of color in many of the same ways that policing was used during slavery and Jim Crow. Approximately one in three Black men in the United States can expect to serve time in prison.<sup>14</sup>

**We raise our cups in acknowledgment of this history, and its continuing debilitating effects on our community.**

ברוך אתה יי אלוקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

*Baruch ata 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.**

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. The New Press, 2012, 49-54.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

## TABLE DISCUSSION

*With the person sitting next to you, read the following excerpt from Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's 1963 speech "Race and Religion."<sup>15</sup> Then choose 1 to 2 questions below as a jumping-off point to discuss the quote and the larger issues of racism, policing, and communal responsibility.*

"There are, of course, many among us whose record in dealing with the Negroes and other minority groups is unspotted. However, an honest estimation of the moral state of our society will disclose: *Some are guilty, but all are responsible*. If we admit that the individual is in some measure conditioned or affected by the public climate of opinion, an individual's crime discloses society's corruption. In a community not indifferent to suffering, uncompromisingly impatient with cruelty and falsehood, racial discrimination would be infrequent rather than common."<sup>16</sup>

1. What does Heschel mean when he says that individuals are affected by public opinion? How can this relate to contemporary policing issues? How can it relate to your experiences around racism and prejudice?
2. Do you agree with Heschel's idea that "some are guilty, but all are responsible"? If so, how have you acted on this responsibility? How would you like to act moving forward?
3. Do you think it is possible to have a community not indifferent to suffering? What would have to change for this to be a possibility? What are some ways our community does not fit this description?
4. Briefly describe an experience you have had with a police officer. Whether or not you noticed or considered it at the time - consider how race could have played a role in shaping that experience.
5. What is one change, small or big, that you would make to policing in Baltimore and why?

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<sup>15</sup> Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) was a Warsaw-born rabbi who moved to America during World War II. He was the Professor of Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and he is well known for both his writings and his active roles in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s.

<sup>16</sup> Heschel, Abraham Joshua. "Religion and Race." *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*, 14 January, 1963, [voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/heschel-religion-and-race-speech-text/](https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/heschel-religion-and-race-speech-text/). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

## MIRIAM'S CUP

In a cultural environment where Black victims of Police Violence are often imagined to only be Black men,<sup>17</sup> we raise Miriam's cup to recognize the significance of women's stories to our narrative.

We acknowledge the lives of the unarmed Black women, and of the transgender women and gender-nonconforming people killed by police.

We acknowledge the women leaders: Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, three queer Black women artists, who thoughtfully coined the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag and ignited the Black Lives Matter movement.<sup>18</sup> We acknowledge the women of Baltimore who, like Miriam guiding her people to wells in the desert, organized and marshaled the peaceful marches after Freddie Grey's death, but were left unrepresented in the media coverage.<sup>19</sup>

We acknowledge the women, trans and cis alike, who are sex workers and victims of sex trafficking, and whose reports of sexual assault are not taken seriously by the BPD.<sup>20</sup>

We acknowledge that while the number of women incarcerated is relatively low, they represent one of the fastest growing segments of the prison population, realizing an 800% increase over the last three decades. The war on drugs has had a particularly devastating impact on women, with drug offenses constituting half of their increase in the prison population. This is despite the fact that women are less likely than men to play a central role in the drug trade.<sup>21</sup>

And finally we acknowledge the women affected by discriminatory policing and mass incarceration. These women are left to bear the burdens of raising children on their own when their children's fathers are incarcerated, all while dealing with a wage gap that disadvantages them as both women and people of color. And even when beloved family members return from prison, they are systematically denied jobs, credit, and access to public programs such as public housing, thus further distancing them from their families. Our system of mass incarceration of people of color does not just target the men incarcerated - it targets entire communities.

We each pour a little of our water into Miriam's cup to remind us that women's stories are central to our story.

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<sup>17</sup> Savali, Kirsten West. "Black Women are Killed by Police, Too." Dame, 18 August, 2014, [www.damemagazine.com/2014/08/18/black-women-are-killed-police-too](http://www.damemagazine.com/2014/08/18/black-women-are-killed-police-too). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Garza, Alicia. "A Herstory of #BlackLivesMatter Movement." The Feminist Wire, 7 October, 2014, [thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/](http://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Goldblatt, Caitlin. "Many Organizers at the Forefront of Protests are Women, Despite Men Taking Center Stage." City Paper, 28 April, 2015, [www.citypaper.com/news/features/bcpnews-many-organizers-at-the-forefront-of-baltimore-policebrutality-protests-are-women-despite-men-taking-20150427-story.html](http://www.citypaper.com/news/features/bcpnews-many-organizers-at-the-forefront-of-baltimore-policebrutality-protests-are-women-despite-men-taking-20150427-story.html). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Department of Justice, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Women's Prison Association, "Quick Facts: Women & Criminal Justice – 2009," available at Page 22 [http://www.wpaonline.org/wpaassets/Quick\\_Facts\\_Women\\_and\\_CJ\\_Sept09.pdf](http://www.wpaonline.org/wpaassets/Quick_Facts_Women_and_CJ_Sept09.pdf); The Sentencing Project, "Women in Criminal Justice," available at [http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/womenincj\\_total.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/womenincj_total.pdf).

## ♪ MIRIAM'S SONG ♪

*Music and lyrics by Debbie Friedman, based on Exodus 15: 20–21.*

### **Chorus:**

*And the women dancing with their timbrels  
Followed Miriam as she sang her song  
Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted.  
Miriam and the women danced and danced  
the whole night long.*

And Miriam was a weaver of unique variety.  
The tapestry she wove was one which sang our history.  
With every thread and every strand  
she crafted her delight.  
A woman touched with spirit, she dances  
toward the light.

### **Chorus**

As Miriam stood upon the shores and gazed across the sea,  
The wonder of this miracle she soon came to believe.  
Whoever thought the sea would part with an outstretched hand,  
And we would pass to freedom, and march to the promised land.

### **Chorus**

And Miriam the Prophet took her timbrel in her hand,  
And all the women followed her just as she had planned.  
And Miriam raised her voice with song.  
She sang with praise and might,  
We've just lived through a miracle, we're going to dance tonight.

### **Final Chorus**

## YACHATZ - THE BREAKING OF THE MIDDLE MATZAH

The breaking of the matzah is one of many ritual acts that transform the food of the Seder into a symbol of meaning. We are told that the matzah is the bread of poverty and persecution. It is through the act of breaking the middle of the three matzot that we jar ourselves out of a sense of complacency. We recognize that not only were we once slaves in the land of Mitzrayim but that poverty and persecution are still very present in our community.

The splitting of the matzah calls upon us to reflect on this poverty and persecution and on the work yet to do. Just as the matzah is divided, so too is the community of Baltimore: we often hear of the terms “the white L” and “the Black butterfly,” which illustrate the very real racial divide of our city.<sup>22</sup> It is a city that is just as broken as our middle matzah.

We invite a representative of each table to break the middle matzah on their table as we reflect on the brokenness of our community and the work that lies ahead.



Source: “The Right Investment? Corrections spending in Baltimore City.” (Justice Policy Institute and Prison Policy Initiative)

## SECOND CUP OF WINE: **DISPROPORTIONATE POLICING IN BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS**

**With our second cup of wine we look towards the neighborhoods that are most impacted by what the U.S. Department of Justice terms unconstitutional police practices.**

Baltimore officers deal with the residual effects of racism, poverty, and homelessness on an almost daily basis. Unfortunately, the department’s policies perpetuate these issues by using adversarial techniques in low-income communities of color. The result is that members of these communities are arrested at alarming rates while public safety is not improved.<sup>23</sup>

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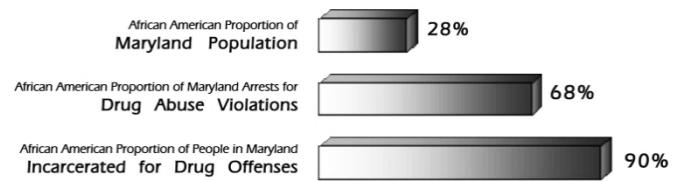
<sup>22</sup> Brown, Lawrence. “Two Baltimore: The White L vs. the Black Butterfly.” City Paper, 28 June, 2016. [www.citypaper.com/bcpnews-two-baltimores-the-white-l-vs-the-black-butterfly-20160628-htmlstory.html](http://www.citypaper.com/bcpnews-two-baltimores-the-white-l-vs-the-black-butterfly-20160628-htmlstory.html). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Department of Justice, 20.

BPD data shows that police stops are concentrated on a small segment of the city's population. According to the Department of Justice, "Citywide, BPD stopped African-American residents three times as often as white residents." This is despite the fact that BPD records show that a Black person is significantly less likely to be discovered with contraband than a white person.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Black people are also far more likely to be stopped multiple times, such as one man in his mid-fifties who was stopped 30 times in less than 4 years, without once being given a citation or criminal charge.<sup>25</sup>

**FIGURE 5: MARYLAND'S AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION, DRUG ARRESTS AND DRUG INCARCERATIONS**

While Whites and African Americans in Maryland use drugs at similar rates, African Americans are 28% of the population, but represent 68% of those arrested for drug offenses, and 90% of those incarcerated for a drug offense.

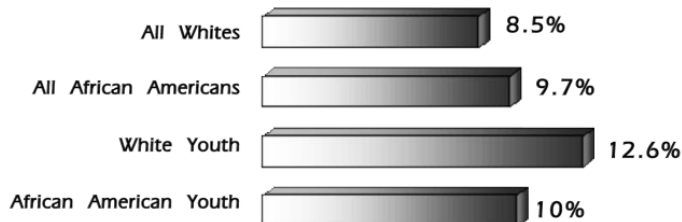


Source: Maryland Arrest Data from Crime in Maryland—2001 Uniform Crime Report. Pikesville: Maryland (2002). Maryland prison data from Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services—Inmate Population (June 6, 2003), Offense Groups By Race; Population Figures from U.S. Census Bureau.

Why is there so much policing of low-income neighborhoods and communities of color? That takes us back to the "war on drugs." In 1988, the federal government began offering millions of dollars in aid to state and local law enforcement agencies willing to focus on the war on drugs. By the late 1990s, military equipment, including airplanes, grenade launchers, and M-16 rifles were also handed over to domestic police agencies, and police departments began receiving increased federal funding for each drug-related arrest they made. Meanwhile, policing of non-drug-related crime, included violent crime, did not bring in additional federal dollars, thus dramatically incentivizing officers to focus on drug-related arrests.<sup>26</sup>

**FIGURE 4: RACE AND AGE OF PEOPLE REPORTING USE OF AN ILLICIT DRUG IN THE PAST MONTH**

National Data Shows Whites and African Americans Generally Use Drugs at the Similar Rates.



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2003). Results from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings (Office of Applied Studies, NHSDA Series H-22, DHHS Publication No. SMA 03-3836). Rockville, MD.

Additionally, starting under President Reagan, state and local law enforcement agencies were allowed to retain up to 80% of the value of any assets seized based on even a suspicion of illegal drug activity. Even owners found innocent of a crime were still responsible for proving the innocence of their property. By targeting people of low or moderate means, who lack the resources to hire an attorney or pay court costs, the police face few challenges to their actions and seize vastly profitable assets.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, the BPD has incredible discretion in who they target. Unlike a violent crime, drug transactions are consensual and there is no victim to call in the police. Instead, police decide where, and who, to target. With this discretion, the BPD has systematically targeted hyper-segregated Black neighborhoods across Baltimore. According to the DOJ Report, police officers regularly are ordered to "clear corners" in Black neighborhoods by arresting

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander, 73-78.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 79.

Black people standing on the sidewalk, and in some instances, “supervisors have issued explicitly discriminatory orders, such as directing a shift to arrest ‘all the black hoodies’ in a neighborhood.”<sup>28</sup>

The “war on drugs” allows the BPD and individual officers to exercise their conscious and unconscious racial bias to guide their behavior, bias that is highly influenced by media imagery that often stereotypes Black people as crack users and dealers in poor, low-income neighborhoods of color.<sup>29</sup> It would surprise many Americans to learn that research shows that people of all races use and sell illegal drugs at very similar rates, with white youth as the mostly likely group to be engaged in illegal drug dealing. Despite this, a Black man is more than thirteen times as likely to be admitted to prison on a drug charge than a white man.<sup>30</sup>

**As we drink our second cup of wine we acknowledge the financial incentives and conscious and unconscious racism that leads to discriminatory policing, and the negative effects of this system on communities of color and the greater Baltimore community.**

ברוך אתה יי אלוקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

*Baruch ata 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.**

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<sup>28</sup> Department of Justice, 63.

<sup>29</sup> Alexander, 103-105.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 99-100.



## FOUR QUESTIONS

### Sing Together:

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות

*Mah nishtanah halaylah hazeh me'kol ha'leilot*

### Recite Together:

1. Why does the BPD use excessive force?
2. Why does the BPD make unconstitutional stops, searches, and arrests?
3. Why does the BPD discriminate against Black people?
4. Why does the BPD retaliate against people engaging in constitutionally protected expression?

## THE SEDER PLATE

*Each item on the seder plate has a rich universe of symbolism, and we also get to eat most of them! Take a moment as a table to discuss the items and what symbolism relating to tonight's program you find in them.*

Karpas (green vegetable) - Flowers don't bloom and food doesn't grow without the invisible labor of others - nature, farmworkers, animals, and the soil maintained by the generations who came before us. Karpas symbolizes how we all grow from a common soil, and we all have a responsibility to care for each other.

Maror (bitter herb) - The bitterness of 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 when it happens to us or anyone else.

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

Beet (or shank bone) - 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. This is in spite of the fact that race is not biological, not 'in the blood,' but rather a social construct. Whose doors are marked tonight to ward off or invite the police? What have we done to create or erase those marks?

Charoset - This mixture of nuts, fruit and wine resembles (but tastes better than) the mortar used by Israelite slaves to build Pharaoh's palaces. In today's Baltimore, we all 'participate' in construction through the tax code and government funding. 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.

Matzah - The unleavened "bread of affliction" that the Israelites carried on their backs as they fled from Mitzrayim reminds us that poverty and displacement is a communal problem, not an individual one. Eating matzah is a symbol of our humility and a call to the work of levelling the superficial distinctions between people.

Orange - We eat the orange in solidarity with lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, and gender non-conforming Jews, who bring "fruitfulness for all Jews" when they are included in Jewish life.<sup>31</sup> We also reflect on how police specifically target queer and trans people for violence, especially trans people of color, who are "6 times more likely to experience physical violence from the police compared to White cisgender survivors and victims."<sup>32</sup> Police violence is encouraged in an atmosphere of anti-trans "bathroom bills" and the discriminatory policing of sex work.

## FOUR CHILDREN

*There are many ways in which we as individuals consider and act upon police brutality - and accountability. Tonight we look to the liturgy of the four children (also called the four sons) to help us understand four responses that we commonly encounter.*

The **wise child** asks "How did this all happen?," striving to learn more about the situation. When she hears the phrase "school to prison pipeline," she investigates. She comes to understand the role that mass incarceration and police brutality play in keeping Black communities disenfranchised. She reads Dayvon Love and Lawrence Grandpre's "The Black Book," which leads her to take action to help Black families and individuals build wealth and stability. She leverages her education to act as a financial tutor for the Baltimore CASH Campaign and supports local Black-owned businesses. She pushes her congregation to act for racial equity.

The **wicked child** asks "How did this all happen to you?" because he does not see himself as part of the system that upholds police brutality. He shares articles entitled "Freddie Grey was 'No Angel'" on Facebook. When faced with the onslaught of police brutality in his city he does not believe the problem affects him - although his tax dollars enable it by allowing the city to pay out settlements to families who have experienced brutality. He is shielded from police brutality, the school to prison pipeline, and mass

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<sup>31</sup> Heschel, Susannah. "The Origin of the Orange on the Seder Plate." Miriam's Cup: Ritual, April, 2001, [www.miriamscup.com/Heschel\\_orange.htm](http://www.miriamscup.com/Heschel_orange.htm). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. "Hate Violence Against Transgender Communities." [www.avp.org/storage/documents/ncavp\\_transhvfactsheet.pdf](http://www.avp.org/storage/documents/ncavp_transhvfactsheet.pdf). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

incarceration by his privilege and he does not try to ally with those experiencing oppression. He does not and will not push for police accountability, lest he lose some of his own privilege. To him the phrase “*avadim hayinu*” (we were slaves) is merely ancient words with no connection to today. He does not see the struggle for liberation that is happening beside him.

The **simple child** asks “What is this?” Although they do not understand the roots of police brutality, particularly against people of color, they want to know more. **White supremacy teaches even the well-meaning not to ask questions and to look at individuals in isolation, not at the whole system.** They are sad when Tyrone West and Freddie Grey are killed, but **the media portrays their deaths as** individual instances of brutality and **does not question the system of policing in Baltimore.** They believe that some cops are good and a few cops are bad, that is all.

The **child who doesn’t know how to ask** is overwhelmed. When he hears that Freddie Grey’s neck has been snapped, he laments, but he **does not know that he can take action.** He sees drones going to the predominantly Black neighborhood near his own home, yet he does **not know to question** why some neighborhoods are surveilled while others are not. He stays silent as money is spent in his name defending the Baltimore Police Department from making true reforms. **Unless** others act for him, **he will not have the courage to act himself.**

For many of us, we gravitate from one type of child to the next as we move through our daily lives and respond to different situations. By noticing which mindset we are coming from at any given time, we can more skillfully monitor our reactions and strive to improve.

## Discussion Questions

*Turn to the person next to you and choose one or two of the following questions to explore together:*

- *Has there ever been a time where your intuition told you there was an injustice happening? What did it feel like? How did you respond? [Wise]*
- *Have you ever intentionally turned a blind eye? What motivated you to ignore someone else’s situation? How is turning a blind eye different from ignorance? [Wicked]*
- *Have you ever been eager to help but accidentally acted too soon? What did you learn from that experience? Has there been a time where you were surprised that your actions made a positive difference for yourself or someone else? [Simple]*
- *Have you ever been so overwhelmed that you chose not to act at all? How do you move from a place of being overwhelmed to a place of action? [Doesn’t Know How to Ask]*

# ESER MAKOT /TEN PLAGUES RESULTING FROM THE CURRENT STATE OF POLICING IN BALTIMORE

*Fill cup of wine*

## **Leader:**

G!d brought ten plagues upon the people of Mitzrayim as part of the Israelites' journey to freedom. Tonight we read ten modern plagues, detailed in the Department of Justice's 2016 report, charging that the Baltimore Police Department engages in a pattern of unconstitutional and discriminatory policing practices. As we read each plague we remove a drop of wine from our glasses to symbolize our anguish at the suffering these plagues have caused.

DISCRIMINATORY POLICING AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE  
UNREASONABLE FORCE  
ABUSE OF AUTHORITY  
AGGRESSIVE TACTICS  
RESTRICTING PROTECTED SPEECH  
TRANSPORT METHODS THAT CAUSE HARM  
FAILING TO HOLD OFFICERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR MISCONDUCT  
FAILING TO ADEQUATELY SUPPORT AND TRAIN OFFICERS  
GENDER BIAS IN RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT  
UNCONSTITUTIONAL STOPS AND SEARCHES

## THIRD CUP OF WINE:

### **THE EFFECTS OF DISPROPORTIONATE & BRUTAL POLICING**

**With our third cup of wine we look at some of the contemporary effects of Baltimore's practice of disproportionate and brutal policing in Black neighborhoods.**

On the most basic level, BPD's use of excessive and unreasonable force increases tension in communities of color and subjects residents to verbal and physical abuse. Evidence shows that BPD has a pattern of using excessive force, resulting from deficiencies in BPD training, policies, and oversight. This includes mistreatment of vulnerable populations, including juveniles and those with mental health

disabilities.<sup>33</sup> For example, an incident in 2010 describes how a juvenile was punched by an officer when he and his sister resisted arrest for “loitering” on the steps of their own house.<sup>34</sup> Rather than defusing the situation, such instances of excessive force often escalate street encounters.<sup>35</sup>

These encounters also undermine the dignity of members of the community. Strip searches are a particular issue - in the last five years BPD has faced more than 60 complaints of unlawful strip searching. Constitutionally, strip searches are only allowed post-arrest and in private. BPD has repeatedly violated both rules, such as a woman who was strip searched on the sidewalk after being pulled over for a broken headlight.<sup>36</sup>

Tactics such as these lead community members to fear for their own safety around police officers. Consequently, they may flee from the police even when they have done nothing wrong, rather than risking that excessive force will be used against them.<sup>37</sup> Individuals are thus significantly less likely to cooperate with the police to solve or prevent other crimes.<sup>38</sup>

The targeted arresting and incarceration of Black residents has damaged the health and wellbeing of neighborhoods across Baltimore. Removing family members and neighbors from communities, and then permanently stigmatizing them with a criminal record upon their return, inflicts lasting damage. These policing practices rip apart community networks, destabilize families, and lock people out of the mainstream economy, leading to joblessness and poverty. Just five neighborhoods account for one in four incarcerated Baltimore residents, and these communities face an unemployment rate of 52%, a rate of high-schoolers chronically absent of 49%, and a life expectancy that is 13 years lower than neighborhoods with the lowest incarceration rates.<sup>39</sup>

**In the words of the Department of Justice, “A commitment to constitutional policing builds trust that enhances crime fighting and officer safety. Conversely, frayed community relationships inhibit effective policing by denying officers important sources of information and placing them more frequently in dangerous, adversarial encounters.”<sup>40</sup> With that in mind, we bless and drink our third cup of wine.**

*Fill cup of wine.*

ברוך אתה " אלוקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

*Baruch ata adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

**Blessed are You, Source of all life, Spirit of the universe,**

<sup>33</sup> Department of Justice, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>39</sup> Justice Policy Institute and Prison Policy Initiative. (February 2016). *The Right Investment? Corrections Spending in Baltimore City*, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 4.

## FOURTH CUP OF WINE:

### **A VISION OF THE FUTURE**

**Seder means ‘order,’ but the Exodus story we retell tonight is one of upheaval, disruption, and challenge to authority. The Baltimore Uprising of April 2015 was labelled ‘disorder.’ But the Uprising laid bare the everyday crisis that is policing in Baltimore and white supremacy in the United States, which is referred to as ‘order’ in spite its of legacy of injured bodies and communities. On Passover, we are asked to relive the suffering of the Israelites in slavery and the exhilaration of liberation. Tonight, let us also step into our roles as Jews confronting the social crisis of policing. The question for us as Jews is, which side are we on? Will we work to build a new future without punitive policing, and how will we do that? And how do we start to do that right here, in Baltimore and in Maryland?**

We have an ‘official future’ ahead of us in the Baltimore Police Department consent decree. The consent decree, agreed to by Baltimore City and the federal Department of Justice in January, comes as a result of the federal investigation of the BPD, which found a pattern of behavior in violation of the Constitution and federal law. The consent decree commits BPD to put in place procedures to protect constitutional rights in police stops, advances principles to avoid unnecessary arrests, and overhauls how the BPD will investigate misconduct by police officers.<sup>41</sup> These and other procedural mechanisms will hopefully reduce police aggression against Baltimore residents.

At the same time, we must recognize the consent decree as an attempt to re-legitimize policing in the eyes of the community. The consent decree calls for “community and problem-oriented policing.”<sup>42</sup> Activists and intellectuals have questioned whether ‘community policing’ is really new, or merely the same old policing with a friendlier face.<sup>43</sup> For example, the Baltimore consent decree calls for officers who carry a firearm to also carry a so-called ‘less-lethal’ weapon, such as a taser.<sup>44</sup> This is despite the fact that these weapons can still inflict serious injury and even death.

**Can we instead imagine a future where public safety is no longer premised on inflicting pain or death on members of the public? Can we imagine and build a future that goes beyond policing to ensure everyone the chance to lead full, dignified lives? To do that, we must reckon with the legacies of the problems we’ve labeled tonight: white supremacy and mass incarceration. Organizations led by Black people and other people of color have taken the lead in imagining these alternative futures and taking on these legacies at their roots.**

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<sup>41</sup> “Fact Sheet: Justice Department Consent Decree with Baltimore Police Department and the City of Baltimore. [www.justice.gov/opa/file/925026/download](http://www.justice.gov/opa/file/925026/download). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> United States District Court for the District of Maryland. (2017). “Consent Decree.” [www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/925046/download](http://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/925046/download). Accessed 25 February, 2017, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Hansford, Justin. “Community Policing Reconsidered: From Ferguson to Baltimore.” *Policing the Planet*, ed. by Jordan Camp and Christina Heatherton, Verso, 2016, pp. 215-226.

<sup>44</sup> US District Court, 46.

One alternative future is envisioned in the People's Decree of Central West Baltimore, put out by one of JUFJ's partners, the No Boundaries Coalition. Where the official consent decree is forward-looking, and sees justice for Baltimore as the result of new and fairer procedures, the People's Decree looks forward and backward, also demanding redress for harms already inflicted. Significantly, the People's Decree also imagines permanent civilian oversight of the police to be much more extensive than that contemplated by the consent decree.<sup>45</sup>

Other organizations within the broader Black Lives Matter movement have taken on the crisis of policing in the context of a white supremacy that extends across society, that manifests itself in our economy, in politics, and in education. One attempt to tackle these interconnected crises is the platform released by the Movement for Black Lives. The platform calls for "an end to the wars waged against Black people." This requires nothing less than dismantling the institutions that criminalize Black people, and committing resources and political will to reparations for the damage done.<sup>46</sup> The alternative future contemplated by this document is the complete political transformation of the current system, via the political empowerment of Black people, into one that serves real human needs.

Jews, and in particular White Jews, are called in to the work of building these futures by following the leadership of Black and people of color-led organizations.<sup>47</sup> We also need to recognize the urgency of this struggle for us as Jews. The system of racial hierarchy which has created an anti-Black police state has only temporarily decided to allow some Jews access to a privileged position in that system. **None of us is free until all of us are free: our Jewish future depends upon the collective liberation of everyone from this racial hierarchy.**

**Which Jewish path will we follow? What are we loyal to: our standing in a white supremacist society, or the lives and rights of our Black neighbors? If we uphold and invest in white supremacy, we will be following those of our ancestors who cried to Moses that we should have returned to the land of bondage.<sup>48</sup> We have the choice to follow the path to freedom and collective liberation.**

*Fill cup of wine.*

ברוך אתה יי אלוקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן

*Baruch ata 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.**

<sup>45</sup> *People's Decree of Central West Baltimore*. No Boundaries Coalition, 2016, [www.noboundariescoalition.com/peoplesdecree/](http://www.noboundariescoalition.com/peoplesdecree/). Accessed 25 February, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> *Platform*. The Movement for Black Lives. [//policy.m4bl.org/platform/](https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/). Accessed 25 February, 2017

<sup>47</sup> Love, Dayvon and Lawrence Grandpre. *The Black Book*. Lulu.com, 2015, 145.

<sup>48</sup> Exodus 14:11-12



## BRICH RACHAMANA / GIVING THANKS FOR OUR FOOD

ברוך רחמנא מלכא דעלמא מריה דהאי פיתא

*Brich rachamana malka d'alma ma'arey d'hai pita*

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

## BRINGING IT HOME – RESOURCES FOR YOUR PERSONAL SEDER

Thank you for joining us for tonight's seder about police misconduct and accountability. While our seder has come to an end, the fight for justice has not. As we conclude our seder, we individually and collectively ask, how can we bring the knowledge gained tonight home? How can we incorporate this learning into our own seders and how can we animate our personal seders to also be vehicles for change?

Here are some key places where you might be inspired to bring tonight's knowledge and message to your own seder. Of course, feel free to also find your own opportunities to share tonight's message, be it at your seder, in your workplace, among your friends, etc.

### **Ideas on how to incorporate these topics into your seder:**

- After singing **Avadim Hayinu** (we were slaves in Egypt) share some of the facts you learned tonight about policing in Baltimore. This line reminds us of our past oppression as Jews - use it to remind participants at your seder about the oppression so present in our own community for people of color.
- Before tasting the **maror**, invite participants to reflect on the bitterness present in their own lives, particularly as it relates to discrimination and prosecution. Then reflect on the bitterness experienced by residents of communities in Baltimore that are targeted for discriminatory policing.
- Although not mentioned during the Passover seder, a central character to the Exodus narrative is Moshe (Moses). Moshe gave up his privilege in Pharaoh's palace to defend the Israelites against the brutality of slavery (Exodus 2:11-15). Discuss how you can follow his example.

## GLOSSARY

**Anti-Blackness:** Within the system of racial oppression in the United States, this refers to the specific structural oppression directed at people of African descent. Anti-Black racism manifests itself throughout the racial hierarchy: for instance, the ‘model minority’ myth is in part predicated on the perceived distance between a non-Black minority group and Black people.

**Baltimore Police Department (BPD):** The law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over Baltimore City. While BPD is funded by Baltimore taxpayers, it has been a *state* agency since the 1800s; the only direct power city government has over BPD is the Mayor’s ability to hire and fire the Police Commissioner.

**Black Lives Matter:** An activist movement that campaigns against violence and systemic racism toward Black people, particularly in racial profiling, police brutality, and inequality in the criminal justice system.

**Cisgender:** Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

**Collective Liberation:** Refers to the practice of struggling to end all forms of interconnected oppression. ‘Collective liberation’ is a politics that demands that no one can be left behind when we fight for justice - that is to say, we cannot pit communities against one another, or try to secure advantages for one that necessarily disadvantage others.

**Collusion:** Thinking and acting in ways that support dominant systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Both privileged and oppressed groups can collude with oppression.

**Color Blind:** the belief in treating everyone “equally” by treating everyone the same; based in the presumption that differences are, by definition, bad or problematic, and therefore best ignored (i.e., “I don’t see race, gender, etc.”).

**Consent Decree:** An agreement or [settlement](#) that resolves a dispute between two parties without admission of guilt or liability. In January of 2017 a consent decree was filed between Baltimore City and the U.S. Department of Justice. The consent decree outlines specific actions that the Baltimore Police Department is required to take to correct the pattern of unconstitutional and discriminatory practices identified by the DOJ report. If approved by a federal judge, a monitor will be appointed to enforce BPD compliance with the decree.

**Criminalization:** The process by which certain activities are defined as ‘crimes’ and the people who take those actions as ‘criminals’. By extension, laws which define as crimes the activities of a certain group of people (or which are selectively enforced against a subset of people) are said to ‘criminalize’ a population. For example, laws which define sleeping or eating outside as crimes effectively criminalize people experiencing homelessness.

**Discrimination:** Unequal treatment of people based on a prejudgement about their membership in a group.

**DOJ Report:** A document released by Department of Justice investigators which details a pattern of unconstitutional and illegal practices by the Baltimore Police Department. In particular, the DOJ report highlighted the BPD's use of unconstitutional arrests, discriminatory enforcement against Black people, excessive force, and retaliation against constitutional expression as problems.

**Haggadah:** The Hebrew word for "telling" or "narrative," it is the name of the text that sets out the order of the Passover seder. Reading the Haggadah fulfills the Torah commandment that we must tell our children about our liberation from slavery in Mitzrayim.

**Institutional Racism:** Established laws, policies, and practices in create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for Whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

**Intersectionality:** The idea (coined by Black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw) that oppression is not singular; people and communities face oppression in multiple ways based on different embodied experiences (e.g. gender, race, sexual orientation, etc.). For example, a Black woman and a white woman can both face misogyny, but will experience that differently.

**Mishna:** An authoritative collection of Jewish law compiled around 200 CE. The Mishna is based off earlier oral collections of Jewish law (also known as the oral Torah).

**Mitzrayim:** The Hebrew word for historical Egypt, ruled by Pharaoh in the Book of Exodus. The word Mitzrayim can be traced to its Hebrew root, *tzar*, meaning a narrow place of hardship and oppression.

**Passover:** The name of this holiday comes from the Hebrew word, *pesach*, whose root is to pass through, to pass over, to exempt, or to spare (referring to the story that G!d passed over the homes of the Israelites when slaying the firstborn in Mitzrayim during the 10th plague). *Pesach* is also the term for the sacrificial offering of a lamb that was made in the Temple on this holiday.

**Pirkei Avot:** A tractate of the Mishna that deals with ethical teachings.

**Privilege:** The concrete and material benefits automatically accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because they are taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage.

**Prejudice:** Positive or negative attitude about a group of people not based on facts.

**Racialization:** The process by which a group is assigned to a race or ethnicity. Because race is not biological, the assignment of a group can change over time: for example, Jews of European descent in the United States were not always seen as 'white', but have been designated as such increasingly since the 20th century. Also, the process by which a place, object, or practice (e.g. a food, type of music, or job) is characterized as pertaining to a racial or ethnic group.

**Racism:** Racial prejudice plus discrimination, supported by institutional power.

**Redlining:** The process of denying services, either directly or indirectly, to residents of certain areas based on the ethnic or racial makeup of those areas as part of official city or federal policy. For most of the 20th century, federal and local policies marked predominantly Black neighborhoods in red on maps and designated them as “high risk,” making it extremely difficult for people of color to secure mortgages or other loans which would enable them to buy property, accumulate wealth, or escape areas of concentrated poverty.

**Seder:** A Hebrew word meaning “order,” this is what we call the ritual festive meal celebrated the first one or two nights of Passover. The meal is called a seder because there is specific information and rituals that must be included, and tradition has come to specify a particular order for the rituals.

**Talmud:** Discussions and elaborations on the Mishna’s collection of Jewish law, compiled around the year 600.

**Torah:** The Hebrew name for the part of the Bible that consists of the Five Books of Moses.

**Unconscious Bias:** Also known as implicit or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, even though individuals may not be aware that those biases exist within themselves.

**White Supremacy:** A historically-based, institutionally-perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by White peoples and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

## WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

**Bolton Street Synagogue** for providing the venue for our third annual Baltimore Social Justice Seder. We are also grateful to **the staff of Bolton Street** and particularly to **Rabbi John Franken** and **Erin Felson** for their help in preparing for this event.

Our 5777 Social Justice Seder Team: **Eli Allen, Erica Allen, Ellie Brown, Laura Menyuk, Alison Reingold, Josh Sherman, Jon Sussman, and Adina Potter Yoe.**

**Mira Menyuk** for the beautiful artwork on the postcard and haggadah cover.

Our speakers, **Garland Nixon** and **Ray Kelly** for generously sharing their experience, wisdom, and vision with us today.

Our spoken word artist, **Lady Brion**, for also sharing her experience and wisdom through her powerful performance.

Our partners in **The Coalition for Justice, Safety, and Jobs** for inspiring and leading us to act on this issue and for the important work that we do together to make Baltimore a more just, safe, and equitable city.

**Pearlstone Center** for donating our compostable plates and utensils and composting the waste from tonight's program.

**Tikkun Leil Shabbat** for lending us their cloth napkins.

**Our co-sponsors** who so generously supported this program.

**Everyone who attended this program and believes in our power to create a better, more just Baltimore.** We are honored to be working alongside you! **Thank you to our volunteers:**

Adina Potter-Yoe  
Alison Reingold  
Ben Sax  
Claire Landers  
Eli Allen  
Ellie Brown  
Erica Allen  
Jon Sussman  
Josh Sherman  
Laura Menyuk

Mattan Schuchman  
Merri Nicolson  
Michele Levy Rachel Bergstein  
Rachel Gang  
Sarah Steege  
Susan Russel  
Tammy Walsky  
Whitney Scott Young  
Yona Gorelick

### We Need You!

If you are interested in joining next year's Baltimore Social Justice Seder committee, please contact Molly at [molly@jufj.org](mailto:molly@jufj.org). We welcome your ideas, energy, and enthusiasm!

**Jews United for Justice leads Washington- and Baltimore-area Jews to act on our shared values by pursuing justice and equality in our local community.** We work on issues like affordable housing, paid family leave, fair taxation and budgets, police reform, worker and immigrant rights, and safety net funding. Through campaigns, programs, and public education, JUFJ builds relationships and mobilizes the Jewish community to demand and win meaningful change. Our work is grounded in Jewish text as well as the Jewish experience of both prejudice and privilege. We envision a healthy, fair, and safe D.C.-Baltimore region, where the rights and dignity of all residents are respected and their voices are heard, where working hard guarantees a decent living and everyone has access to quality health care and education. We believe that the only way to build such a community is for Jews to join with our neighbors to demand social change.

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**JEWES UNITED  
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*Think Jewishly. Act Locally.*



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