

GENERAL RESOURCES  
**Introduction**

*Pirkei Avot 5:26*

*“Ben Bag-Bag says: Turn [the Torah] over and over, for everything is in it.”*

We turn to Torah for many different kinds of wisdom and inspiration.

Sometimes, our goal is to place a particular issue in the context of the sacred. When we discuss any social topic in the synagogue or the beit midrash and find its points of intersection with Jewish texts, we bring a different sensibility to the discussion: one informed by spiritual and emotional sensitivities, that seeks to galvanize rather than simply analyzing. We hope the suggested opportunities to speak about mass incarceration over the course of the year serve that purpose.

Sometimes, we turn to Jewish law to learn directly from *halakha* and how we can apply

our own legal tradition to th contemporary manifestations of this issue. The essay that follows on incarceration in Jewish law is an example of such a turning.

Sometimes we read traditional sources not for the specifics of *halakha* but for the value concepts embedded therein. These help us look at an issue with “Jewish eyes,” and help us to ask good Jewish questions. This is our intent for the following essay on policing in *halakha*.

Sometimes, we look at Jewish text as a mirror, hoping that by analogy it can help us see something about ourselves that was previously obscured. The commentary on leprosy and reentering the camp that follows is offered in that mode.

Wherever your inquiry and study lead you, we hope Torah will be one of your starting points.