

Passover 5766 / 2006
**IF YOU COULD PREVENT
A GENOCIDE,
WOULD YOU?**

AT THIS YEAR'S PESACH SEDER ADD
A PLATE OF SLAVE FOOD AND
READ THE FOLLOWING TEXT
AS A REMINDER OF
SLAVERY AND GENOCIDE IN DARFUR



A Modern Midrash on Ancient Texts

Exodus 1:8- ... ויקם מלך חדש (Vayakam melech chadash...) And a new king arose...

And it came to pass in 1983 that an Islamic fundamentalist government took power in Sudan – a country bordering on Egypt and the Red Sea, a stone's throw from Israel. The Muslim Arabs of the north then began a systematic genocide of the black African villagers of the south of Sudan. Two million were killed, 2.7 million were forcibly uprooted. Tens of thousands of Black African women and children were enslaved.

After American intervention produced a shaky 'peace' in the South, the Arabs turned their attack on the African Muslims in Darfur – who resisted Arabization, wanted to maintain their own language, dress, and customs, and practice their own moderate Islam. They were deemed by the Arabs as "infidels," worthy of slaughter. 400,000 Africans in Darfur have been killed in the second jihad-genocide. Over a million have been displaced, their homes, villages and livelihoods destroyed, while they are subjected to rape and other horrifying atrocities.

Numbers 11:5 - ... זכרנו את הדגה (Zacharnu et hadagah...) We remember the fish...

Yes, we remember how we ate the small fish which the Egyptians had thrown away. We remember scrounging through the garbage for rotten cucumbers and overripe melons. We remember digging at dusk in remote gardens to find leeks and onions and garlic.

*We who remember what it felt like to be degraded as slaves –
we have placed a plate of slaves' food on our Seder table.*

*We who remember what it felt like to be beaten as slaves –
we call to mind now the pain of our fellow humans in Darfur.*

*We who have recently known the threat of genocide –
we commit ourselves to act while this next genocide can still be prevented.*

*We whose beloved State of Israel is under threat of annihilation by Islamic fundamentalist regimes –
we need to rise against such a regime as it threatens to annihilate the black African villagers of Darfur.*

BECAUSE IF WE CAN PREVENT A GENOCIDE WE ARE OBLIGATED TO DO SO

The Duty to Rescue life and limb, based on "Lo taamod al dam re'acha" (Lev. 19:16), and on "Vechai imach" (Lev. 25:h35), extends to all persons. (Ramban, Hoshafot leMitzvot Aseh, 16; Meiri, Sanhedrin 58a.)

The Mitzvah of Tzedakah, to provide food, clothing and shelter to the poor, extends to the impoverished of any nation, and one who shuts his eyes to that duty is called wicked, evil and sinner. (Ramban, Matnot Ani'im 7:7, 10:3).

The Prohibition against aiding or encouraging wrongdoing (Lev. 19:14) applies to all persons and societies and precludes indirect aid even through failure to protest. (Avodah Zara 6a-b; Nedarim 22a; Ramban, Kings 9:14.)

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