

IN SEARCH OF FREEDOM: *A Passover Seder for Darfur*



Edited by Rabbi Or N. Rose & Tamar Grimm

*In collaboration with American Jewish World Service, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs,
Tents of Hope, and the Save Darfur Coalition*

Introduction

Shalom, Salaam, and Peace.

Welcome to the Interfaith *Seder* for Darfur. Today, we join other activists —religious and secular — throughout the world participating in events protesting the genocide in Darfur.

The Jewish holiday of Passover celebrates the liberation of the ancient Israelites from Egyptian bondage and the ongoing pursuit of human freedom and justice. For centuries, Jews have gathered around their dinner tables with family and friends to participate in the annual ritual of the Passover *seder* (rite or order), chanting sacred texts, eating symbolic foods, and engaging in impassioned discussions about the struggle for liberation.

In recent decades, the traditional *seder* has been adapted by Jewish and interfaith activists to serve as a ritual framework in which to explore various contemporary justice issues (labor, feminism, peace, etc.). Using elements from the traditional rite, these groups have reshaped the ritual to include contemporary prayers, poetry, songs, and teachings that speak to their causes.

It is our hope that by participating in this interfaith *seder* for Darfur, by joining people of diverse faiths and backgrounds for this intentional meal, we will strengthen our resolve to help end the atrocities in Western Sudan and create an enduring anti-genocide movement.

Candle Lighting



As we light these candles, we pray that all those suffering in Darfur and elsewhere in the world find light amid the darkness. We pray that our experience today helps us to ignite the spark of justice within each of us. We pray that we have the strength to carry forth this light into our homes, schools, offices, and houses of worship, creating a beautiful and bold flame that inspires others to work for the freedom and security of the innocent people of Western Sudan.

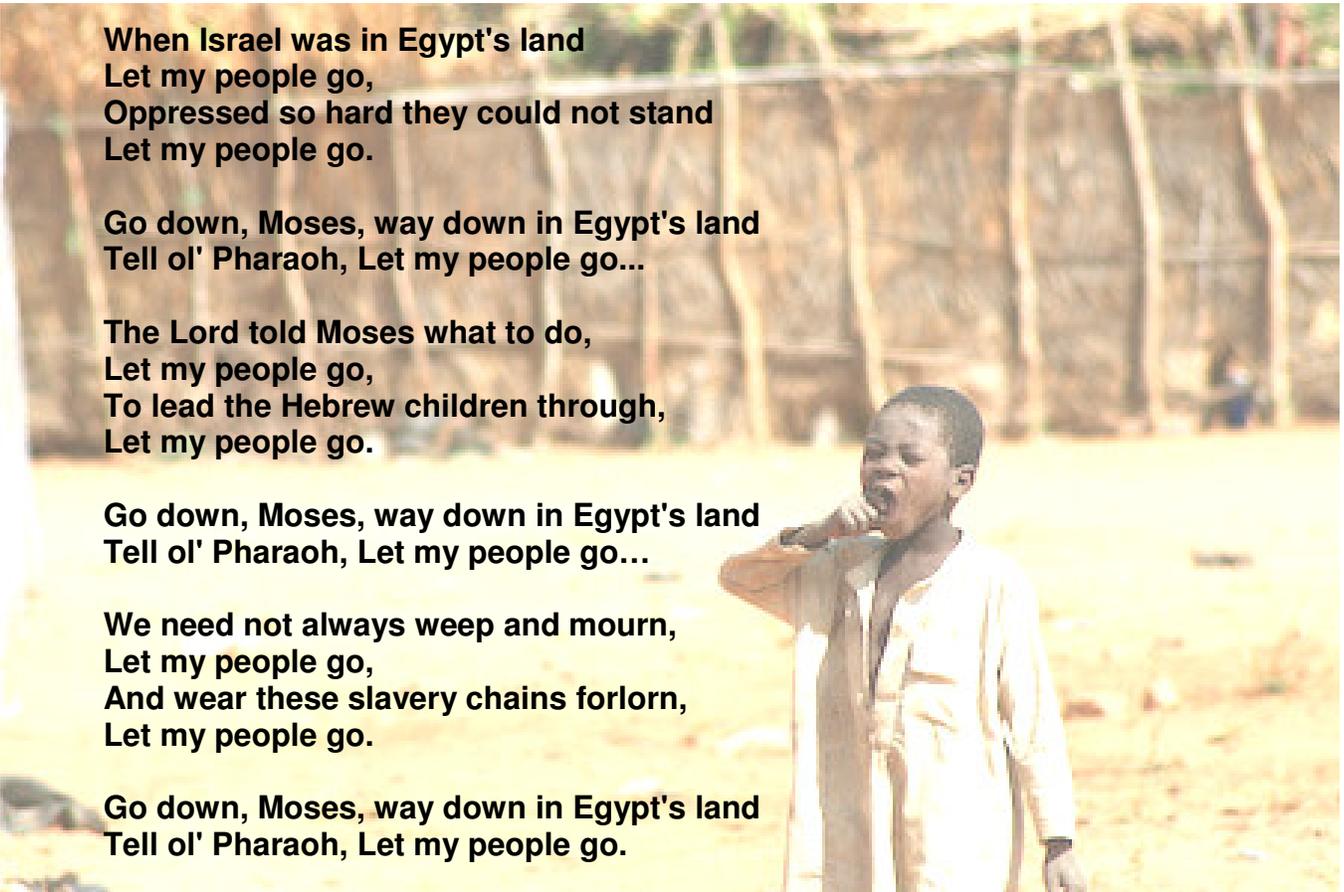
It Felt Love

How did the rose ever open its heart?
And give this world all its beauty?
It felt the encouragement of light against its being.
Otherwise, we all remain too frightened.

-Hafiz

Opening Song: “Go Down Moses” (“Let My People Go”)

"Go Down Moses" is a African American spiritual that uses the Israelite liberation story to give voice to the pain, suffering, and hope of Black slaves in this country. The song was made famous by the great entertainer and activist, Paul Robeson. We have included the chorus and several stanzas below.



When Israel was in Egypt's land
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell ol' Pharaoh, Let my people go...

The Lord told Moses what to do,
Let my people go,
To lead the Hebrew children through,
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell ol' Pharaoh, Let my people go...

We need not always weep and mourn,
Let my people go,
And wear these slavery chains forlorn,
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell ol' Pharaoh, Let my people go.

*"You shall not oppress the stranger,
for you know the heart of a stranger,
since you were strangers in the land of Egypt."*

-Exodus 23:9

The First Cup of Wine – Humanitarian Aid

Throughout the *seder* we will drink four cups of wine or grape juice (a symbol of wholeness—four seasons, four directions). In the Jewish tradition wine symbolizes bounty and joy. Today, we will use each cup as a call to action, knowing that millions of Darfuri men, women, and children are living in distress without the bounty or joy that so many of us experience in our daily lives. Each time we refill our cups, we recommit ourselves to help improve the lives of all those who suffer from oppression, violence, and degradation.

As we pour our first cup of wine, we focus on the need to provide humanitarian aid for the millions of genocide survivors who are languishing in displaced persons and refugee camps. These people are in need of food, shelter, clothing, and medical supplies. On each table you will find a collection bowl. In the spirit of this interfaith gathering, we encourage you to donate to one or more of the following humanitarian organizations active in Darfur: American Jewish World Service (www.ajws.org), Church World Service (www.cws.org), and Islamic Relief USA (www.irw.org).

Reflections on Charitable Giving

“I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare.”

-C.S. Lewis

“The best investment with the least risk and the greatest dividend is giving.”

-Sir John Templeton

“It’s not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.”

-Mother Teresa

“No wealth (of a servant of Allah) is decreased because of charity.”

-Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 2:247



We fill our cups, recite a blessing, and drink the first cup of wine.

Blessed are You Eternal One, Sovereign of the world, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

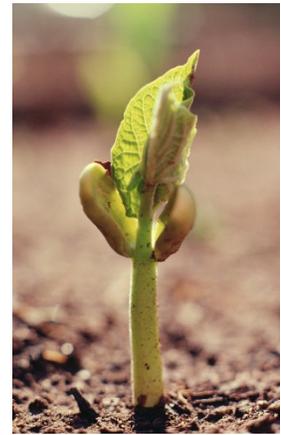
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Parsley & Saltwater

Long before the struggle upward begins,
There is a tremor in the seed.

Self-protection cracks,
Roots reach down and grab hold.

The seed swells, and tender shoots push up toward light.
This is *karpas* (the green vegetable): Spring awakening growth.



A force so tough it can break stone.

And why do we dip *karpas* into saltwater—to remember the sweat and tears of our ancestors in bondage.

-The Journey Continues: The Ma'yan Haggadah

We pray that the people of Darfur will soon enjoy a new season of growth and prosperity, guided by the healing lights of justice and equality.

We dip the parsley in the saltwater, recite a blessing, and eat the greens.

Blessed are You Eternal One, Sovereign of the World, Who creates the fruit of the earth.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Borei p'ri ha-adamah

Maggid: Telling the Story

At the heart of the *seder* is the telling of the Passover story, including the experience of Israel's enslavement in Egypt, the emergence of Moses as a leader, the parting of the waters at the Sea of Reeds, and the long sojourn in the desert.

At this point in our *seder* we will view the documentary film *Darfur: A Call to Action, Lessons from Faith Leaders* created by the Save Darfur Coalition. The film tells the story of the genocide from the perspective of several Darfuri refugees and religious leaders from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions.



**For those who cannot view the film, please see the alternative reading and discussion questions appended to this guide.*

The Four Questions

It is customary at the *seder* for children to recite “the four questions.” These questions are designed to stimulate an intergenerational conversation about the history and meaning of Passover. Below you will find four questions about the film you have just seen. Please feel free to address as many of these questions as you wish at your tables.



1. In the film, Bishop John H. Ricard says: “One of the first questions in the Old Testament was ‘Where is your brother?’ when the Lord asked Cain where his brother Abel was. And he [Cain] says, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ And throughout the remainder of the Scripture is an answer to that question – yes you are!”

What does it mean to “keep” our brothers and sisters? What responsibilities do we have to those beyond our “families?”

2. Moheamed Dafalla Ishag talks about his brother, who was like a father to him, and was shot five times in the back by the Janjaweed militia. He says, “If I have a chance to say something for my brother, I’m praying all days for you.”

What role does prayer play in healing the wounds in Darfur? What role does it play in sustaining you in this work?

3. Dr. Ingrid Mattson says that “there is a rule in Islamic law that if you keep silent you are consenting to an action.”

Do you feel you are speaking loudly enough for Darfur? If not, what is stifling your voice? How can the people at your table help you?

4. “We change the world one life at a time, one day at a time, one act at a time. There really is no other way,” says Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks.

Please share one significant relationship or interaction from your past activist experiences? How might this help your work for Darfur?

The Ten Plagues of Darfur

Among the traditional practices at the *seder* is the recounting of the Ten Plagues that God visited upon Egypt. It is customary to remove a drop of wine from our cups as we mention each of the afflictions. While these plagues fell only upon the enemies of the ancient Israelites, we do *not* celebrate the suffering of others, even that of our foes. Since wine is a symbol of joy, we each remove ten drops from our cups.

In adapting this ritual for today's *seder*, we recount the suffering of the people of Western Sudan. As we name each of the horrors, we remove a drop of wine from our cups.

Rape

Torture

Looting

Destruction of Property

Displacement

Separation of Families

Loss of Community

Starvation

Disease

Murder



The Second Cup of Wine – A Call to Our Elected Officials

The Genocide Intervention Network (GI-Net) has created a powerful and accessible activist tool called **1-800-Genocide**. When you dial this number, you will be connected to the offices of your state or national representatives or to The White House (*Note: The White House does not accept calls after business hours*). GI-Net also provides you with updated talking points so that you can urge your elected officials to take meaningful action to help end the genocide in Darfur. Moses had his staff; we have our cell phones!

Please have one person at your table make a call, using the speaker feature so that others can participate in the experience.

Upon completion of the call, we fill our cups, recite a blessing, and drink the second cup.

Blessed are You Eternal One, Sovereign of the world, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Borei p'ri ha-gafen

Matzah & Bitter Herbs

Witness to Destruction

... What I found most powerful on that trip was a story that I heard from several people in hiding about their struggle to find drinkable water. When men would go to the wells the Janjaweed would shoot them; when women would go to the wells the Janjaweed would rape them. So they decided to send their young children, ages 6 or 7, to fetch water, hoping that the Janjaweed would ignore them. It made me wonder what I would do as a parent of three young children—would I send my kids to these wells knowing they would be met by gunmen... but if I didn't send them, how would we get water? To this day, I do not have a clear answer.



-Nicholas Kristof

Matzah, also known as the “bread of affliction,” leaves our mouths dry and parched. But rather than quench our thirst with water we taste the bitter herbs (*maror*), remembering the pain and anguish of our ancestors in Egypt and all those who suffer under the tyranny of contemporary Pharaohs.

We place a small amount of horseradish on the matzah, recite a blessing, and eat the matzah.

Blessed are You Eternal One, Sovereign of the world, Who brings forth bread from the earth.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Ha-mozi lekhem min ha-aretz.

The Third Cup of Wine — The China-Sudan Connection

Despite the atrocities committed by the Sudanese government over the last five years, China continues to serve as Khartoum's most significant political, military, and economic ally. China has repeatedly used its veto power as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council to prevent the passage of strong measures against the Sudanese government. While China did support a 2007 Security Council resolution calling for the deployment of a hybrid U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force to Darfur, Beijing weakened that resolution before it was passed. China also doubled its trade with Sudan in 2007 and continues to supply Khartoum with weapons used to perpetrate atrocities against innocent Darfuris.

As Beijing prepares to host the 2008 Summer Olympics, activists around the world (www.dreamfordarfur.org) are calling on the government of China to take seriously its Olympic motto of "One World, One Dream." It must use its power to help end the genocidal nightmare in Darfur.

On each table you will find a petition calling on the Chinese special envoy to Darfur to insist that his government use its power to pressure the Sudanese leadership to change its behavior. The Khartoum regime will continue to oppress the people of Darfur as long as it knows that world powers will not compel it to do otherwise. Please read and sign the petition at your table.



After signing the petition, we fill our cups, recite a blessing, and drink the third cup of wine.

Blessed are You Eternal One, Sovereign of the world, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Responsibility to Protest

Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of his own family and does not do so is liable for his family. Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of the people of his community and does not do so is liable for his community. Whoever is able to protest against the transgressions of the entire world and does not do so is liable for the transgressions of the entire world.

-Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 54B

Welcoming Elijah: Herald of a New Age

One of the hallmarks of the *seder* is the welcoming of Elijah the prophet into our homes for the latter part of the evening. Why Elijah? Because according to biblical and rabbinic lore, it is Elijah who will herald the coming of the messiah. It is Elijah who will announce to the world that the ongoing struggle for liberation and justice has finally come to an end, and that lasting freedom and peace are upon us.



As we begin to wind down the ritual meal, we call on Elijah to help us move closer to redemption. It is customary at the *seder* to open the door for the prophet, greet him with song, and fill a cup of wine for him. This cup of wine is not drunk like the other four cups, but is left on the table as a sign of hope for the future.

While in most homes, the *seder* leader fills Elijah's cup from a bottle of wine, the Hasidic sage, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Horowitz, insisted that every participant around the table pour some wine from his/her glass into the special cup of redemption. This symbolizes the need for each and every one of us to participate in the healing and transformation of the world.

At this time, we invite you to help fill the cup of Elijah at your table. As you do so, please share with the others one way in which you are going to use your unique talents and skills to help end the genocide in Darfur.

Planting Seeds: The Work of Prophets

This is what we are about:

We plant seeds that will one day grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing they hold the future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for God's grace to enter and to do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

-Archbishop Oscar Romero

The Fourth Cup of Wine – Raising Awareness

As we pour our fourth cup of wine, we focus on the need to raise awareness about the ongoing crisis in Darfur. Please take a moment to think of **five** people you can speak to about the genocide in Western Sudan, sharing with them information about local and national events, and action steps they can take both individually and communally.



Below are the names of five people I will contact and ask to take immediate action, referring them to a Darfur event or to an action website or hotline:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

After completing this brief exercise, we fill our cups, recite a blessing, and drink the fourth cup of wine.

Blessed are You Eternal One, Sovereign of the world, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, Borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Concluding Prayer

A Prayer for the People of Darfur

By Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks



O God of peace, who commands us to seek peace, send peace to the people of Darfur.

O God of compassion, who hears the cry of the afflicted, hear the cry of the victims, the bereaved, the injured, and all those who live their days in fear.

Rouse the hearts of the leaders of the world to put an end to the bloodshed, the violence, the rape, the starvation, and the terror that has ravaged and endangered an entire population.

Be with those who are working for peace, or tending the sick, or bringing food to the hungry, or shelter to the homeless, or hope to those who are close to despair.

O God of justice and love, let us not be indifferent to the cry of the persecuted and the tears of those who have seen their homes, their families, and their communities destroyed.

And may their plea and their plight reach the ears and hearts of those who have it in their power to bring peace to a troubled region and aid to a devastated people.

Oseh shalom bimromav—may You who makes peace in Your high places help us make peace down here on earth.

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The Passover *seder* traditionally concludes with the words “Next Year in Jerusalem,” representing the age-old hope for the coming of the Messiah, the ingathering of the Jewish people in their homeland, and peace among the nations.

In this spirit, we conclude our *seder* with the words,

Next Year Without Genocide!



Seder Outline

- I. Introduction & Candle Lighting (5 minutes)
- II. Opening Song (5 minutes)
- III. The First Cup of Wine (5 minutes)
- IV. Parsley & Saltwater (1 minute)
- V. Telling the Story: *Darfur: A Call to Action, Lessons from Faith Leaders* (documentary film, 20 minutes)
- VI. The Four Questions (15 minutes)
- VII. The Ten Plagues of Darfur (1 minute)
- VIII. The Second Cup of Wine (5 minutes)
- IX. Matzah & Bitter Herbs (1 minute)
- X. The Third Cup of Wine (5 minutes)
- XI. Elijah: Herald of a New Age (1 minute)
- XII. The Fourth Cup of Wine (5 minutes)
- XIII. Concluding Prayer & Next Year without Genocide (1 minute)

*The *seder* can be completed in approximately 75 minutes.

Materials:

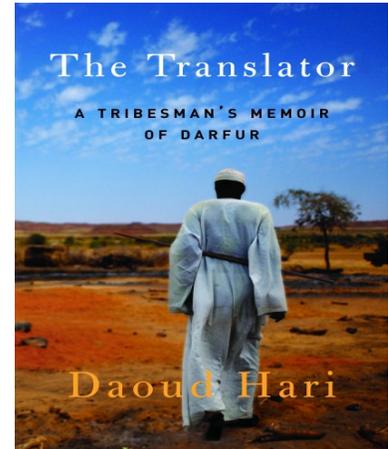
- One large set of candles and candlesticks for the main table
- Small bowls, plates, and cups for the symbolic foods and drink at each table
- A special glass for Elijah's cup at each table
- Wine and/or grape juice for each table
- Parsley or other greens for each table
- Saltwater for each table
- *Matzah* for each table
- Horseradish for each table
- Collection baskets at each table
- One copy of *Darfur: A Call to Action, Lessons from Faith Leaders* (DVD—**free** from the Save Darfur Coalition, karen@savedarfur.org, 202-478-6172)
- Audio-visual equipment to show the DVD
- One cell phone with a speaker function for each table
- Petitions for each table
- Pens for each table

**We recommend that you have a facilitator at each table to help the leader/s conduct the seder and facilitate discussion.*

Alternative Reading

From *The Translator: A Tribesman's Memoir of Darfur* by Daoud Hari
(Random House, 2008)

Near my village is a beautiful mountain we have always called the Village of God. Though the Muslim religion is practiced throughout our area by both indigenous Africans like me and by Arab nomads, it is also true that our people, especially our young people, have always gone up on this mountain to put offerings into the small holes of rocks. Meat, millet, or wildflowers may be placed in these holes, along with letters to God, thanking him or asking him please for some favor. These gifts and notes have been left here long before the newer religion came to us. For a young man or woman, a letter may ask that some other young person be chosen for his or her mate. It might be a letter asking that a grandfather's illness be cured or that the rainy season be a good one or that a wedding be beautiful and the marriage successful. Or it might be as simple as that the year ahead be good for everyone in the village below. So here it is, God. I am up there now in my heart, and I put this book in Your Mountain as an offering to You. And I praise you by all of Your Names and I praise our ancient Mother of the Earth, and all the Prophets and wise men and women and Spirits of heaven and earth who might help us now in our time of need.



Questions:

1. Are there places of worship—personal or communal—that you consider particularly important or powerful? Why?
2. How do you understand God's role in the human pursuit of justice?
3. If you were to write a letter to God, Mother Earth or the Spirits about Darfur, what would you say?
4. Is there a specific religious teaching that inspires your justice work?

Petition To The Honorable Liu Giujin

All nations share the responsibility to help bring an end to the genocide in Darfur and establish peace and security throughout Sudan. China, more than any other government except Khartoum itself, has the ability to end the bloodshed in Darfur and to initiate a serious and lasting peace process. China's responsibility and leverage stem from its intricate economic, military, and diplomatic relationship with Sudan. It is Sudan's largest trade partner, major military provider, and consistent defender of Sudan's interests in the United Nations.

This responsibility and leverage also stems from China's influence in the world at large, especially this year. As a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, and as acting president when the UNAMID peacekeeping mission was adopted in 2007 (for which China took much credit), it is uniquely positioned to see that the U.N. is effective in Darfur. And as host of the Olympics this summer, a competition based on the values of peace and goodwill, China has a special duty to ensure that the actions it takes worldwide are consistent with these values.

China did take some helpful actions last year, appointing a special envoy to Sudan, providing military engineers in Darfur, and helping with the passage of UNAMID. Yet, at the same time, China's ties to Khartoum grew closer than ever in 2007, with a doubling in trade being just one example.

Of greatest importance, China's modest positive contributions have not improved conditions on the ground in Darfur. In fact, the humanitarian and security situation has deteriorated dramatically in recent months, and Sudan has obstructed the deployment of UNAMID to such a degree that it is now unclear whether this initiative can ever be successful. Beyond that, China has been silent while Khartoum has resisted implementing key provisions of the North-South peace agreement of 2005 and contributed to the recent attempt to overthrow the Chadian government by arming and supporting Chadian rebels.

The time for patience with Khartoum is long past gone. The fate of millions of displaced Darfuris and countless other disenfranchised Sudanese citizens demand otherwise. Given the unparalleled influence China has to affect Sudan's behavior, we will hold China to a "results-based" test. China should use all the influence at its disposal to press the Sudanese government to:

1. Permit the swift, full and effective deployment of UNAMID
2. Implement fully the North-South peace agreement and participate constructively in the Darfur peace process
3. Allow the unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid in Darfur and Eastern Chad.

China will only pass this test once Sudan has acted accordingly in all three areas.

Ambassador Liu, as Special Representative of the Chinese Government to Darfur, you have the power, access, and the responsibility to make sure the government of Sudan ends its campaign of terror and destruction in Darfur. You must use the authority of your office to help end the genocide.

Name	Email	Address

Please mail all petitions to China Campaign, Save Darfur Coalition, 2120 L St., N.W., Suite 335, Washington, DC 20037; if scanned or typed, email to phil@savedarfur.org (include additional names on the back of this page or on a separate sheet of paper).

The Editors

Rabbi Or Rose is Associate Dean of the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College in Newton, MA. He is the co-editor of *Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice* (Jewish Lights Publishing). A contributing editor for *Tikkun* and a member of the advisory board of *Sh'ma*, Rabbi Rose has written extensively on issues of religion and public life.

Tamar Grimm is a third-year student at the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College. She has been involved in advocating for Darfur for the past several years through Jewish Seminarians for Justice, including co-editing a Holocaust memorial service and organizing various Jewish communal events, connecting the Jewish declaration of “Never Again” to the genocide in Darfur.

Partnering Organizations

American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is an international development organization motivated by Judaism’s imperative to pursue justice. It is dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger and disease among the people of the developing world regardless of race, religion or nationality. Through grants to grassroots organizations, volunteer service, advocacy and education, AJWS fosters civil society, sustainable development and human rights for all people, while promoting the values and responsibilities of global citizenship within the Jewish community. www.ajws.org

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) serves as the representative voice of the organized American Jewish community in addressing the principal mandate of the Jewish community relations field, expressed in three interrelated goals: to safeguard the rights of Jews in the United States and around the world; to dedicate ourselves to the safety and security of the state of Israel; and to promote environmental responsibility and social justice domestically and internationally. www.jewishpublicaffairs.org

The Tents of Hope project is designed to support a one-year process in which people respond as communities to the crisis in Darfur, Sudan by creating tents that are both unique works of art and ongoing focal points within communities for learning about, assisting and establishing relationships with the people of Sudan. Please see photos of the Tents of Hope on page 12 of this guide. www.tentsofhope.org

The Save Darfur Coalition is an alliance of over 180 faith-based, advocacy, and human rights organizations whose mission is to raise public awareness about the ongoing genocide in Darfur, and to mobilize a unified response to the atrocities that threaten the lives of more than two million people in the Darfur region. www.savedarfur.org



In Search of Freedom: A Passover Seder for Darfur

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