



DARFUR: A Call To Action

Lessons from faith leaders



Discussion Guide for Jewish Congregations

After the film, use the texts and questions below with the entire audience or break into small groups first and then return to the larger group to share ideas. You may wish to distribute this sheet before the film to acquaint the audience with these texts, or wait until after the viewing. We hope this discussion will lead your congregation to think about ways that you can help solve the crisis in Darfur.

1 **Text:** A passage from the book of Isaiah is inscribed in the main hall of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.: “You are my witnesses.” On its face, this passage underscores the fact that visitors are becoming witnesses to the Holocaust.

Questions: *How is the passage from Isaiah also a challenge to us about our continuing obligation to bear witness? And how does this continuing obligation apply to the situation right now in Darfur? If we bear witness, are we compelled also to act?¹ Is it possible to both bear witness to the Holocaust and other events in Jewish history while acting on Darfur? Does one detract from the other?*

2 **Text:** In Genesis 3:9, Adam eats a fruit from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. Afterwards, he is ashamed and he hides behind a tree in the Garden of Eden. God calls out to him, “Eyekah?” —“Where are you?” The medieval commentator Rashi notes that God would have known where Adam was physically located, so God’s question must have been something else, perhaps about Adam’s accountability for his actions.

Questions: *Why would God have asked this? How does God continue to ask “Where are you?” to all of us in relation to the genocide in Darfur? How would you answer God’s question?²*

3 **Text:** Lo taamod al dam réakha” or “Thou shall not stand idly by the shedding of the blood of thy fellow man.” is a Biblical commandment. The word is not “akhikha,” thy Jewish brother, but “réakha,” thy fellow human being, be he or she Jewish or not.

Questions: *What does this specific use of words tell us? Why is it important to the Jewish response to the crisis in Darfur compared to the Holocaust?³*

4 **Text:** In the film, Bishop Ricard says: “One of the first questions in the Old Testament was ‘Where is your brother?’ when the Lord asked Cain where his brother Able was. And he says, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ And throughout the remainder of the scripture is an answer to that question - yes you are!”

Questions: *Where in the Bible does God answer that question? Who have been the Jews’ keepers in our times of trouble? Do Jews carry a special responsibility to victims of genocide? Why or why not? How does what is happening in Darfur relate to what may have happened in your family or the family of other Jews you know? Does it change our responsibility when non-Jews are the victims? How will we as a congregation be the keeper of our brothers and sisters in Darfur?*

1 Adapted from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Committee on Conscience director Jerry Fowler’s congressional testimony before the House Judiciary Committee on Oct. 23, 2007.

2 Adapted from Rabbi Elliot Rose Kukla’s Sept. 15, 2007 commentary for the American Jewish World Service.

3 Adapted from remarks by Elie Wiesel at the Darfur Emergency Summit in the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on July 14, 2004.