

# JEWISH SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS



## SUGGESTED MEANINGFUL DATES FOR SERVICES OR MENTION OF SUDAN IN SERMONS

Africa Action's Just L.E.A.D. Campaign on Sudan will have an especially strategic push from the end of October 2008 - April 2009, so if it is possible to mention Sudan in a sermon or host a service within that timeframe, that would be most helpful. However, if that is not possible, please consider committing to a service whenever it is feasible.

The holidays are always a good time to remind a congregation to think beyond themselves and to imagine the reality of other people.

- Hanukkah

- Passover
- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur
- Sukkoth

These are just a few examples of holiday links to this important issue. Other important dates for you to consider within the Just L.E.A.D. Campaign push are:

- January 20th - The Inauguration of the Next President
- The State of the Union
- April 6th - The Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide
- April 15th - Holocaust Remembrance Day

## SCRIPTURES AND QUOTATIONS

"You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your kinsman fairly. Do not (go about as a tale-bearer among you) deal basely with your countrymen. Do not stand by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord. You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him. You shall not take the vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the Lord." ~Leviticus 19:15-19

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here I am; send me!'" ~Isaiah 6:8

"Let me hear the words of the Lord:

are they not words of peace, peace to his people and his loyal servants and to all who turn and trust in him? Deliverance is near to those who worship him, so that glory may dwell in our land. Love and fidelity have come together; justice and peace join hands." ~Psalm 85:8-10

"What is hateful to you, do not to your fellowman. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary." ~Talmud, Shabbat 31a

"When man appears before the Throne of Judgment, the first question he is asked is not, 'Have you believed in God,' or 'Have you prayed and performed ritual acts,' but 'Have you dealt honorably, faithfully in all your dealings with your fellowman?'"

~Talmud, Shabbat 31a

"Therefore was a single human being created: to teach you that to destroy a single human soul is equivalent to destroying an entire world; and that to sustain a single human soul is equivalent to sustaining an entire world. And a single human being was created to keep peace among human beings, that no one might say to another: My lineage is greater than yours." ~Mishnah

"And Israel sent messengers (XXI, 21). This bears on what Scripture says: Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and cherish faithfulness (Ps. XXXVII, 2). It also says, Depart from evil and do good; seek peace, and pursue it (ib. XXXIV, 15). Now the

Torah did not insist that we should actually go in pursuit of the commandments, but said: If a bird's nest chance to be before you (Deut. XXII, 6); If you meet your enemy's ox (Ex. XXIII,4); If you see the ass of him who hates you (ib.5); When you beat your olive-tree (Deut. XXIV, 20); When you gather the grapes of your vineyard (ib. 21); When you come into your neighbor's vineyard (ib. XXIII, 25. In all these cases, if they come your way you are commanded to perform the duties connected with them, but you need not go in pursuit of them. In the case of peace, however, 'seek peace' wherever you happen to be, 'and pursue it' if it is elsewhere. Israel in

fact acted in this way. Although the Holy One, blessed be He, had said to them: Begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle (ib. II, 24), they pursued peace, and Israel sent messengers unto Sihon... Let me pass through thy land (XXI, 21 f.). ~Bamidbar Rabbah 19:27

"Love truth and justice; hate falsehood and injustice. Stand behind your promises: let them be as binding as a written contract. Disdain mental reservation, trickery and evasion. Live honestly, conscientiously and cleanly. Let your loyalty to truth be your priceless wealth, for there is no heritage equal to honor. Be compassionate to

the poor and the sorrowing; let them share in your joys and attend your feasts. Avoid those who love friction. If your own relatives like to stir up strife, act like a stranger to them. Avoid revenge, for it may come back on your own head. Revenge results only in hatred, confusion and sleep-

ness, and to silence our conscience. There is immense silent agony in the world, and the task of man is to be a voice for the plundered poor, to prevent the desecration of the soul and the violation of our dream of honesty. The more deeply immersed I became in the thinking of the

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lessness." ~Moses Maimonides

"It became quite clear to me that while our eyes are witness to the callousness and cruelty of man, our heart tries to obliterate the memories, to calm the

prophets, the more powerfully it became clear to me what the lives of the prophets sought to convey: that morally speaking there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings." ~Abraham Joshua Heschel

## PRAYERS

"O Source of Peace, Lead us to peace, a peace profound and true; lead us to a healing, to mastery of all that drives us to war within ourselves and with others. May our deeds inscribe us in the Book of life and blessing, righteousness and peace! O Source of Peace, bless us with peace." ~Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayer Book for the Days of Awe

"Everlasting God, we turn now to You once more to cry out our longing and the longing of all men and women for a beginning of that wholeness we call peace. Ever and again we now admit, we have turned our backs on You, and on our sisters and brothers: forsaking Your Law, denying Your truth, ignoring Your will, defacing Your beauty. The intelligence You have implanted within us we

have applied to the arts of war; with the skill we have from You we make engines of terror and pain.

We have prayed for peace, even as we laughed at truth; for blessing, but did not care to do Your will; for mercy, and have shown none to others. We have prayed for impossible things: peace without justice, forgiveness without restitution, love without sacrifice.

But You, our Maker, abound in grace" so now again we turn to You, to attach ourselves to Your purpose, to set ourselves on the paths that lead to the coming of peace and right, freedom and joy for Israel and all the world.

Again, as the shadows fall, we ask forgiveness, and again we praise You, O God, the Source of peace." ~Gates of Re-

pentance: The New Union Prayer Book for the Days of Awe "Concluding Service"

"For the sin of silence,

For the sin of indifference,

For the secret complicity of the neutral.

For the closing of borders,

For the washing of hands,

For the crime of indifference,

For the sin of silence,

For the closing of borders.

For all that was done,

For all that was not done,

Let there be no forgetfulness before the Throne of Glory;

Let there be remembrance within the human heart;

And let there at last be forgiveness

When Your children, O God,

Are free and at peace." ~ Gates of Repentance, CCAR 1978

"May it be your will, Eternal One, our God, God of our ancestors, that wars and bloodshed be abolished from the world, and bring into the world a great and wonderful and lasting peace. And let no nation lift up sword against nation- let them learn no more the ways of war!

Let all who dwell on earth simply acknowledge the truth of truths; that we have not come into this world for the sake of quarreling and war, nor for the sake of hatred, jealousy, anger, or bloodshed; rather, we have come into this world only to know you- may you be blessed eternally!

Therefore, have mercy on us, and fulfill among us what is written in Your Torah: " I shall give peace upon the earth, and you shall lie down with no one to make you afraid...

The sword shall never come upon your land. Justice shall roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of The Omnipresent, as the waters fill the seas." ~ From the Shabbat Vehagim, the Reconstructionist Shabbat and Festi-

val prayer book, Reconstructionist Press

"O Source of light and truth,

Creator of the eternal law of goodness,

Well-spring of justice and mercy,

Help us to find knowledge by which to live.

Lead us to take the words we shall speak

Into our hearts and our lives.

Bless all who enter this sanctuary in search and in need,

All who bring to this place the offering of their hearts.

May our worship here lead us to fulfill our words and our hopes

With acts of kindness, peace and love." ~ Mishkan T'filah: The Siddur for Reform Jewish Prayer. N.p.: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2003.

"Grant us peace, Your most precious gift, O Eternal Source of peace, and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the earth. Bless our country, that it may always be a stronghold of peace, and its advocate among the nations. May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes. Strengthen the bonds of friendship among the inhabitants of all lands. And may the love of Your name hallow every home and every heart.

Blessed is the eternal God, the source of peace.

Our God and Creator, we thank You for the sense of justice You have implanted within us, and which always seeks, though at times haltingly, to express itself in daily life.

Make us, O God, more steadfast in our desire to do Your will. Teach us that the men and women around us are brothers and sisters, and fill us with such love for our fellow creatures that we will never wrong them, or exploit them, or take advantage of their weakness or ignorance.

Kindle in us a passion for righteousness. Grant us the vision to see that only justice can endure, and that only in being just to one another can we make our lives acceptable to You.

May we by our thoughts and our deeds hasten the time

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when wrong and violence shall cease, and justice be established in all the earth.

Let Justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

God created us in the Divine image; in the image of God were we created; male and female God created us.

Our tradition says that God created us through one human being to teach us that whoever destroys a single human soul has destroyed an entire world.

And whoever sustains a single human soul has sustained an entire world.

And a single human being was created for the sake of peace, that none might say: my lineage is greater than yours.

I call heaven and earth to witness: Gentile or Jew, man or woman, manservant or maidservant -- all according to our deeds does the spirit of God rest upon us.

Speak to the whole community of Israel, and say to them: "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy."

As God is merciful and gracious, so shall you be merciful and gracious.

When we oppress the poor, we offend their maker.

But we honor their maker when we are kind to the needy.

Let your neighbor's property be as dear to you as your own.

And let your neighbor's honor be as dear to you as your own.

You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling-block before the blind.

You shall not rejoice when your enemy falls.

You shall not exult when your enemy stumbles.

Never say: I will do to them as they have done to me; I will repay them according to their deeds.

You shall not hate another in your heart; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

O God, You have called us to peace, for You are Peace itself. May we have the vision to see that each of us, in some measure, can help to realize these aims;

Where there are ignorance and superstition, Let there be enlightenment and knowledge.

Where there are prejudice and hatred, Let there be acceptance and love.

Where there are fear and suspicion, Let there be confidence and trust.

Where there are tyranny and oppres-

sion, Let there be freedom and justice.

Where there are poverty and disease, Let there be prosperity and health.

Where there are strife and discord, Let there be harmony and peace." ~ Adapted from Jewish texts and readings in Gates of Prayer. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975.

"Seven things are an abomination to Eternal our God: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; a mind that makes wicked plans, feet that are quick to run to do evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who sows discord among brothers and sisters.

These are the things you shall do; speak the truth to one another; render judgments that are true and make for peace; do not plan evil against your neighbor; and approve no false oath; for all these things I hate, says the Eter-

**"SEVEN THINGS ARE AN ABOMINATION TO ETERNAL OUR GOD: HAUGHTY EYES, A LYING TONGUE, AND HANDS THAT SHED INNOCENT BLOOD; A MIND THAT MAKES WICKED PLANS, FEET THAT ARE QUICK TO RUN TO DO EVIL, A FALSE WITNESS WHO UTTERS LIES, AND ONE WHO SOWS DISCORD AMONG BROTHERS AND SISTERS."**

nal." ~ Stern, Chaim, ed. Gates of Prayer. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975

"By leave of my eyes that watched the bereaving. Add cry after cry to my crushed heart's burden, By leave of my trust that taught me forgiving Till the pall of days that seared beyond pardon, I have sworn an oath: to remem-

ber each grieving, To remember, never to harden.

Nothing, till ten generations give way, Till soothed is the rankling, annulled each pain, Till the rods that punished are purged away. I vow that the dark wrath pass not in vain. I vow that at dawn I never more stray. Lest now I learn nothing, again."

(This poem is engraved in the wall of Yad Vashem shrine in Jerusalem.)

What shall I ask You for, God?

I have everything.

There's nothing I lack.

I ask only for one thing

And not for myself alone;

It's for many mothers, children and fathers.

Not just in this land, but in many

lands hostile to each other.

I'd like to ask for Peace.

Yes, its Peace I want,

And You, You won't deny the single wish of a child.

You created the Land of Peace,

Where stands the City of Peace,

Where stood the Temple of Peace,

But where there is still no Peace...

What shall I ask for God? I have everything.

Peace is what I ask for,

Only Peace." ~ Shlomit, Age 13, Jerusalem, From the Shabbat Vehagim, the Reconstructionist Shabbat and Festival prayer book, Reconstructionist Press

"Belief in God, therefore, has to do...

with human nature, with the way individual men and women act, with their attitudes, their ideas of what is good and what is bad, with their ideals... If we believe that life is worthwhile, that it is good, that, in spite of sickness and accidents, in spite of poverty and war, in spite of all the sad and difficult conditions in the world, that the world can still be made a better place, then we believe in God. When we believe in God, we cannot be discouraged because we believe that all the misery in the world is due, not to the fact that misery must be there, that it is a necessary part of life, but to the fact that we have not yet discovered how to do away with that misery." ~ Rabbi Ira Eisenstein (adapted), From the Shabbat Vehagim, the Reconstructionist Shabbat and Festival prayer book, Reconstructionist Press.

## SERMON NOTES

### Isaiah 6:8

When I read the alerts and updates on the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, I can feel overwhelmed by the suffering of the people and the brutal violence that marks every day life. A staff member at Africa Action once described how she would read the stories, the reports from the humanitarian aid workers in Darfur. late at night. She could imagine the people in Darfur praying a handwritten prayer that was found outside of Bagdad during intense conflict in 2003, the same year that the genocide started in Darfur, "O God, Creator of all things in the world, please bind up all my wounds."

This thought and the extent of the

challenge of this conflict would be paralyzing to the point that all she could do was utter the prayer, "Oh God, please protect the people of Darfur." To her surprise the response she felt from the core of her being was, "Whom shall I send?" She realized again, that God calls on us to answer the prayers of people in conflict by working for peace, and with fear and trembling, she had to reply, as Isaiah did in Chapter 6, verse 8, "Here I am Lord. Send me."

The question is, do you hear God's call? How will you respond? If you too offer yourself up to be "sent" to Darfur, don't worry - you don't have to book a flight. Instead, let us work to-

gether, as a congregation, to take meaningful action that will push our nation to lead the international community to respond with the necessary resources and energy to stop this genocide.

### Leviticus 19:16

We have just read in Leviticus, "Do not stand idly by the blood of our neighbor." One could argue that further reading of Maimonidies shows that there is an halachic imperative for Jews to act in the face of genocide, even if those being persecuted are not Jewish. Others would argue that the fact that the victims are Muslim means that there is not an halachic imperative, but certainly a moral one.