

# Darfur Reading for Tisha b'Av

**My eyes are spent with tears,  
My spirit is greatly troubled,  
My being melts away  
Over the ruin of my people**

Lamentations 2:11

Devastation, exile and grief are the recurrent themes of Tisha b'Av. We remember the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem and the uprooting of our people, and we mourn.

As we recount our own losses, they should remind us that many people still struggle for survival amidst destruction and dislocation as we did 2,000 years ago. We should remember, in particular, the people of Darfur, who are confronting their own epic tragedy of destruction and exile:

On Tisha b'Av, we remember: "Our heritage has passed to aliens, our homes to strangers."

Lamentations 5:2

**In Darfur, over 2,000 communities have been destroyed, their inhabitants killed or displaced into camps.**

On Tisha b'Av, we remember: "We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are like widows."

Lamentations 5:2

**In Darfur, over 450,000 men, women and children have lost their lives since the genocide began in 2003.**

On Tisha b'Av, we remember: "We must pay to drink our own water, obtain our own kindling at a price."

Lamentations 5:2

**In Darfur, the refugees and displaced people lack sufficient food and water and risk violence whenever they venture out to find firewood.**

But we should not only remember. In Jewish tradition, memory looks both backward and forward in time. Our memory of oppression at Passover compels us never to become oppressors. We should allow our memory of national disaster at Tisha b'Av to encourage us to project our empathy outward to the people of Darfur.

Let us be spent with tears.

Let our spirits be greatly troubled.

And let us take those tears, that trouble,  
and reach out to those who need us most.

At this season of remembrance and grief, we must work to create a world where all are comforted and supported. As Lamentations ends with hope for redemption, we must commit ourselves to work and act until the people of Darfur achieve their own redemption of safety, security and justice.



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