

DARFUR MEDITATION

R: Wherefore Darfur?

Who are we to them?

Or they to us.

C: They live in distant lands unknown to us

They do not recite our catechisms or pray our liturgy.

They speak different languages.

They are of different ethnicities.

R: What have we in common if not theology or race or place?

We share in common tears, we share in common fears, we share in hopes.

We have read and seen the terror of wild predators, swooping down on innocent people. Riding on stallions with swords outstretched to behead bodies and carve hatred into their flesh.

We know the fright that follows the burning and the trauma that follows the bombing of fragile homes and the savage teeth of genocide.

We know the twisted design of rapacious men who rape children and wives into humiliation and destroy the pride of families.

C: We know for we have seen the bodies bloated from lack of food and drink. In horror, we behold the infectious flies that dance their dance on the eyeballs of helpless children.

R: We have not forgotten the lethal silence that turns eyes and ears away from the unspeakable tragedy.

C: We Jews see with ancient eyes and attend with ancient ears. We were not born yesterday.

Not long ago we swore over the cremated bodies of our fathers, mothers and children a solemn oath. From the depths of our souls we cried "Never Again." That oath carries the past into the present and pledges to do today whatever is in our power to prevent the perverse plots to extinguish the promise of life.

"Never Again" will we allow the world to dissemble, to pretend that we are voiceless, soundless, without legs or hands.

Ours is a solemn oath in memory of those who were slaughtered in deathly silence.

We are pledged to wake the world from the paralysis of will. We are partners with God in protecting His children. We dare not shut our eyes or our mouths or our ears.

R: Who is Darfur to us? And who are they to us?

They are us.

Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis

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