

Or Rose
Testimony
Thursday, March 29, 2007

Good afternoon. My name is Rabbi Or Rose, and I am the associate dean of the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College and a proud member of the Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur.

As I stand before you today to speak about the first genocide of the twenty-first century, I hold in my mind the biblical account of the genocide of the Israelite boys in ancient Egypt: "Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, 'every boy that is born you shall throw into the Nile... (Exodus 1:22).'"

On Monday evening, Jews around the world will observe the holiday of Passover, the joyous commemoration of the exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.

At the heart of the story is God's supernatural intervention on behalf of the beleaguered Hebrew slaves. The Torah records how the Divine brought plagues upon the land of Egypt, parted the waters of the Red Sea, and eventually guided the Children of Israel to the Promised Land.

Ladies and gentlemen, God is not going to swoop in and save the day in Darfur. For better or for worse, we live in a reality in which the Divine works much more subtly than in this great biblical drama, a world in which human beings are responsible for creating a just and compassionate world.

While none of us can play God, each of us must assume the roles of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, doing everything in our power to help liberate the innocent people of Darfur. To do otherwise is to aid and abet the Pharaoh-like forces in Khartoum. As the eminent theologian and activist, Abraham Joshua Heschel, stated, "In a free society some are guilty *all* are responsible."

Today, we gather in this august hall to call on the Joint Committee on Public Service to play its role in the struggle for freedom in western Sudan by divesting from the worst-offending companies in the war-torn region. While the enactment of bill 1479 alone will not end the bloodshed in Darfur, it will strike a significant blow to the genocidal Sudanese government and its allies, and help strengthen the global anti-genocide movement.

On the eve of Passover, I pray that one day soon, my family and I will be able to include the liberation story of Darfur in our annual celebration of freedom.

Thank you.