



The picture at the entrance inspired me to write this. The wrinkles of her face have been gently placed by the journey of her life. Her hands support the weight of her head, for what she has seen has just become *too powerful* for her mind to hold up on its own. Tears regularly flood to her eyes to mask her vision, to make *blurry shapes* fit together to appear as if they were placed next to each other *on purpose*. The drops of salt water create an *illusion of harmony* among the world she *sees* through her eyes. She cries because...

She cries *because*...

I cry because I see her tears and the pain she's felt for too many years.

You may have already heard of the current brutality taking place in Darfur. Katie is going to share with you a brief history of the situation in Sudan.

#### READ KATIE FOSTER'S SERMON

We are now all armed with the basic knowledge of a powerful thing. This is the first step toward overcoming the curse of hatred.

It is incredible that we are aware of this genocide while it is happening. The fact that we know anything about the conflict in Darfur fills us with a responsibility. It means that we can't keep our mouths shut. There is a stack of white paper at the entrance that has a list of websites you could go to. At these websites there are different organizations that will provide more information on Darfur and offer opportunities to make donations. These are all links involved in the process of action. We can become a part of it.

The idea of paying it forward originated as a book and later became a movie. This concept was created to prove to young students that they could change the world. A quote from the movie reads,

"You see, I do something real good for three people. And then when they ask how they can pay it back, I say they have to Pay It Forward. To three more people. Each. So nine people get helped. Then those people have to do twenty-seven. Then it sort of spreads out, see. To eighty-one. Then two hundred forty-three. Then seven hundred twenty-nine. Then two thousand, one hundred eighty-seven. See how big it gets?"

If we expand the idea of paying forward just good deeds, to sharing information with anyone who will listen, then we will be so much closer to overcoming this situation.

The text from Luke chapter 21 verse 15 says, "For I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict," which means that now with the knowledge we have, and our ability to communicate we can endure anything. We hold the power of truth in our minds, and the even more powerful ability to love in our hearts. We must fight with love because hate is what has brought us to this point.

A few weeks ago Reverend Allen told Katie and I a story that I am going to share with you.

There was a man walking along the beach when he saw in the distance another man repeatedly bending over, picking something up, and throwing it into the waves. As the first man who was walking neared the place where the waves met the sand he noticed thousands of stranded starfish that had been scattered along the beach. He called to the man who was releasing the starfish back to the sea and said "you'll never be able to save them all," and the second man bent over picked one up and smiled as he said, "you're right, but I can save this one," and he threw the starfish that was in his hand.

While our focus is on Darfur that's not all this is about. We have to always remember that with any problem we face, no matter how overwhelming or how insignificant, we CAN make a change. We aren't being asked to solve every problem, we aren't being asked to save the world, but to take what is in our control and fix it. I'm sure most of us in here have interacted with

strangers before, and while there can be numerous sour exchanges, a smile has the influential ability to turn shadows into blinding rays of hope.

“Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it,” said Gandhi. The smallest of gestures have the capability to change everything.

## WHATEVER HAPPENS

As an example of how one seemingly small effort can make a difference, we have Josh Kaplan here from Congregation Khol Havarim to speak to you about his trip to D.C. to join a rally about Darfur.