



Civil Disobedience at Senator McConnell's Office
Rabbi Sharon Brous
July 18, 2017

Senator McConnell, they call you “Leader.” But we have a different idea of what a leader looks like. After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea leaving Egypt, they were attacked by Amalek, an army determined to destroy them. As the battle raged, Moses ascended a mountain and lifted his hands to the heavens. As long as his arms were raised, the people prevailed over their enemies. But at times, his arms grow heavy and when they inevitably fell, the Israelites faltered.

What’s the message of this story... is this magical thinking? The Rabbis say that Moses’s arms were raised to direct the people’s gaze toward the heavens, to remind them of God’s sovereignty and inspire them to fight harder for what is just and right. In other words, it’s not magic... it’s leadership. Moral leadership. The kind that fuels people’s resolve, reminding them to think expansively and openheartedly about what is possible.

What could be further from today’s gutter politics?

Do you believe that God put you in this position of power so that you could strip vital health services from the sick, the working poor, the elderly, and women of all ages and abilities? To ask not *what are we capable of*, as a nation, but *what can we get away with*? That is not leadership. That is spiritual anemia and moral failure.

We’re here today because we won’t abide a cynical politics that steals care from those who need most. In our faith traditions, God stands on the side of the most vulnerable: the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. In other words, you and your colleagues are messing with God’s people now. And we won’t stand for it.

Today, hatred and intolerance, the toxins of white supremacy, misogyny, and heartlessness, poison the water of our nation.

But we—people of all faiths and none—have a different vision: in a time of moral crisis, we live even more deeply from our core convictions. We stand in willful opposition to the cruelty and insanity, prepared to *drive a spoke through the wheels of injustice*, again

and again and again. We lift our arms and our eyes to remind America that we must use all our spiritual, political and intellectual resources to fight for one another's dignity.

That, we believe, is the only way forward.