

THE THREE SONS

A hundred thousand people, fleeing the Vietnamese Wonderland, could drown in the ocean waters because no country will receive them.

There is much muttering of "It's not our business," which raises the story of The Three Sons.

It seems that three sons had to separately lead small family groups across the desert. It was a much-travelled desert, but perilous, with stretches of quick-sand. In each case, the group asked the son who was leading them: "How are we going to save ourselves if we all fall into the quick-sand?"

The Innocent Son answered: "The first caravan that passes, will pull us out. -- just as we must do for others. Is it not God's commandment that everyone should help his fellow-human?"

But when this group became stuck in quick-sand, the first caravan which passed had its own gods, with no such commandment, was of another clan and did not stop. The group of the Innocent Son -- may he someday prevail -- perished.

The Foolish Son, when then asked the same question, answered: "We obviously cannot depend on anyone else. We must look after our own self-interest. We will not stop to help others, but will save our strength and our ropes to save ourselves."

But when his group became stuck in quick-sand, their ropes found no target, their strength gave out, and they perished.

The Wise Son answered thus: "We must act in our own self-interest, as well as according to God's commandments. We will gather all the caravan-leaders before we depart and say: 'Whatever our different gods or clans, the only guarantee any

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of us has for surviving the quick-sand, is if we establish the civil rule that *all* of us will stop and pull *any* of us out of the quick-sand.'" The meeting was held, the civil rule was established, and the Wise Son's group survived the perilous journey.

Malaysia and others have said that they will not accept any more of the Vietnamese refugees -- "boat people" -- if they try to land. Not long ago, Jewish refugees -- "boat people" -- were under the same threat. The only solution is for the civilized world to agree to portion out the burden of these refugees. Not long ago, Jews were pleading for similar agreements, to no avail.

These Vietnamese are refugees from the political oppression of the North Vietnamese government. Some former supporters of the North Vietnamese government, such as Joan Baez, recently published an open letter protesting against the human rights violations of the North Vietnamese government. Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden, political appointees of Governor Brown and self-proclaimed "human rights activists," refused to sign the letter. But selective justice is not justice at all -- or, eventually, for anyone.

Actually, the United States has taken about 200 thousand of the Vietnamese refugees already. China has only taken about that many, although 90 per cent of the refugees are ethnically Chinese. Other countries have taken a total of about 100 thousand. There may be another half million in temporary camps or floating around.

We all have a stake in writing our Congressman and Senators today. First, the United States should take the lead in immediately calling together a serious international conference to assign quotas for these refugees. Second, Congress

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should move swiftly on the comprehensive refugee bill now before it. That bill should establish the principle of constant and humane hospitality towards the *political* refugees of the world.

As the Innocent Jewish Son would know, we have no choice of conscience. As the Wise Jewish Son would know, the self-interest of the Jews will be served only by establishing civilized rules that apply to everyone -- and therefore to Jews.

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