

# *Message from*

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Yom HaShoah coincides with the anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War which enables us to reflect for a moment on both the necessity of war and on the hope of peace loving faiths including Judaism that the weapons of dialogue, persuasion and compromise will prevail in the face of challenge and dispute.

War, however, is not always wrong as a former Dean of St Paul's, Dr Inge, is reported to have observed, "It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism whilst the wolf remains of a different opinion". The war against Hitler was surely such an example whereby there was an entitlement, if not an obligation, to fight for life and liberty.

The Nazi campaign of the twentieth century witnessed the most ruthless attempt ever to annihilate the Jewish people, and yet its survivors found the energy to rebuild their shattered lives and continue the remarkable tradition and contribution of Judaism.

It might be suggested that the continuity of the Jewish people in such circumstances is itself a 'miracle' implying the work of a Power greater than that of humanity. Even if this is so I am reminded of the Rabbinic maxim that 'We do not rely on miracles' (Kiddushin 39b) which teaches that humanity is God's partner in the fulfilment of the Divine will and the full realisation of human potential.

The listening to survivors, the educating of the young, and the very act of remembrance itself are the means by which we affirm our responsibility as God's partners in the creation of societies and a world in which the lesson of the very Creation itself will be heeded that each and every human being is made in the image of God.

Perhaps it is better expressed by the sermon (reproduced in Siddur Lev Chadash, the liturgy of Liberal Judaism Pp 368/9) of the French Liberal Rabbi Daniel Fahri

*Wherever you may be, whenever that may be, I shall be there with you, the last survivor. Because you will be the last survivor, I shall be there, I promise you. I promise to be the memory of your memory. I promise that what you have endured will not be erased from the human conscience. I promise you this ultimate justice, that neither your name nor your suffering shall be permitted to vanish from world history. You were one man, one woman. But it is as if you had been one suffering humanity. And because you will be the last, it will be my duty to take over your martyrdom as one takes over in a relay, not in order to re-live it, but to relate it for all time, to bear witness before history in order that criminals shall no longer be absolved, to teach children that, having become adults, they may build a society conscious of its past and resolutely turned towards a future of justice, love and peace*

On behalf of Liberal Judaism I salute the survivors, pledge to remember, and promise to work for the best of futures.