

## **Rabbi Charley Baginsky – HMD/CCJ - Lambeth Palace**

### **Closing Words**

As we gather today in this sacred space at Lambeth Palace to remember the unfathomable loss of the Holocaust, we do so with heavy hearts. And yet, we also gather with the conviction that a better future is not only possible—it is our responsibility to build.

I take these stories as my personal responsibility, the lives of my great uncles, Egon and Willi Baginsky – murdered at Aushwitz, even more so my children take on their memories. But when others join us and take the responsibility for their memories and for building a future together when we can all say never again, then we can hope for the future.

In the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me" (Jeremiah 8:21). These words speak to the profound grief and brokenness that marks the tragedy of the Holocaust. In them, we feel the weight of loss, the brokenness of humanity that can be so difficult to confront. But this moment of brokenness also carries within it the potential for transformation. For it is in the darkest, most painful places that healing begins—where the seeds of a new future can take root.

The imagery of Psalm 23 offers us a profound source of reflection. It speaks of still waters and green pastures, of being led along paths that restore the soul. These are not images of escape or avoidance—they are images of deep restoration, of renewal. The still waters are the calm after the storm, the place where we can pause, reflect, and heal. The green pastures are not just places of comfort, but of sustenance—where we can find nourishment for both body and spirit, where we can rebuild what has been broken.

In the Psalm, we are reminded that even in the darkest valleys, even in the most difficult moments, we are not alone. The presence that guides us through these places is one of comfort and protection. It is a reminder that, even in times of overwhelming loss, the way forward is not always clear, but there is a way forward nonetheless—a way that leads us from brokenness to healing, from despair to hope.

Today, as we reflect on the pain and loss of the Holocaust, we also remember the resilience and the hope that emerged from the darkest of times. We remember that, just as the Psalm speaks of being led through shadows, the survivors of the Holocaust were, and continue to be, living testimonies to the power of resilience and the possibility of renewal. They have taught us that even in the deepest grief, the potential for transformation exists.

We are living in a time when so much feels overwhelming, when the pain of the world, both personal and collective, can feel too great to bear. Yet it is precisely in these moments that the need to envision a better future becomes all the more urgent. It is in these moments that we must look for the still waters, for the green pastures—places where healing can begin, where hope can grow. Optimism, in this sense, is not the denial of pain, but the radical choice to imagine and work toward something better, something more just, something that can heal the divisions we face.

This vision of a better future is not a distant dream—it is a call to action. It is a call to reject the forces of hate and division, and to embrace the transformative power of empathy, of connection, of community. This is the ultimate balm to the wounds of the past: the ability to envision the possible and to move toward it, together.

Today, as we close this ceremony, let us recommit ourselves to that vision. Let us remember that even in the midst of brokenness, there is the potential for renewal. Let us choose to stand together in the belief that a better world is within our reach—a world where kindness, justice, and peace prevail.

May we always remember that it is through our collective will, our shared humanity, and our unshakeable optimism that we create a future worthy of the lives we honour today.