

# Interfaith Commemoration Reflections

**HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL DAY 2022**

**ONE DAY...**

...In the future  
...In history  
...When life changed  
...At a time



## Reflection:

# Leon Silver, President, East London Central Synagogue

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One day in 1942, a meeting of senior government ministry representatives took place in a picturesque lakeside villa in a Berlin suburb. The Wannsee Conference, chaired by SS General Reinhard Heydrich, was held to organise and coordinate the administration of the “final solution to the Jewish Question”.

The genocide was already underway but now in place of the mass sonderkommando shootings in Poland and Russia, this One Day, 20th January 1942, marks the start of the official policy of deporting all of Europe’s Jews to specially constructed death camps.

One Day at a time is how survivors describe the horror. Just survive this One Day. Get through it if you can. Then the next, then another. Try not to think of the past, of your loved ones. Starving, exhausted, ill; just get through the day.

For many survivors, remembrance came only later. Belsen concentration camp was turned into a displaced persons’ camp after liberation. Later that year a Yom Kippur service was held and during Yizkor, when memorial prayers are recited, a great wail went up from the large outdoor congregation. It was the first time so many felt able to release their emotions and to grieve and weep for those they had lost. From Yizkor: “May their souls be bound up in the bundle of life”. Yom Kippur 1945, One Day.

The lessons of the past must never be forgotten. Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur are reminders of how easily society can still slip into barbarism. One Day, hopefully soon, we will all learn to live together in peace, friendship & loving kindness.

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## Reflection:

### The Revd Preb. Alan Green, Tower Hamlets Borough Chaplain and Interfaith Adviser

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So much can happen in One Day - to make it a day never forgotten, a day in which life changed forever, a beginning or an end. A day to be cherished forever, or a day in which the world collapses.

For those groups targeted by the Nazi regime - Jews, gays, Roma, disabled, lefties, all the others - that day might have begun with a knock at the door, a finger pointed in the street, but then moved very quickly into the darkness of an everlasting night. The darkness of separation, the darkness of cattle trucks, the darkness of arbeit macht frei, the darkness of the shower blocks.

We must ensure that the light continues to shine in that darkness, not to forget what that day meant to so many people whose humanity was denied, whose lives were torn apart. We must look unflinchingly and acknowledge what human beings are capable of doing in the dark.

That brings the risk of despair, but it is the only way of rooting hope. Hope that is not a fantasy, not a diversion, but that can transform darkness into brilliant light, to lead to a day of transformation, a day in which miracles occur, a day in which we see a clenched fist become an open hand, a day in which we do not remain quiet but speak up and act justly.

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## Reflection:

### Mayor John Biggs, Tower Hamlets Council

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Holocaust Memorial Day is a time to pause, reflect and to remember the millions who lost their lives during the Holocaust and other genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

This year's theme is One Day, a day where we can set time aside to learn about and reflect on the history of these atrocities, draw on lessons from the past and help build our communities by making a conscious decision to help create a better future for our society.

Tower Hamlets has always been a place of refuge and diversity, and a place where people stand shoulder to shoulder with each other. As we remember the millions who lost their lives during the Holocaust and other genocides, we continue to celebrate our differences, stand together and share values such as tolerance and respect.

This Holocaust Memorial Day, we are working in partnership with a number of organisations to deliver a programme of virtual commemoration events for people from all backgrounds and faiths. All are invited to join in.

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## Reflection:

Dilowar Khan, Director of Finance  
& Engagement, East London  
Mosque and London Muslim Centre

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As Muslims we believe that killing any innocent people is one of the biggest sins and crimes. In the Holy Quran it is mentioned that killing one innocent person is just like killing the whole of humanity. Last July, on the 26th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide, we listened in respectful silence as Bosnian children read the names of the victims who most recently had been identified and laid to rest.

In those moments, thoughts turned from the families bidding a final farewell to their loved ones, to all those who would never be able to do so. Countless victims, countless anguished survivors. We have heard harrowing recollections from the Holocaust, from the Rwandan and Srebrenica genocides; it seems remote, but these are all in living memory, recalled by those who lived through their terrors.

Despite the darkness, there is prevailing hope that one day we will rise above this. One Day our shared humanity, our sense of accountability first to God and then to each other, will be strong enough to prevent atrocities against whole races, against whole faiths.

That hope is there, because we continue to strive together. One Day, God willing, we shall succeed.

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## Reflection:

Jan McHarry,  
London Buddhist Centre

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Civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King once commented ‘our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter’.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2022 highlights the importance of remembering and reflecting on the testimony of Holocaust survivors and subsequent genocides including Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur and Bosnia.

Hearing the pain and suffering contained within people’s experience and memories is sobering. Listening means trying to comprehend things we don’t understand. We can’t stay silent. But to stop them happening again, we can’t look away.

In our own small ways, we must all try to step up and challenge the attitudes and actions that continue to foster social injustice, persecution and hatred.

Peace-making is an ongoing process. It has to happen in our hearts, in our communities and on the national and international stage.

Recognised for his practical wisdom, the Dalai Lama constantly stresses that faith communities have a special responsibility to disarm greed, hatred and delusion (in Buddhism, these characteristics are known as the ‘three poisons’) whilst undertaking actions that build tolerance, respect, trust and compassion. We live in a world filled with injustices. But One Day, every day, there are opportunities for kindness and forgiveness. Let’s not be silent on things that matter.

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# HERITAGE

By Hayim Gouri

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The ram came last of all. And Abraham did not know that it came to answer the boy's question - first of his strength when his day was on the wane.

The old man raised his head. Seeing that it was no dream and that the angel stood there - the knife slipped from his hand.

The boy, released from his bonds, saw his father's back.

Isaac, as the story goes, was not sacrificed. He lived for many years, saw what pleasure had to offer, until his eyesight dimmed.

But he bequeathed that hour to his offspring. They are born with a knife in their hearts.

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## Reflection:

Julie Begum,  
Swadhinata Trust

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### **One Day that changed the lives of millions of Bengalis around the world**

The 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu was a speech given by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh on 7 March 1971 at the Ramna Racecourse maidan in Dhaka to a gathering of over 10 lakh (1,000,000) people. It was delivered during a period of escalating tensions between East Pakistan and the powerful political and military establishment of West Pakistan.

In the speech, Rahman proclaimed: “The struggle this time, is a struggle for our liberty. The struggle this time, is a struggle for our independence.” He announced a civil disobedience movement in the province, calling for “every house to turn into a fortress”.

The speech inspired the Bengali people to prepare for a war of independence amid widespread reports of armed mobilisation by West Pakistan. The Bangladesh Liberation War began 18 days later when the Pakistan Army launched Operation Searchlight against Bengali civilians, intelligentsia, students, politicians, and armed personnel.

On 30 October 2017, UNESCO added the speech in the Memory of the World Register as a documentary heritage.

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# Reflection:

## Sister Christine fcJ, Neighbours in Poplar

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### One Day

One Day in Warsaw, One Day in Bosnia, One Day in Cambodia, One Day in Rwanda. And 31st August 2021...

We have seen how One Day can change lives for ever – there have been so many catastrophic days in the last 80 or so years – Warsaw, Bosnia, Cambodia and Rwanda, to name only a few. We ask ourselves over and over again: will we ever learn?

We now have no excuse. We do know something of the anguish and suffering of the Holocaust years.

Yet, this year, only five months ago, there was One Day again, this time for the people of Afghanistan. We know that millions are now facing mass starvation and unimaginable suffering – and we could have avoided it.

We need to remember the Holocaust and all it stands for. We need to pray for our leaders everywhere that they will wake up to their responsibilities and use their power and authority to exercise compassion and bring peace and healing to our divided communities.

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# HOW?

By Abraham Sutzkever,  
Vilna Ghetto, February 14, 1943

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How will you fill your goblet  
On the day of liberation? And with what?  
Are you prepared, in your joy, to endure  
The dark keening you have heard  
Where skulls of days glitter  
In a bottomless pit?

You will search for a key to fit  
Your jammed lock. You will bite  
The sidewalks like bread,  
Thinking: It used to be better.  
And time will gnaw at you like a cricket  
Caught in a fist.

Then your memory will resemble  
An ancient buried town.  
And your estranged eyes will burrow down  
Like a mole, a mole....

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## Reflection:

Ram Chandra Saha,  
Director Vivekananda  
Human Centre



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The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2022 is One Day.

Holocaust Memorial Day is One Day – 27 January – that we put aside to come together to remember, to learn about the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and the genocides that followed in different places in the different countries in the world. Survivors of the Holocaust and of genocide often talk about the One Day when everything changed. We can learn more about the past, we empathise with others today, and we can take lessons and act for a better future and better world.

On Holocaust Memorial Day we learn from genocide for a purpose – to build a better future. When we look ahead to ‘One Day with no genocide’, what do we need to do today to achieve this? We can use this theme to motivate us to speak out when we see injustices, prejudices, and identity-based violence. This year’s theme may inspire us to support charities and community groups working to tackle identity-based violence and denial. Holocaust Memorial Day enables us to remember – for a purpose. It gives us a responsibility to work for a safer, better, future for everyone. Everyone can step up and use their talents to tackle prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance wherever we encounter them. On Holocaust Memorial Day 2022, this One Day, we will all come together in our communities, to learn from the Holocaust and genocides – for a better future.

Accordingly, in Hinduism we believe that ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ – ‘the world is one family’. We hope that there may be One Day in the future with no genocide when we will realise this oneness message.

Swami Vivekananda says, ‘Help and not Fight’, ‘Assimilation and not Destruction’, ‘Harmony and Peace and not Dissension’.

OM SHANTI, SHANTI, SHANTI! (Peace, Peace, Peace)

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## Reflection:

### Detective Chief Superintendent Marcus Barnett, Central East BCU Commander

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It is so important that we never forget the truly horrific acts that took place all those years ago. The number of people that lost their lives and the families they left behind is absolutely heart-breaking. We must also take stock of where we are now and just how much more we still have to do. The devastating impact that hate crime can have on both individuals and communities can never be underestimated and where it takes place we absolutely must challenge it and hold those perpetrators to account. One Day I hope that all members of our communities feel valued, loved and embraced equally regardless of their individuality. It is only once we live in a truly inclusive society that we can say we have learnt the lessons of the past.

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# We Remember Them

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At the rising of the sun and at its going down  
We remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter  
We remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring  
We remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer  
We remember them.

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn  
We remember them.

At the beginning of the year and when it ends  
We remember them.

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# Lighting of Candles to commemorate HMD



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Every year, we light six candles in memory of six million people, all known to God by name, who perished as a result of human action. Here also we light a seventh candle in memory of all others who have perished through genocide and hatred. Before we begin we say together the words printed below and when the candles are lit we keep a minute's silence for reflection.

- We light these candles in memory of all splintered families and lost communities.
  - We light these candles in memory of smashed lives and destroyed ambitions.
  - We light these candles in memory of bewildered, frightened and orphaned children.
  - We light these candles in memory of those whose last act was a selfless one.
  - We light these candles in memory of those who lived and died in the service of God and of their neighbour.
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# Zog Nit Keyn Mol / Partisan Song

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‘Zog Nit Keyn Mol’ was the anthem of the Jewish Partisan movement in the Second World War. Originally written in Yiddish, it is also considered one of the chief anthems of survivors all over the world.

zog nit keyn mol, az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.  
kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,  
s'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zaynen do!

fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun  
shney,  
mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey,  
un vu gefaln s'iz a shprits fun undzer blut,  
shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut!

s'vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,  
un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mit dem faynt,  
nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in der kayor –  
vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.

dos lid geshribn iz mit blut, un nit mit blay,  
s'iz nit keyn lidl fun a faygl oyf der fray,  
dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent  
dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent.

to zog nit keyn mol, az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.  
kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho –  
s'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zaynen do!

Never say this is the final road for you,  
Though leaden skies may cover over days  
of blue.  
As the hour that we longed for is so near,  
Our step beats out the message: we are here!

From lands so green with palms to lands all  
white with snow.  
We shall be coming with our anguish and  
our woe,  
And where a spurt of our blood fell on the  
earth,  
There our courage and our spirit have rebirth!

The early morning sun will brighten our day,  
And yesterday with our foe will fade away,  
But if the sun delays and in the east remains –  
This song as motto generations must remain.

This song was written with our blood and  
not with lead,  
It's not a little tune that birds sing overhead,  
This song a people sang amid collapsing walls,  
With pistols in hand they heeded to the call.

Therefore never say the road now ends for you,  
Though leaden skies may cover over days  
of blue.  
As the hour that we longed for is so near,  
Our step beats out the message: we are here!

# HMD Statement of Commitment



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1. We recognise that the Holocaust shook the foundations of modern civilization. Its unprecedented character and horror will always hold universal meaning.
  2. We believe that the Holocaust must have a permanent place in our nation's collective memory. We honour the survivors still with us, and reaffirm our shared goals of mutual understanding and justice.
  3. We must make sure that future generations understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences. We vow to remember the victims of Nazi persecutions and of all genocide.
  4. We value the sacrifices of those who have risked their lives to protect or rescue victims as a touchstone of the human capacity for good in the face of evil.
  5. We recognise that humanity is still scarred by the belief that race or religion or disability or sexuality makes people's lives worth less than others. Genocide, anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and discrimination still continue. We have a shared responsibility to fight these evils.
  6. We pledge to strengthen our efforts to promote education and research about the Holocaust and other genocides. We will do our utmost to make sure that the lessons of such events are fully learnt.
  7. We will continue to encourage Holocaust remembrance by holding an annual UK Holocaust Memorial Day. We condemn the evils of prejudice, discrimination and racism. We value a free, tolerant and democratic society
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