

**SPEECH BY RABBI LAU AT THE MORNING SESSION
OF MARCH 16, 2005**

Presidents, Dignitaries, members of the plenum:

I would ask you to pay attention to the prophecy of Isaiah – a very famous one – Chapter 11: A day will come when the Messiah will appear: the leopard will dwell together with the goose; the wolf with the lamb and the baby with a snake, and there will be no harm and no damage and everyone will live in peace, in friendship.

We think that this is a prophecy, a vision that is so far from reality: how can it be? It is against the nature of the beast – against the nature of the nature. But indeed it happened already once, once before – some 1000 years ago – in the same Bible. You open the book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, Chapter 6,7,8,9 – describing the flood, the flood of water. Noah made an Ark in order to survive. The Almighty ordered him to do so. In that Ark there were the leopards, the tigers and the lions and the snakes and babies and lambs and the geese – no harm, no damage, nobody killed or ate somebody else; so that is the difference between Noah's Ark which happened already in the history of mankind and the prophecy of Isaiah, that we think is just an imagination, a vision? The difference is very simple.

In Noah's Ark, they lived together, all the beasts, all the animals, because they had no choice. They had a common enemy – the water, the flood. If they wanted to survive, they understood that had no alternative, but to live in friendship, to come together and not to do what they were used to do – if they wanted to survive.

Isaiah speaks about an idealistic world, where there will be no damage, no harm and no common enemy at all; just from good will and understanding - and emotionally one would want to dwell together with the other in peace and friendship.

Dear friends, we did not come yet to the times of the Messiah. Period. Not yet. But our world 60 years after the Holocaust must understand that we have to dwell together at least like in Noah's Ark. Don't we, mankind of today, don't we have common enemies? Poverty – violence – crime – atom bomb – weapons – ignorance – brutality – cancer – aids – heart conditions! We have so many problems in common that at least what the tiger and the lion and the snake understood is Noah's Ark we human beings must understand the

same: that we live in an Ark – not one flood, but many, endangering our existence – are around this Ark.

I think that after visiting yesterday the new museum here in Yad Vashem, after being in Auschwitz/Birkenau some weeks ago, freezing together and feeling something of the feelings of the victims of 60 and 65 years ago – we must adopt from here, from Jerusalem, this message:

The world lives in Noah's Ark. Many, many common enemies endanger our very existence. If we want to survive – and who does not -; if we don't want to commit suicide – and who wants –, we have to understand in the shadow, not in the light, but in the shadow of the events and the horrors of the Holocaust, we have to understand that we have no choice – no alternative, but to offer a hand one to the other and together, shoulder to shoulder, to fight our common enemies and live among us in understanding, friendship and peace.

Thank you.