



Every Shabbat during the Kaddish, I mention that we rise to remember our loved ones and also those who died in the Holocaust and do not have anyone to say Kaddish for them. It is our responsibility to remember them.

Unfortunately, only three million of the six million victims of the Holocaust are recorded in known databases. This means that three million people may not be remembered at Kaddish time. Their histories are not known and while their sacrifices were large and amazing, their lives are essentially forgotten, hence we say Kaddish for the large unknown tombs that lie in Eastern Europe.

Congregation Shir Ha-Ma'alot has been blessed with a unique opportunity to assist in finding the lost three million. Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem began a very special and time sensitive project entitled, "The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names."

The goal is very simple. Yad Vashem is the only place in the world where one can access, as well as input names, from any place in the world via the Internet. Why are we blessed with a unique opportunity? Yossie Hollander and his family, congregants of Shir Ha-Ma'alot are the major underwriters of this amazing once in a lifetime project.

Yossie has asked us to be the model Congregation for the rest of the world. We have been charged with creating a model that every other Congregation can replicate and join in the mitzvah of memory.

So what are we asking from

All We Are Asking For Is Your Memory

you? All we are asking for is your memory. The goals are simple. Through various venues (Ma'alot, email, phone calls, letters, etc.) you will be asked only two things:

1. Do you know of anyone who died in the Holocaust who is not registered on The Central Database of Shoah Victims' names?

2. Do you know anyone else who might have information about victims of the Holocaust that you would inform about this project?

Please send us the names of the victims that are discovered as well as register them on the database.

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It is that simple. But the clock is ticking. In just a decade there will be virtually no first hand accounts of the horrors of the Holocaust because those who survived that terrible time will be deceased. Rarely does an opportunity like this come before a Congregation to set the record straight for Jewish history. Yossie has not asked us to find all three million names, but he has asked us to create a system that others might follow. The only way we will reach the goal is if you respond. We must make it our mission to find an unremembered victim so that their lives and their deeds are written in the Book of Life for eternity.

Our Congregation's goal is quite straightforward. Every one of us will be contacted – unless you contact us first – which we hope you will do

(see information inside the Ma'alot). When you are contacted you will be asked if you know of anyone whose name is not listed in the Database. If you do not know someone personally, you will be asked to discover through your contacts one name that we might be able to add to that database. The goal is that every family of our Congregation provides one or more names to the database. We will not rest until those who have died are remembered.

There are other powerful results that flow from this database. Recently two sisters who thought that each was murdered in 1944 found one another through the database. They lived only 35 miles from one another.

Our own Cantor Shikler found an uncle he never knew existed. He can now properly say Kaddish for his relative. Another amazing benefit of this project, which we have seen already take place, are the conversations that take place from generation to generation. For example, we know of an eighth grade student who talked to his grandfather about his experiences and we know of a 90-year-old woman who shared her thoughts and feelings with her daughter that she had never expressed before. These lines of communication are imperative for remembering the past, understanding the present and dreaming of what the future could be.

During the months of March and April our Congregation will be focused on this project. If you would like to help volunteer in facilitating this mitzvah, please contact **Toni Rios** at **trios@prolse.com** or **949-683-2145**.

All we are asking is your memory – please give.

Rabbi Richard Steinberg