

Holocaust Torah History

Congregation Shaarei Kodesh recently acquired a 200-year-old Torah on permanent loan from Memorial Scrolls Trust, a UK based organization dedicated to the care and preservation of ancient Jewish manuscripts. Our scroll, number 208 in the collection, is from the Czech region and is part of 1400 scrolls that are on loan across the world. It has been traced to a small synagogue in a Moravian town known as Uherske Hradiste.

Early in the 20th century, more than 300 towns in the Czech lands had significant Jewish populations. In the early 1930s, as Adolph Hitler rose to power, the Jews of the region began to recognize that a problem was arising. In 1939, the Nazis plowed through Bohemia and Moravia, rounding up the community members and destroying most of the manuscripts and ritual items, along their way to Poland. Of the 118,000 Czech Jews that lived in those two provinces, more than 85% were killed.

The Jewish community in Prague devised a plan to prevent similar destruction of their holy scrolls, books and ritual items. In total, more than 250,000 items were stored and preserved in the Jewish Museum. Fortunately, Prague was left relatively unscathed during the war, and the Jewish Museum, where all the artifacts were hidden, remained intact. One of the few Jews that survived the war and returned to Prague was a curator at the museum. She knew precisely where all the artifacts had been hidden. Not long after the war ended, the Czech Republic would come under communist rule. Knowing that religion had little place in the communist world, the curator brilliantly moved the scrolls to the Michle synagogue outside the city and under less communist scrutiny.

All the items remained in the Michle Synagogue until 1960 when a communist party member contacted a British antiquities dealer, Ralph Yablon, who happened to be Jewish. He offered to sell this mountain of "Jewish Junk" to Yablon for \$20,000. Realizing the size and scope of what he acquired, Yablon formed the predecessor organization to what is now known as the Memorial Scrolls Trust.

In total, 1,564 Czech scrolls survived the Holocaust and represent the lost Jewish communities of that region and the 6 Million that perished in the Shoah. The MST encourages all the scroll-recipients to use their scrolls for inter/intra-faith work, as well as for ritual and education. The Memorial Scrolls Trust has allocated Czech scrolls to synagogues and organizations around the world. The scrolls are never sold or donated; but allocated on loan.

CSK's Holocaust Torah scroll has been repaired and made kosher for ritual use. It is the purpose of this campaign to show support of the important work of the Memorial Scrolls Trust and to affirm the responsibility we all have to remember the 6 million Jewish souls who perished in the Shoah. Please review the various levels of giving outlined on the following page and consider making a pledge to show your support of the importance of being connected to those who perished by the inhumanity of the Holocaust and of this sacred task that Congregation Shaarei Kodesh has chosen to fulfill.

Holocaust Torah

Sponsorship Opportunities

Sefer Torah: \$27,000

Books of the Torah: \$5,400

Pillars of Judaism: \$2,700

Aseret Hadibrot - The Ten Commandments

The Shema

Priestly Blessings

Bereshit

Pillars of Judaism: \$1,800

Az Yashir Moshe - Song of the Sea

Lech Lecha - Go Forth To The Land I Will Show You

Noah's Ark

The Bush That Was Not Consumed

El Nah Refah Na Lah - Please God, Heal Us

Jacob's Ladder

Building the Mishkan

13 Attributes of God

The Holy of Holies

Kabeid et Avicha v'et Imecha - Honoring Parents

Parasha/Portion: \$540

Pasuk/Verse: \$180

Melah/Word: \$54