

"כה אמר ד' עצמות האלה הנה אני מביא בכם כח וחיייתם" (יחזקאל לז, ה)

“So, said Hashem to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live again.” (Yechezkel 37, 5)

The souls and spirits of the multitude Kedoshim who were murdered in the Holocaust went up straight to Shamayim, yet their bodies – burnt, battered, and beaten – stayed right here on earth. Their ashes scattered upon the blood-soaked soil of Europe. Many of them were never Zoche to Kever Yisroel. Of the many whose bodies did eventually get buried, most of their burial places are unknown. Even people who are known to have perished only immediately after the war from illness and starvation. Many of them were buried in mass graves which have long been forgotten.

The above is true in many areas formerly housing Nazi death camps. One of the areas where there are a staggering number of unknown graves is in and around the Mauthausen death camp. The body count from that area amounts to the tens of thousands. Many scattered graves ended up being transferred to a mass-grave in Mauthausen itself, others were transferred to mass graves in cities in the surrounding areas. We have identified at least 24 different - mass and single - graves in the cities and villages surrounding it. Some of these graves scattered across cities and villages can house up to 100 Niftarim.

Most of these Niftarim people arrived there near the end of the war. At that time the Russian army was zeroing in on Germany proper. As they were getting closer to the German homeland and closer to the areas near Concentration Camps, the Nazis started a ruthless evacuation campaign to move their prisoners to Camps in area deeper in Nazi territory. One of these camps was Auschwitz, from which prisoners were transferred to Mauthausen.

There were also Jews led to Mauthausen by the Hungarian government from Work Camps (Munkotabor) across Hungary to the Nazis. These Jews were also subject the notorious Death Marches. Thousands were killed along the way and buried locally.

These journeys were accomplished primarily by two means. One was the notorious Death Marches – marching thousands of these malnourished and underclothed Jews by foot for miles upon miles to their respective destinations. They also moved many of them by train, cramming hundreds into packed cars without any food or water, let coats or adequate clothing to protect them from the harsh weather. Any person who fell ill along the way or even just withered was immediately shot to death or thrown from the wagon. Many were then buried along the way by village locals.

Those who did live to arrive at Mauthausen from the above areas were then transferred to Gunzkirchen. That entire way from Mauthausen leading to Gunzkirchen – the Death Road – is filled with single and mass graves from these Kedoshim. Most of these graves were either lost and forgotten, and those bodies found were transferred later to Mauthausen. A large amount of these Kedoshim are buried in these 24 areas we will list. Theses graves can usually be found in the city cemetery – most of them under Christian administration.

I do not know what the Halacha dictates in regard these matters. It is also futile to try to describe the atrocities which I witnessed with my own eyes while I was imprisoned there. But my feelings are impossible to hold back. These are people – our own brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers - who

were murdered for the sole reason of them being a part of Am Yisrael. The tragedy is compounded by the fact that not only were they murdered in disgrace but their bodies are lying in disgrace all but forgotten by those of us fortunate enough to survive. There is no one going to visit them, no one to light a candle, recite a Kaddish, or say a perek of Mishnayos for them. They are literally Meisei Mitzva. Every single one of these Kedoshim were an integral part of Klal Yisroel rounded up to this one area by the accursed Nazi army. They are all our Jewish brethren originating from all areas where Jews had lived prewar including Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, and Germany.

There is not one person who survived the war, who – between all these Kedoshim – does not have there any relatives. There are hundreds of Yidden who - whether they know it or not – can find between them a father, mother, grandparents, uncles and aunts, or cousins.

We must do everything we can to let the local communities know that these are Jewish graves, and to educate them on the importance it bears for the Jewish Community. Hopefully that will ensure that they are kept holy and are not in any way desecrated. This is only possible if we as a community show our interest.

Let us remember the eloquent words of the great Jewish leader – whose tireless efforts saved thousands during the war – Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandel:

זכור נא הבכיות, בתהום הגיויות, ביום כלותם למרום הנשמות,
אז נשבענו שמם להזכיר, ואל לשכוח עד סוף עולמות"

“Remember the tears, coming out of the abyss, returning their souls to heaven;
we swore then to remember throughout the years, and not to forget forever”.

J. Friedman

Zichron Kedoshim Association
Remembering the forgotten graves of Holocaust victims in Europe

Mauthausen

Tens of thousands of victims lie in the Mauthausen vicinity. There they gathered the victims from inside the Camp's graves and from the surrounding graveyards:

- 1) In the village of MARBACH near the camp where they buried more than 10,000 victims from the makeshift "Tent Camp" (Tzeltlager) where they arrived from the "Death March" of mostly Hungarian Jews the death count was so large the Crematoriums couldn't keep up and they were reburied at the corner of the camp without any tombstone or markings.
- 2) In the camp itself when the American Air Force arrived, they found thousands of bodies from multiple nationalities scattered over the grounds. They buried them all in graves and affixed signage over each of the graves showing which religion that person was. Unfortunately, all these were later exhumed and transferred to one big mass grave at the side of the camp.
- 3) Bodies of those who died at the sides of the road leading to Mauthausen (the "death road") and were buried then and there were later reinterred at the mass grave at the Camp.
- 4) People who were sick at liberation were taken to hospitals in the vicinity, many of them died subsequently and they were buried near those hospitals were late reinterred there.
- 5) **Gunskirchen:**
After liberation, thousands of Jewish bodies were buried by the locals under the auspices of the Air Force in mass graves in Gunskirchen. One of these graves contained at least 1227 bodies that – according to the records – were buried by the Vien Jewish Gemeinde with help from the Budapest Chevra Kadisha without markings.

We would like to note that Mauthausen is nowadays a famous tourist destination with thousands of visitors yearly Jew and non-Jew alike. But these graves are unmarked and therefore unknown to the Jewish visitors. There are several memorial stones erected by various countries including the Israeli government, but not at the site of these graves. Hence, the burial place of these thousands of Jews – which is of utmost importance to us as Jews - remains unknown and unvisited.

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Zichron Kedoshim Association – Remembering those Forgotten

Linz

- 1) Many of the survivors who were liberated by the American Army from the GUNSKIRCHEN Camp made their way to LINZ. There were also many sick people who ended up in the Linz hospitals. Multitudes died there thereafter, mostly Jews. They were buried in the city cemetery and are under the auspices of the local municipal government. 514 of them were identified by name and another 88 are unknown.
- 2) 97 of those who died on the "Death Road" from Auschwitz and Mauthausen were buried in Enns and later reinterred in the Jewish cemetery in Linz.

Wells

Wells is a city near GUNSKIRCHEN where many survivors arrived right after the liberation.

Many of the sick were also taken to hospitals around Wells. Close to one thousand of these survivors eventually died and were buried in the city cemetery – 99% of those perished were Jews. There are also an additional close to 600 people who were buried in individual graves with their names noted. But this is not well publicized, so visitors and potential family members have no knowledge of this.

Ebenze

There are thousands of victims buried there. Brought there from the surrounding areas and from Ebenze itself. Mostly Jewish Kedoshim HY"D.

There is a gated burial plot under the management of the Interior Ministry.

- 1) When the liberating army arrived there, they found thousands of bodies scattered all across the camp. Under their command, a plot of land was designated and used for their burial about 2km away from the actual camp.
- 2) In 1946 the camps remains were demolished in order build there residential units. During the excavation process a mass grave holding up to 3,000 victims was found. After intense lobbying by Italian survivors of the camp – who claimed their relatives were buried there – it was finally designated as a cemetery, and they erected there a Christian statue. The bodies buried in the area mentioned above (1) were later transferred to this place. The place is presumably right where the camps crematorium was.
- 3) People who died in field hospitals set up by the army all around the vicinity were brought to Ebenze, as well as people from the camp itself and from those who were initially transferred to Guns kirchen. According to the local officials there are 1300 individual graves of people who are identified by name and origin. Another 1341 are buried – according to local officials – in two mass graves there. A Christian grave on the right and a Jewish grave to the left. The area is under the auspices of the local government and it is always open and easily accessible. The surrounding area is a residential neighborhood.