



# Surviving Holocaust Torah

*Something to Treasure, Something to Display*



## The Story of the Jewish Torahs of Czechoslovakia

Early in February 1964, in the nineteenth year after the last German troops had surrendered in Prague, there arrived in London 1,564 Torah scrolls representing hundreds of Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia that had been wiped out in the Holocaust. For many years, the scrolls had lain unused and unattended in a Prague synagogue that had been used as a warehouse. Then they traveled across Europe and arrived at the Westminster Synagogue in London on February 7, 1964. From there, over the years that have passed since, they have been sent out to Jewish communities in Great Britain and twenty other countries of the Western world, including West Germany, to be cherished as memorials to a tragic past but at the same time to be read and studied by a new generation of Jews, the guarantors of Jewish survival and rebirth.

The Torah scrolls from Czechoslovakia were part of a huge collection of Jewish ceremonial objects that were collected at the Jewish Museum at the instigation of the Jewish curators who worked there. Under the watchful eye of the Nazis, Jews in Prague sorted, classified, and catalogued these treasures and arranged the scrolls in stacks reaching from the floor to the ceiling. For the Jews thus employed, it was a short reprieve; even before their task was completed, they were deported and all but two eventually perished in the death camps.

One of these treasures resides with us at **B'nai Shalom**. It is very fragile and in need of much work which is why it is not used anymore. However, our plans are to showcase this historical Torah for all to see and we are proud to make it part of our heritage.

Many of the Torahs, like ours, have been entrusted to synagogues around the world to be cared for and displayed so that the memory of their origin never fades. Our Torah, written at the beginning of the 19th century is no longer kosher due to the fact that it was damaged by the Nazis. You will notice that the top scroll handles have been removed, most likely for the precious metals or jewels that once adorned them.

The brass plate shown to the left is the identification marker. MST# 725



# Original Letter to Temple Shalom from the Memorial Trust

Dated December 7, 1971

Temple Shalom, N.J.

507B

December 7, 1971

Mr. David Curtis  
Temple Shalom  
Box 133  
Highland Lakes, N. J. 07422

Dear Mr. Curtis:

Scroll No. 725 which was allocated to Temple Shalom is being collected by our shippers to-morrow and you should be receiving it sometime next week or early the week after. It is being sent by air-freight-collect.

This Scroll came from the synagogue in Prague and was written at the beginning of the 19th century. We trust that it will be to your liking and we would appreciate hearing of its safe arrival in due course.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Honorary Secretary

What was Lost



What was Saved

