

God, where were you during the Holocaust? How could you let this happen, God?

How many thousands of times have these questions been asked over the past 65 years?

But God was there during the Holocaust. He was at the Extermination Camps: Auschwitz, Belzec, Treblinka, giving his people strength to face family separation and death. God was at the Concentration Camps: Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, Theresienstadt, giving his people strength to survive one more day, helping them to keep faith in their religion, teaching their children love of Torah.

God was in the Warsaw Ghetto giving courage to the few poorly armed Jews, who in April and May of 1943, stood up to the German army. And he gave courage to Oskar Schindler of Germany, Victor Kugler of the Netherlands, Sempo Sugihara of Japan and over 22,000 Righteous Among the Nations from 44 countries, non-Jews, who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

God continues to give courage to those survivors, dwindling now in number, to rebuild their lives. God helped build Holocaust memorials and museums in places like Poland, Germany, France, America, and Israel, that they may serve as a reminder of man's inhumanity to man, that they will stand in the face of those who deny the Holocaust.

As we gather tomorrow around the world for Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and read lists of the 5,693,851 Jews who perished let us also hold in our hearts those 6 to 12 million others who were slaughtered in the Nazi holocaust: Ukrainians, Poles, and Russians; Gypsies, Mentally/Physically Disabled, and Homosexuals; Clergy, Political Prisoners, and Countless Others. Our voice must speak for them too.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַנוֹתֵן לְבָנָי יִשְׂרָאֵל גְּבוּרָה וְאַמֶּץ רוּחַ לְכֻלָּם.

Blessed art thou oh Lord our God, King of the universe, who gives his children strength and courage to his people.

Composed by: Stephen Bernstein

Blessing theme: Remembering all Holocaust victims