

**LETTER TO THE SURVIVOR MITZVAH PROJECT
FROM HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR HIRSH KUSHNER**

"I am Hirsh Kushner from Nemenchine, Lithuania. I received your wonderful letter and check, for which I am very grateful. Your letter is like a breath of fresh air for me. Other than you, no one writes to me. It is such a pleasure when somebody remembers you.

Thinking about you, each time I am amazed that there are such wonderful people as you. I hold on only to this.

In my long life I have learned to understand that the most important thing in this world is goodness and compassion. In the most difficult days of life, you begin to understand a lot.

My health has been deteriorating and my wife's condition is a lot worse. She is hanging in there only because I am still here. She no longer speaks. So, I was very glad to receive your letter, since most of the time I spend alone. The people around me are strangers; I don't have any friends here and I cannot go anywhere.

A week before the war started, our family was arrested and sent to Siberia for 19 years. Our father was sent to a camp, from where almost no one returned. Only at the end of the war did we find out that all of our relatives who had been left in Lithuania were murdered and buried in one common pit.

A lot of time passed since then. I worked a great deal, studied part-time, and didn't have time to think. Only when it appeared that I couldn't do anything else, I started thinking and got surprised how I had lived all my life as if with closed eyes. I looked, but didn't see, didn't understand.

After so many years, I still cannot forget how my mother was crying when she found out that all of her family was murdered in 1941. She lost her parents, two brothers, a sister and their children. She remained the only survivor of the entire family. I was too young then and could not understand a lot.

We had a lot of bad things in life...everything has passed now...

Most of all, I regret that when it was time for it, I did not devote enough attention and tenderness to my mother...

It was too late when I realized it.

*With great esteem and love,
Hirsh"*