

## **Graveside Remarks for Isidor Katzenstein, a”h**

### **Ste. Quentin Cemetery, France**

Jesse Hefter - July 3, 2026

Names are important because they create a personality and uniquely identify an individual.

The Pasuk tells us in Tehillim -l’kulam shaymot yiqra- that HaShem assigns a name to every created thing. This means that one’s parents and the Ribbono Shel Olam are partners in some divine way in the assignment of a name to a new child.

The name Isidor is derived from the Greek “gift of Isis”. Isis was one of the most famous Egyptian goddesses, possessed of the power to heal, protect, and love. We certainly have learned over the past few months that our great-uncle Isidor gave his life in the service of his country – to protect his countrymen.

In German Jewish culture, the English name Isidor was usually paired with the Hebrew name Yitzchak, one of our three formative forefathers. The name Yitzchak is presented in the future tense, as in “he will laugh”. Thus, the Torah teaches us that, uniquely, those called Yitzchak have a capacity to look at the best in others and consider a glass with liquid half full rather than half empty.

Is this not the credo of Am Yisrael? Don’t we, after 2,000 years of exile, through the most improbable of circumstances, stand today in Eretz Yisrael and proclaim- Ki Li Kol HaAretz – God proclaims that the Land is His and we, as his people, feel the same connection to the Land!

Do we not stand here today at the kever of Yitzchak ben Yakov HaKohen and proclaim – Am Yisrael Chai!

When Shalom Lamm from Operation Benjamin cold-called me some months ago and quizzed me about the Katzenstein family, I had no idea that the conversation would propel me to the experience that I am living this very moment. I had no idea that I would merit seeing the kever of my great uncle together with my brother and sister-in-law and proclaim with pride – B’Gan Aiden Tehay Menuchato – that Isidor’s holy neshama should rest in the Garden of Eden and that his grave should now be adorned with the Magen David. It is incredible that, after 108 years, Isidor’s descendants have the merit of reciting Kel Maleh and Kaddish at this grave for the very first time!

This star is a magnificent symbol of both the divine and the here and now. One triangle of this star points toward Shamayim, indicating that everything we do is part of our striving for the Divine. The downward-pointing triangle represents the Bracha of HaShem and God’s holy Masorah coming from above to below, to us. The transmission of our tradition across the centuries continues unbroken to this very day in this very place.

May all our strivings be l’shem shamayim (for the sake of the Divine) and may the soul of Yitzchak ben Yakov HaKohen be bound in the bonds of eternal life Tachas Kanfei HaShechinah – under the protection of God’s wings and may we all merit the coming of the Mashiach bimhayra Beyamaynu, Amen.