



# The Survivor Mitzvah Project™

Isaak, c. 1946



**My name is Isaak, from Berdichev, Ukraine.** I was born in 1929 into a family of five children, mother and father. When the fascists came on July 7th, 1941, my brothers, the boys from neighborhood and I were in the street playing. We heard soldiers shouting from the trucks, "*Juden kaput!*" So we ran home and told my parents. Announcements hung on the lampposts ordering Jewish families to go to the town of Yatki. There were rumors that they would be killed.

Our father gathered us and took us to a neighbor family. With tears in his eyes he begged them for help, to hide us, as Jewish pogroms were about to start. They agreed. We stayed for four months in a barn cellar, and they helped us with whatever they could. My mother was pregnant and gave birth to my brother there. But my mother was afraid that it was

very hard both morally and financially for that family to keep us, and decided that father should ask another family to hide us. So, we moved our hiding place to a family we had been friendly with before the War. This family lived in poverty, but shared what little food they had with us. Very often we stayed hungry and cold in our shelter, shivering from the thought that police and fascists might find out, and that this kind family would suffer because of us.

My mother didn't have any milk to nurse the baby, so she made a doll out of cloth, put some crumbs of bread inside, and let the baby suck on this. With God's help we somehow survived.

I was blond and blue eyed and was often sent with my father or the family's son to go to the villages to beg for food. Sometimes, soldiers stopped us, took bread from us, and shouted that we were taking it to Partisans. They beat us, and we were left without anything. I carried a razor in my boot so that if I was captured I could slit my throat so as not to give away our hiding place. I was only 12 years old at the time.

Humiliation, hunger, cold — this is what our family endured. While I am writing this, tears come to my eyes.

May the warm sun always shine for you, Isaak

Today Isaak is 85 years old, blind, and has life threatening health issues. His beloved wife Galya died from untreated diabetes. They could not afford the medication to save her life.

To help Isaak and others like him, make a special donation to *The Survivor Mitzvah Project* at [www.survivormitzvah.org](http://www.survivormitzvah.org) or send a check to:

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