



The Survivor Mitzvah Project

*"I hope I die first,
because I couldn't
bear to bury him."*



Malka & Abram - Bazaliya Ukraine 2009

These words were spoken to me by Malka about her beloved husband Abram, both in their 90s. I first met them during an SMP humanitarian aid expedition to Ukraine in 2009. It was a harsh winter and the snowy, unplowed roads made it hard to reach them in their distant shtetl, Bazaliya – a tiny village in the middle of nowhere. They are the last two Jews living in the birthplace of my grandfather.

Still very much in love with her husband of 70 years, Malka was concerned about Abram's health. He had fainted repeatedly the night before, as well as several times that week, and there was no doctor and no medication, and no money for either. These two individuals were still living in the house they had built themselves from mud and straw bricks right after the war. They still grew their own food, harvested it and preserved the fruits and vegetables in their root cellar for winter. There was nothing modern about their lifestyle and it seemed as if our visit with them was really a trip back to another century.

We supplied Abramam and Malka with enough money to buy needed medications and pay for medical help. We brought them eyeglasses, soap, Malka a necklace with a Star of David, and Abramam warm gloves. We left them arthritis cream and other over the counter medications as well as enough funds to last them an entire year. We also left with a promise to return.

Because of the generosity of our compassionate donors, we were able to continue sending aid to Malka and Abramam, and in 2013 returned in the summer to visit them.

Things had changed. Abramam was no longer ill. The medications had returned him to health and he was energetic, strong, and seemed much younger than his 93 years. The problem now was Malka. Her health had begun to deteriorate and she was in the first stages of dementia, sometimes unable to remember things, unable to manage to do the heavy chores that are necessary to have enough food to sustain them during the winter. The root cellar, usually filled to capacity, was bare. Their harvest was thin – just a few melons. They hadn't the strength or the ability to prepare for the winter. And the job was too big for Abramam to do alone. Plus he was now consumed with caring for his beloved Malka. Now, after years of growing their food, they needed a source of nutritious food to keep them going. And they needed medications. Again SMP stepped in, and through your help, to this day, we continue to provide for Malka and Abramam.

When asked what was the secret to their long and happy marriage, Malka looked at me, quite alert, and said, "We still love each other."

– Zane Buzby



To help Malka and Abramam and others like them, please donate online at www.survivormitzvah.org

Or send a check to:

**The Survivor Mitzvah Project
2658 Griffith Park Blvd.,
Ste.#299
Los Angeles, CA 90039**

Abramam, Zane, Malka in Bazaliya - Summer 2013