

MICHAEL GRIMBERG SHARES:



Michael – joyfully loves to sing

Oy - fn pri - pe - tshik

“People ask me: “How can you remember everything, you were still a very small child?”

“When facing terrible fear, hunger and cold, and when you see people being killed before your own eyes as a small child, then your memory becomes like the memory of a grown person.” Michael

Today I would like to introduce you to Michael Grimberg. He is such a blessing for us! Michael is a warm and very kind person. For years I have given the testimony, that we find no hate or bitterness in most of the Holocaust victims, and still it always surprises me anew. On the contrary! When we have a meeting with guests and Holocaust survivors who share their heartbreaking, painful stories, then it is Michael who does not want to see our guests so sad and blesses them, cheering them up with his music. He is such a joy!

Michael:

“I was born in the year 1935 in the Ukraine, near Vinica. I have a brother who is three years older. Our mother was an example and a very honest woman who kept the Jewish traditions. Of my father I have only a vague memory. The Russian Army drafted him in 1941, when the war began. I do remember, that he received bread and sugar for provisions, which he gave to us. I was only 6 years old at this time, and never saw my father again. Later on I found out, that he had already been killed by a bomb attack, in 1941. He died in the arms of another man and sent greetings to his family. However, nobody could bury him!

When the war first broke out, my mother thought that the Germans would not do us any harm, because our Yiddish language is so close to German and she knew, that the German soldiers were not bad in the first World-War. But others reported, that Hitler was so bad and all the Jews should run for their lives. We were terribly scared. In the middle of our town lived mostly Jewish people, and around us were the “Christians.”

One day the soldiers came and knocked at our door. My mother took me and my brother and escaped through the back door and we found refuge with my mother’s Christian friend, Haritja. She hid us in her home, but was also scared to be discovered and shot. During the day we hid in the cellar and at night she brought us out and gave us food. For one week we could sleep in her small place on the floor. My mother spoke very good Ukrainian and asked Haritja to spy out the situation and to see, if we could go back to the town. Haritja told us that it was ‘quiet’, and so we went back, only to find our home totally destroyed. We had to sleep outside, in the open air. We had nothing!

The Ukrainian police worked together with the Nazis. Soon they created a Ghetto for us, where four families had to live in only 3 rooms. Every Jew had to cut out his own ‘Star of David’ and sew it on the clothes. I have kept this ‘Star of David’ until today. There was no food in the Ghetto, and we were always hungry.

Around the Ghetto was a place where there was no barbwire. My brother and I went through this open spot and we tried to get some food. Once we even found frozen red-beets. My mother had a winter coat, which she exchanged with some ‘Christians’ for some leftovers of flour and somehow she managed to bake something with water for us. I kept it as long as possible in my mouth. I did not want to swallow it, full of fear to be so hungry again.

People ask me: “How can you remember everything, you were still a very small child?”
When facing terrible fear, hunger and cold, and when you see people being killed before your own eyes as a small child, then your memory becomes like the memory of a grown person.”

“Sing to God, sing praises to his name... his name is the Lord, rejoice before him.

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families...” Ps. 68:4-6



Michael with Anne