

Yisrael Kristal, world's oldest man, finally gets a bar mitzvah

by [Michele Chabin](#) in the [November 8, 2016](#) issue

Yisrael Kristal, 113, considered by Guinness World Records to be the world's oldest man, celebrated his bar mitzvah 100 years after Jewish boys traditionally mark this rite of passage.

The ceremony took place at his local synagogue in the Israeli city of Haifa in October.

Kristal, who survived the Auschwitz death camp where his first wife died (his two children from that marriage died in the Nazi-controlled Lodz ghetto), was born in Poland on September 15, 1903.

He didn't celebrate his bar mitzvah on time because World War I was raging. His father returned from war only to die a year later. His mother had died three years earlier.

An Orthodox Jew his entire life, Kristal continues to pray every day, his daughter, Shulamit Kuperstoch, told reporters. She said her father's longevity doesn't surprise the family, given his will to survive.

When he was liberated from Auschwitz "he weighed 81 pounds, but he gathered himself, he remarried, he had more children, and he built a new family. And he never once said, 'It's too hard, I'm done, I want to die.' Never."

In 1950, Kristal and his second wife and son immigrated to Israel, where he opened a candy factory. His daughter was born in Israel.

When Guinness World Records crowned Kristal the World's Oldest Man earlier this year, he said he credited God with giving him a long life.

"I believe that everything is determined from above, and we shall never know the reasons why. There have been smarter, stronger, and better-looking men than me who are no longer alive," he said. "All that is left for us to do is to keep on working as hard as we can and rebuild what is lost." —Religion News Service