

Faina Melamed And Her Son-In-Law Andrey Makarenko



This is me Faina Melamed and my son-in-law Andrey Makarenko. This photo was taken in Odessa in 2000.

In 1978 my daughter Mila finished school and entered the Faculty of Cryogen Engineering in the Refrigeration College. She made many friends and there were Jewish friends among them. Once she met a Russian guy named Andrei Makarenko, student of the Construction College, at a party. We wanted Mila to marry a good Jewish man, but look what happened. Mila got pregnant and they got married in 1981. Mila and Andrei had a civil ceremony in a registry office.

Andrei came to live with us. The newly weds settled down in the bedroom and we stayed in our passage room. In 1982 my first grandson Igor was born. Mila continued her studies, Andrei worked as a painter and I had to quit work to take care of my grandson. Mila finished her college in 1984 and went to work as an engineer in a design institute. In 1986 our granddaughter Yulia was born. Mila left her work and became a housewife. My husband was very happy about his granddaughter's birth and bought a car that he gave to Mila and Andrei. In 1989 they had an accident. Mila died and Andrei survived. This was the most horrific moment in our life. We buried Mila in the Jewish cemetery. I don't know where we got strength to outlive this grief, but I cried day in and day out. To go on living we took our grandchildren to live with us.

Some time later Andrei married a Russian woman. In 1995 the Jewish school Or Sameach opened in Odessa. Igor went to study in this school. One year later he was circumcised and got a Jewish name of Igal. Yulia also studied in Or Sameach. The children studied Jewish traditions, Ivrit, Jewish prayers and observed Jewish holidays. They go to the synagogue on Jewish holidays and take us with them. Sometimes they ask me to cook for a holiday. They like to observe Pesach. I make wonderful gefilte fish and broth with matzah. Before Pesach Yulia helps me to clean the apartment. I made for the grandchildren holiday supper. When the children grew bigger they went to live with their father, but they often come to see us.

After finishing school Igor entered the Faculty of Economics and Law in Odessa University. Igor studies at the extramural department and works as a consultant assistant in a store selling household appliances. Yulia entered the Faculty of Culturology in Odessa University after finishing school in 2003. We have very nice and caring grandchildren.

Of course, we are in need. It's impossible to live on our pension and we don't have any additional allowances. We receive food packages from Gmilus Hesed, a Jewish organization, and my nephew Yuri (my brother Boris' son) supports us with money. My husband does exercises and goes to swim in the sea in Arcadia every morning, but his age speaks of itself, nevertheless. He has been in hospital twice or three times. He had a heart problem and pneumonia. Yuri paid for his stay in hospital. We receive Jewish newspapers and magazines Or Sameach, Shamrey Sabbath and Lechaim, and we get invitations to various events in Hesed. I want my grandchildren to grow up decent people and I want my husband and me to be healthy and to be no burden to anybody. I want piece and wealth to rule in Israel, America and Ukraine, so that we didn't worry about our close and dear ones.