

Meer Kuyavskis



This is I near the grave of my elder brother Isaac in Haifa , Israel in 1999.

In 1947 I started working in the atelier as a tailor. I was pretty good money there. My skills got better and better and soon I became a good cutter of men's and ladies' garment. I had my own clients and had a rather comfortable living. I rented an apartment from one Jewish lady. It was not far from my work. In couple of years I went to work to the factory, where I was promoted to the foreman.

My life was good. Our family was very friendly. Elder daughter Aldona had also treated me like father and I loved her as my own daughter. I work hard at the factory and also took private orders at home. I provided a good living for my family.

In 1993 my wife Stepha died. I retired in 1993 as my Stepha became bed-ridden. I had to quit work when she became disabled. I had to look after her. She passed away that year. I have lived with my daughter since then. Unfortunately, Aldona's husband died of infarction. His daughter Yustina, has her own children. They are living in Kaunas, but we see each other very rarely as everybody has his own life.

My wife's death and my loneliness happened to take place in the period of state changes- Lithuanian independence. Finally, I got the chance to visit my brothers. I visited my elder brother Isaac in Israel. We have not seen each other for fifty years. In 1998 Isaac died and it was the last time I saw him. His daughter Chava is living in Israel and keeps in touch with my sons. I also went to my native city Lodz, walked along the streets, where ghetto was located. At first, I could not

even recognize that place. My house was not preserved. There was a modern building in its place. Big stone synagogue is not longer there either. As it turned out, fascists put all remaining Jews from ghetto and burnt it. People burnt down quickly, and the stone building of the synagogue was destroyed by artillery. It was hard to walk along the streets from childhood, where the blood of my kin was shed. It was the last time I was in Lodz. I did not go to Auschwitz for the same reason, though the society of ghetto prisoners invited me there on a number of occasions.

Now I am unwell. I became disabled after operation. I am bed-ridden. I live pretty comfortably- get 400 Euros (German pension to the camp prisoners). There was time when I got the compensation from Switzerland for being Dachau prisoner. All of that helps me to get by as well as my daughter Aldona. There is enough money for food, medical care. No money can make up for all those people I lost during war- my perished parents, brothers, with whom I had been severed for many years, and still being unable to be with them. I will not survive a trip to Canada, and they refuse to come to Lithuania. Moishe has a strong antipathy to USSR and I cannot convince him that we are living in a different country now, which is free. Benjamin is not willing to go to Lithuania either. Brothers are helping me. They call me. I am still hoping that I will see them again.