

Simon Glasberg



This is me in Botosani. I can say that I am a fulfilled person, even if I stayed in Romania and was criticized by former classmates who live abroad and who, truth be told, have a much better financial situation than me. My only possessions are a three-room apartment, an automobile, and a Dacia at that - I would have wanted to have a better car, maybe I will get it next year, or two years from now, if we live until then, if we are in good health - a garden - actually, it is my wife's, as mine remained in Radauti next to our parental home, and my middle brother lost it, for the house and land were somehow confiscated when he left for Israel. Back then, under the dictatorial communist regime, they gave you very small, symbolic compensations, which he refused to accept and he has an ongoing lawsuit against the Romanian State, but without any hope of winning the case.

Be that as it may, I feel fulfilled, as I was saying, because my financial situation is modest yet satisfying, taking into account the conditions I was accustomed to for so many years - we are used to eating not only specialties, or driving cars that aren't necessarily luxury - my children made a life for themselves.

And now, after having retired, I want to continue to be useful to society, I am a technical law expert, an expert assessor for real estate and other goods, and I want to render myself useful. That is what I did until recently, now I mainly handle projects for obtaining European funding, vehicles, tractors for farmsteads. I have my office at home - since I have a three-room apartment, one room serves as a dining room where we watch television, one as a living room, and one as an office. I still get working contracts, some of which are in the field of my former profession; for instance, I was recently told that they needed an agro-chemical study this autumn, a soil analysis to determine how to use fertilizers. I take on whatever I can and I try to be useful in any way I can, I charge negotiable, advantageous fees, much smaller than others so that I can get some work, earn

some money - for we need it.

My garden hasn't fared well this year, for there was the drought, and also the hailstone. I still have a decent crop of carrots, some root crops, I had potatoes, some fruit-bearing trees, but they were so damaged by the hailstone that they were affected and all fell to the ground, I have some grapevine left. It is a place where it is peaceful and quiet. I talk to the plants, and they are so obedient, they don't talk back, they listen to me, not a single one moves ostentatiously or defiantly. There are 4 km from my house to the garden - sometimes I even walk there, it's a half an hour's walk.

I still take part in the events organized by the Jewish Community in Botosani. The community's president [Iosif David] summons me, he calls me on the phone from time to time, as he has on this occasion. He knows that I am sometimes busy, for there is the garden as well, and my grandson. For some people only have their wife or husband when they retire, or they only have themselves to look after, and in that case of course they can be a pillar of the Community and of the synagogue. But when you have family, household obligations, you can't be readily available, you can't attend every event. But he sometimes calls me, when there are funerals, for a minyan is needed on such occasions, you can't recite the Kaddish for the dead without a minyan. And on these occasions I perform 'am mitzvah,' as they say.