

## Ella Perlman



This is me. This photo was taken at our home in Riga in 1993.

During perestroika the Jewish life began to revive, and this was very important for me. The Latvian Society of Jewish culture that was actually a Jewish community was established. From the first days we knew how much we needed it. There is a Jewish choir at the community, and I went there the moment I heard about it.

I look forward to our choir rehearsals. Each meeting is a holiday for us. Old and ill people sing in the choir, but when they start singing, they look young and happy. One lady in the choir is blind. She is 86, and her daughter takes her to the choir rehearsals. The daughter also sings in the choir. Both have beautiful voices. Both attend all rehearsals. Some of those I started singing with have passed away. Old age and diseases have no mercy. However, we are like one family. We visit and support people, if they fall ill. We also remember the deceased ones. When I visit my husband and parents' graves, I also bring flowers to put them on the graves of our deceased choir members. Many of them had no relatives left to visit their graves.

The Rahamim social center supports me a lot. They pay my heating bills during the heating season. They also provide medications that are very expensive here. I also have medical insurance for free. The synagogue bought me two trips to the recreation center. I had free treatment and massages there. This is all very important, considering that the pension is not sufficient to cover all expenses. It's also very important for me to know that I've not been abandoned and that there are people remembering and caring about me.