

Beila Gabis



This is me, Beila Gabis, photographed on my son's birthday in a restaurant in Ternopol in 2002.

I think I am a very happy woman regardless of all ordeals that we had to go through. My husband, Motia Gabis, took good care of the children and me. He worked hard and created wonderful living conditions for us. Motia also insisted that I didn't go to work. So, I stayed at home with the children. We didn't observe Jewish traditions, but I raised the children as Jews. They knew about the great suffering their nation had to go through. My husband and I were always together and we were close. He died in 1994. It was a huge loss for me. I buried him beside my mother's grave at the town cemetery. I am very happy for our children and glad that their life is different from ours.

There are some economic difficulties, but I am glad that independent Ukraine gives good opportunities for every nation, including Jews, to develop. I've never been religious. I help my brother with his work in the community. He asks my advice and I am ready to help. I observe Sabbath as tribute to tradition and homage to my family. I light candles and make something delicious. I invite my son and his family or my neighbors. They gave me a book of prayers and I pray for the health and wealth of my loved ones. I don't attend Hesed: there is a lot of bureaucracy there, those officials: I don't like the atmosphere like this. I am old, but I am very optimistic about the future. I would dream to travel to Israel and I love my Motherland Ukraine more than anything in the world. I used to have a dacha. Once a neighbor - a drunkard and rascal - called me zhydovka [kike]. He told me to get out to Israel. I replied to him that I am proud to be a Jew and that if I wanted I would go to Israel and if not - I would stay in my Motherland Ukraine. I told him that he is a disgrace to Ukraine and drinks away its riches and people in Israel have built a prosperous country on stones and the rest of the world admires this country. I hope to see my children, my granddaughter and grandson in Israel. I would dream to see Israel with my own eyes and bow to this great land created by human blood and sweat, to the country and its people. I hope that this dream will come true. My children promised me to buy and send me a plane ticket.