

Sarra Shylman



My granddaughter Evgenia who came to my husband's funeral made this photo of me. Kiev, 2000.

My husband and I lived a happy life. We had many friends and we traveled a lot. Every summer we went to the seashore. We went to concerts and theaters. Our friends and colleagues visited us on holidays and birthdays.

When in 1980s perestroika began my husband Chaim and I had a small hope for positive changes in our country and even if they take place after we die our granddaughter will live to see them. Of course, there are many hardships during this turning period, but I still believe that Ukraine will become a democratic, free and prosperous country.

In 2000 I lost my husband Chaim. We lived together for almost 50 years. I am happy to have granddaughter Evgenia and her mother Valia. They came to the funeral and spent some time with me afterward. Valia and Evgenia often call me and come to see me every year. They visited me recently. They painted windows and doors and helped me to prepare for the winter. In 2002 Evgenia got married. I am so happy for my granddaughter and I hope to cuddle my great grandchildren.

When my husband was alive he and I often went to celebrate Jewish holidays in the Hesed. We attended the synagogue and a course of Torah studies that our rabbi's wife conducted. We got together once a week at the synagogue. She read an article from the Torah and then we had discussions about it. We were not really religious with him: we didn't celebrate Sabbath or follow

kashrut, but we liked to be involved in observation of Jewish traditions. When I lost Chaim I had a sudden change in my heart: I began to believe in God. It's difficult for me to go to the synagogue or Hesed alone. Hesed assists me with medication and food packages and I am grateful to them. I light candles every Saturday, celebrate Sabbath, pray, observe kashrut and fast at Yom Kippur. I do not forget to celebrate all holidays, however small celebrations they are, but it is my heart's need.