

Geta Jakiene



This is my picture recently made in Kaunas in October 2005 during the interview.

In 1946 I got married. In 1947 I got pregnant and my husband insisted that I should leave my work. I became a housewife since that time. We lived comfortably. In summer we rented a dacha either in Palanga or in Prenai. We also went to the resorts, e.g. to Druskenkai, where we had mineral water. We had never owned a dacha. Husband bought a car in the early 1960s and we went on vacation by car. We almost did not go to the theaters. I enjoyed reading. I read a lot of books of Russian classics, Jewish and European authors.

My husband and I managed to preserve a true Jewish spirit, which was raised in us. Yiddish was spoken at home. We also tried to keep Jewish traditions the best way we could, though it was very hard in soviet times. I tried observing kashrut- at any rate I never mixed milk and meat food, never had pork at home. I failed to observe Sabbath, as Saturday was a working day- Kalmin had to work, boys had to go to school. I tried not to do anything on Saturday though- no laundry, cleaning. We marked holidays- Pesach, Rosh Hashanah, Shaveot, Simchat Torah the way it was done in grandmother's house. Husband and I obligatorily attended synagogue on holidays. We were the members of Kaunas Jewish religious community.

In 1995 my husband died at the age of 70. I am by myself since then. I meet with my brother's wife and sister on Jewish holidays at my place. My son with his family also come to me on holidays to communicate with me. I try to cook delicious Jewish food the way it was done by my grandmother.

Now I get a small social pension as I did not work. I get 233 litas (editor's note.: about 90 USD). But I am not needy as my sons are helping me, Jakov helps me with money and Gerts physically and morally, he impaired his health because of him. I had five infarctions. Recently, I have spent three weeks in two hospitals. He comes to me three times a day to fall in drops in my eyes as I have glaucoma and cataract. He is the best sitter in the world. He does laundry and cleaning, buys medicine, goes shopping. I do not know what I would do without him. I am trying to be the best friend for him. I asks me for advice and it is important for me to be useful for him in some way. Jewish community is also helping me. The nurse looks after me. They give me some money for the medicine, give me products. When I felt better, I went to the community for all kinds of events, holidays, meetings with interesting people. I used the library. I do not go anywhere over the past three years as I am sick, but I am not forgotten. Now before Rosh Hashanah I got a greeting card from the community and a basket with food. Soon there would be Yom Kippur, the day when the fate of all Jews for the coming year would be decided. Now I am not fasting as I am sick, but still on that day I will ask God to give wellbeing and health to my children and grandchildren. I will also ask to prolong my life as I know that my son will feel bad without me.