

Sarah Kaplan



This is a picture of me, taken in 2002 in Lvov.

When the emigration to Israel began in the 1970s I was inspired to move there. But then the Yom Kippur War began and we stayed. In 1987, during perestroika, we decided to move to Israel. We received an invitation from Israel in 1991, submitted all necessary documentation and obtained foreign passports, visas and permits. We had our belongings shipped to Israel. Shortly before our departure the doorbell rang. I looked through the eyelet and thought my friend's son was standing at the door, so I opened it. Three bandits wearing masks stormed into the house. They demanded money, but we didn't have any left. I gave them my golden jewelry, our wedding rings, golden watch and my earrings. I told them that it was all we had. They brutally beat us.

After they left I asked our neighbors to call the ambulance. Two different ambulances took my husband and me to the hospital. Zeilik died on the way to the hospital, and I had an extensive infarction. When I came back to my senses and heard that my husband had died I wished I had died, too. I didn't want to take any medication and refused injections. The chief doctor of the hospital saved me. He was a Jew, and when he heard what had happened to us he was committed to save me. He brought medication and food from home. He fed me begging me to live. He brought me back to life.

My husband was buried in the Jewish section of the town cemetery while I was in hospital. He was buried without any rituals. When I returned home I borrowed some money and went back to work. I was 75. There wasn't much I could do, but I worked from morning to night. I didn't get our luggage

back. I managed to buy some furniture from what I earned.

Now I live alone in this half-empty house. I know who robbed us. Every now and then I see one of those bandits. He passes by as if I weren't there. I was afraid to go to court because I was scared of the bandits.

The Jewish charity organization Hesed provides important assistance to me. I get free meals, medication and Jewish newspapers. Hesed often invites me to the club where I have Jewish friends. Of course, I won't go to Israel any more now, but the country is very dear to me. I feel as if it were my motherland, and I think Hesed is a part of Israel. This helps me to continue to live my long and difficult life.