

Mozes Katz With His Wife Vera Katz



My wife Vera lighting Saturday candles. I am sitting. This photo was taken in my house in Khust in 1989.

All my life I did my best to observe Jewish traditions. I had to go to work on Saturday, though, since it was a working day. However, I celebrated all Jewish holidays and never worked on them. After we got married Vera began to attend the synagogue in Korolevo on Saturday and Jewish holidays. She lit candles on Friday. We celebrated Jewish holidays at home. We followed the kashrut and we still have kosher utensils. We also kept special fancy crockery for Pesach in the attic. Jewish women taught Vera to cook Jewish food and make challah for Sabbath. Gradually my wife adopted the way of life I was used to.

When Ukraine gained independence after the breakup of the USSR in 1991, Jews got an opportunity to be Jews in the full meaning of this word. I think there is no state anti-Semitism at present or, at least, there is almost none. At least, I haven't heard of refusal in admission or employment because someone is a Jew.

There is Hesed that provides big assistance to old people and single mothers. After Hesed opened in Subcarpathia in 1999 my son went to work there as curator of Khust district.

There are not many Jews left. Many emigrated to USA, Israel and Germany. Now there are mostly mixed families: Jewish men married to non-Jewish women and vice versa. Few people go to the synagogue now. There are not enough even for a minyan at times. People don't want to come to the synagogue, even though there are no bans. Young people don't need it, at least, the majority of young people. I go to the synagogue on Saturday and Jewish holidays and pray at home. I place tefillin on my hand and head like they taught me when I was a child and pray.