

Sarra Shpitalnik And Her Husband Moisey Shpitalnik



This is me and my husband Moisey Shpitalnik. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1997. This is the celebration of my 70th birthday at work in the Jewish library. In 1984 I became a pensioner, but I stayed at work part-time. My mother broke her hip and could only get up from her bed when Moisey and I supported her. She spent most of the time in her room reading and watching television. My mother died of cancer in 1989. We buried her in the Doina, in the Jewish sector since the Jewish cemetery had been closed by then. By this time the Jewish society appeared in Kishinev. It was something very different for us. There were lectures on Jewish traditions where material and courses in Hebrew were available. In the 1990s the rest of our friends moved to Israel. In 1990 my husband and I decided to move to Israel. We studied Hebrew for half a year. We obtained a visa, when all of a sudden I was overwhelmed with fear. Our friends weren't very encouraging: 'You have no children. You won't have anything to do here. Moisey wouldn't be able to find a job with his occupation, and you wouldn't get any allowances since you've not come of proper age.' This had such an impact on me that when we went to the cemetery to visit the graves of our dear ones, I said, 'Whatever you decide I'm not going.' He said, 'All right, if you don't want to go.' He went back to work though he was a pensioner, and I saw an announcement that our library needed a person who knew Romanian and Yiddish. I went to work there. When the charity center Hessed Jehuda opened in Kishinev, I went to work there as a volunteer. Before they got their own building they worked in our library partially. They generated the lists of needy Jews, distributed matzah, or clothes. Every month I lecture on Jewish literature for them. Now I'm working on a lecture on Kanovich, a Jewish Lithuanian writer, who lives in Israel now. We've had a club of pensioners in Hessed for ten years and I'm an active member there. In 1995 I celebrated the presentation of my book 'Jews of Moldova' at the library; it's an annotated guide in Romanian. In 2000, its extended and added edition was issued with a resume in English. Here in the library we celebrated my 70th anniversary and my husband and my golden wedding in 2001. Our colleagues asked Moisey to make his outstanding gefilte fish, and it was great. Moisey died two years after this anniversary. I buried him in the Jewish cemetery near my father and bought myself a place there.