

Beila Uchitel With Her Granddaughters Sopha Klochko And Ella Koblik



This is my mother Beila Uchitel with her granddaughters Sopha Klochko (first from left) and Ella Koblik. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1965.

My mama tried to observe Jewish traditions. Mama's relatives joined us on Pesach. I remember the first Pesach celebrations in Rybnitsa were interesting. Mama had special crockery for Pesach. She had her own recipe to make keyzele. She made matzah observing the proportion between flour and water. Two-three women got together to make matzah at home. Later the synagogue began to make matzah and mama made an order for matzah in January. There is a mourning day before Rosh Hashanah. Mama went to the grave of her father David Trostianetskiy in Rezina on this day. Mama fasted on Yom Kippur. My stepfather retired, mama received 250-300 rubles in old currency [Tamara means the monetary reform in 1961, denomination of the ruble in the USSR]. Mama began to feed pigs to sell pork to save money for a new house. She managed to buy a small house. In 1962 my stepfather died in Rybnitsa. He was buried according to the Jewish ritual, in a takhrikhim, and mama invited a rabbi. I always recall Shabs with gratitude, he raised me, and gave me a chance to get education, he was a good father. Mama sold her house in Rybnitsa and moved in with us in 1964. In summer my second daughter Sopha was born. Two years later we received a big three-bedroom apartment in Zelinskogo Street. Ella went to a kindergarten, and Sopha was in a nursery school.

According to our family tradition, we also celebrated Jewish holidays. My mama, who lived in Kishinev then, went to the synagogue, and had a seat of her own there. Each Jew is accustomed to have his own seat. On Rosh Hashanah they bring money in 'schis!' [basin, Yiddish], and mama always made a contribution. On Yom Kippur she stayed at the synagogue a whole day fasting. My girls and I came to take her home from there. My girls recalled after she died: 'mama, do you remember how we accompanied grandma?' On Pesach mama bought a chicken at the market and

took her to a shochet. She made a special liqueur and took out her Pesach crockery. She had a beautiful dish to serve pudding in it. On Chanukkah we gave Chanukkah gelt to our girls. I told them this childhood story of mine, when my sister and I got different coins. I always gave my daughters the same amount of money. On Purim mama and I made hamantashen. So my daughters knew all Jewish traditions.

In early 1990 my mama fell severely ill. She died in July at the age of 83. Mama was buried in the Doina [cemetery in Kishinev], in the Jewish section of it. We observed the Jewish ritual. I invited a man from the synagogue, my relatives arrived from Rybnitsa, whoever stayed in Moldavia. The man from the synagogue had a beautiful service for mama. Mama was covered with a ritual cover that he took with him after the service. Then we sat Shivah for 7 days. Everything was arranged in the Jewish manner.