

Elizabeth Waiser Biography

Elizabeth Waiser. Biography

Elizabeth Waiser

Kiev

Ukraine

Interviewer: Ella Levitskaya

Elizabeth Waiser is a tall woman looking young for her age. Six years ago her son died and her husband died two years ago. She lives with her husband's older sister Clara Waiser in a two-room apartment. Clara is about 90 years old. Elizabeth was confined to bed 4 years ago due to hip fracture. Volunteers from Hesed helped her to learn to get up and move about her room. Her apartment is in the basement and the windows are on the level of the ground. Elizabeth is a very sociable woman. She just loved to talk with me. When she gets overwhelmed with the discussions she begins to use words in Yiddish. Her neighbors interfered with our interview several times asking Elizabeth how she was doing. They came to the window to give her few apples or a newspaper.

My father's family lived in Bairamcha, Saratsk district, Ismail province in Rumania. It was a very small provincial town with small houses and the population of about 150 families. My grandfather Shmil-Gersh Braverman came from Bairamcha as well as several generations of his ancestors. My grandfather was born in 1860s. My grandmother Zlota, I don't know her nee name, also came from this town. She was also born in 1860s. My grandfather owned a food store. He also had other essential goods: kerosene lamps, candles and clothing and footwear. When there were more than few customers in the store my grandmother or my father helped my grandmother. It was a small store in the house where the family lived. It was a small stone-faced wooden house. The family had 3 small rooms and a kitchen. There was a living room, my grandparents' bedroom and a children's room in the house. I remember the living room. There were small windows in the house and it was always dark in there. There was a sofa, a table and six chairs with velvet upholstery and carved legs in the living room.

My grandparents had two sons. My father Isaac was an older son, born in 1890. He had a younger brother Berl, born in 1896. My grandmother and grandfather were religious people. My grandfather went to synagogue every day. My grandmother went to synagogue on Saturday and holidays. They celebrated Shabbat and Jewish holidays at home. My grandmother was a housewife that was customary for Jewish families at that time. A Jewish woman was supposed to be a good wife and mother. Perhaps, that was why Jewish families didn't make it their goal to give education to daughters. Jewish boys studied at cheder and girls were taught to read and write, traditions and prayers. My father's parents were not rich. They made ends meet in the family and had sufficient food. My grandmother made and fixed clothes for the family. They didn't have a housemaid.

We don't have any photos of my grandfather, but I can see him looking at my father's photographs. My father looked very much like my grandfather and even smiled in the same way. My grandfather wore a dark suit, a tie and a hat that was customary at that time. He didn't have a beard or payots.

He had a moustache. My grandmother always wore a shawl. She wore long dark skirts and blouses almost covering her neck. Even when it was hot in summer my grandmother still wore long-sleeved blouses. She had a fancy dark blue gown to go to synagogue.

They spoke Yiddish in my father's family. They also knew Rumanian that was a state language. My father and his brother studied at cheder located near the synagogue. My father told me that he had a very strict teacher that could punish the boys if they didn't do their homework appropriately. They learned to read and write in Yiddish and Hebrew, studied the Torah and Talmud. They also studied mathematics, literature, history and geography. When my father turned 13 he had Barmitzva at the synagogue. My grandmother arranged a festive dinner at home.

Most of the population in Bairamcha was Jewish. There were also Moldavians and Russians. Jewish families lived mostly in the central part of the town and non-Jewish population lived in the outskirts, as they were involved in farming for the most part. Like in most of small towns Jews in Bairamcha were handicraftsmen and tradesmen. There was a very skilled hat maker in Bairamcha. He was a Jew. He had customers come even from distant villages to have him make a hat or a winter coat for them. There was a shohet in the town and butchers sold kosher meat at the market. There was a big two-storied synagogue in town. All Jews attended it on Saturday. They had a very good rabbi. Jews came from other towns to listen to his sermons. My grandfather and father had a pew at the synagogue. My grandfather was a very respectable man. He was wise and fair and always tried to help people.

My father helped my grandfather in the store since he was in his teens. He managed very well and it gained good experience. At 18 my father became a clerk at a garment store. My father was a very decent employee and his customers were very pleased with his services.

My mother's family lived in the town of Ataki. There was Jewish, Moldavian and Russian population in Ataki. Ataki belonged to Russia before 1918. After the revolution in Russia Pridnestroviye became part of Rumania. Russian was spoken there as much as Rumanian. My mother's father's name was Yankl Shein. He was born in Ataki in 1860s. My mother told me that my grandfather came from a very poor family that had many children. He had to work very hard to build up his own life. My grandmother's name was Pesl and she came from a village near Ataki. My grandfather was introduced to her by matchmakers. I don't have any information about my grandmother's family. My grandmother was born in 1870s. I only know that she came from a poor family and had many sisters. It was difficult for a girl from a poor family and with no dowry to find a match at that time. There were matchmakers that traveled from one town to another offering their services. My grandfather accepted their services and liked the girl that they suggested. He decided that she was not spoiled and would not nag to him about his not earning much enough. They got married and my grandmother moved to her husband in Ataki. They lived in a small house near the Dnestr.

My grandmother and grandfather came from religious families. They observed all traditions, celebrated Shabbat and all Jewish holidays. My grandparents had two children. My mother Mindl was born in Ataki in 1901. Her younger sister Freda was 3 years younger. My grandfather had to work hard long hours to provide for the family. My grandmother was a housewife. My mother and her sister had classes with a teacher that taught them at home. My mother could read and write in Hebrew and studied the Torah. They spoke Yiddish at home.

My mother told me how she met my father. He came to Ataki on his business related to purchase of goods for his store. He saw my mother and liked her a lot. My mother was very pretty. My father came to Ataki several times and then he finally asked my mother whether she would marry him. He met my mother's parents and they liked him. My father was a very reserved and calm man. They got married shortly afterward. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a huppah in Bairamcha. My mother wanted to keep her wedding gown for her daughter or granddaughter. I loved to try it on when I was small. It was a white silk gown decorated with laces. When we were going to evacuation in 1941 we left the gown at home and it burnt along with the house.

After their wedding my parents rented a 3-room apartment. My father worked at the store and my mother was a housewife. The owner of the store noticed my father's skills and appointed him as supervisor at the store.

In 1920 my parents had their first baby. My mother was 19 then. Few months before their son was born my mother's father Yankl Shein died. Jewish mothers are usually given the right to give names to their first babies and my mother named her son Yankl (Jacob) after her father. My second brother was born in 1922. He was named Joseph. In 1924 my third brother Froim was born. This childbirth was very difficult for my mother and doctors didn't allow her to have more children. But my mother wished to have a daughter. She told me that when she got pregnant she decided to have a baby in spite of what doctors had told her. So I was born in 1927. I was named Lisa and only when the authorities were issuing my passport in 1944 they put down my name as Elizabeth.

I was the last child in the family. I was much loved and spoiled. My grandfather Shmil-Gersh loved me dearly. He always cuddled and kissed me when I came to see my grandparents. I used to ride on my grandfather's shoulders in the yard.

My father's younger brother Berl met my mother's younger sister Frida at my parents' wedding and fell in love with her. She was as beautiful as my mother. Berl decided to marry her. Jewish rules didn't allow brothers to marry sisters. They say that if this happens God will give everything best to one family and everything bad including ailments and poverty - to another. But Berl didn't want to believe any of this. My mother said that he probably obtained rabbi's consent to this marriage. One way or another they got married in two or three years after my parents' wedding. They lived in Bairamcha. Their older daughter Lisa was the same age as I. They had four children. Their youngest son was born in 1940.

We had a good Jewish family. I had wonderful parents and good brothers. I remember how clean our house was. My mother was a great housewife and was very handy. She embroidered and made clothes, looked after the children, did shopping, cooked and cleaned. We never wasted money in our family and my mother managed to have everything necessary for our living and save something for a rainy day.

My parents were religious and were raising us religious. They always celebrated Shabbat. My mother didn't cook on Saturday. She did her shopping and cooking on Friday morning. My mother cooked enough food to last for two days and put it in the oven that kept it warm for few days. In winter our non-Jewish neighbor came to start a fire in the stove. On Friday we sat to dinner after the evening prayer and lighting candles. My father blessed the children and holy Saturday. We had Gefilte fish. My mother was best at making fish. She also made halas. There was a bakery in the town, but my mother preferred her own halas. She said they tasted different. My mother also made

a boiled chicken. Jews traditionally make broth and boiled chicken. On Saturday my parents went to synagogue and had a rest. They did not work at all. Sometimes my father's brother Berl and his family visited us and we played with their children.

We celebrated all Jewish holidays at home. At Pesach my mother always bought over 3 dozen kilos of matzah, sufficient for the family and guests that we usually had on holidays. My mother always did the general cleanup of the house and we helped her. On the eve of Pesach my brothers and I walked the house with a candle and a chicken feather gathering all bread crumbs. We had to sweep them on a sheet of paper with the chicken feather and burn them all later. My mother cooked very delicious traditional food. She made fish and chicken and puddings: potato pudding, mamalyga (editor's note: a dish made from corn flour and water) and matzah and egg pudding. She also made tzymes from carrots and beans. My mother made strudels with jam, raisins and nuts and honey cakes. In the morning we went to synagogue. We had guests at Pesach. We also had the first Seder. I didn't know Hebrew and couldn't understand what my father was saying. My mother used to explain me later. We all drank special red wine. I was too small and had water with a drop of wine. My father also put an extra wine glass for prophet Elijah. My mother told me that this prophet comes to every Jewish house at night at Pesach and sips wine from each glass. When I was small I couldn't understand how he could manage to make the rounds of all Jewish houses. We had guests on all days at Pesach and visited my grandmother and grandfather and my father's brother Berl. His daughter Lisa was my friend.

At Purim all neighbors shared delicacies with one another. My mother baked fludn. She made the stuffing from ground nuts, sugar, cocoa and honey and baked thin leaf-shaped cookies. She put the stuffing between two leaves. My mother put a white napkin on the plate and fludn, a couple of slices of strudel, few candy, an orange and an apple on it. She covered this plate with a napkin and we, children, took it to our neighbors. Their children brought us their treatments. My mother was a great housewife. I learned a lot from her.

At Succoth my father made a small booth in the yard covered with green branches. He placed a table inside and we had all our meals in this booth.

Besides Jewish holidays before 1940 we celebrated one Rumanian holiday: birthday of the king of Rumania. I don't remember the king's name. I only remember how festive this celebration was. All people celebrated this holiday regardless of their nationality. We were citizens of Rumania. It was a lot of fun. People danced and sang in the streets. My mother told me there were fireworks in bigger towns on this day, but we didn't have then in our town. When I was 4 my mother made me a beautiful Rumanian folk costume. I recited poems at the celebration wearing this costume. I remember this very well. People applauded me and I enjoyed it greatly. Then people gave me candy.

In 1932 my grandfather Shmil-Gersh died. I went to my grandfather's funeral. All furniture was removed from a bigger room. My grandfather was lying on a straw mat on the floor wrapped in white cloth. We all were sitting on the floor wailing. My mother told me to take off my shoes. She took off her shoes, too. Then I saw that other people also had their shoes off. People were saying that my grandfather was a very good and kind man and how well loved he was. Many people came to the cemetery. The rabbi said a prayer. When people were leaving the cemetery a woman at the egress poured water onto their hands. After the funeral my father didn't go to work for a few days. My

mother told me that one couldn't go to work during mourning. My mother and I often visited my grandmother. My grandmother died in spring 1940.

My brothers and I studied at a Rumanian secondary school. As for Jewish schools, they were primary schools, 4 years and our parents wanted us to get a good education and sent us to a Rumanian school to study Rumanian and have no problems with getting further education. I have a good conduct of Rumanian. There were Jewish, Rumanian, Moldavian and Russian children in our school. We were all friends and had no problems with our nationality. I studied 6 years at school when the Soviet power was established in 1940. Few people in the town were arrested including my father's master. The Soviet authorities explained to employees of the store that there no more masters and everything belonged to the people. My father continued to work as supervisor in the store. Our town of Bairamcha was renamed to Novorossiysk, Saratsk district, Odessa region. My school became a Russian school. I studied there for another year when the war began.

The Soviet authorities were propagating for getting education in Russia. Our older brother Jacob decided to go to Russia and convinced his brothers to join him. All three of them went to Russia in 1940. They went to different locations in Russia. Jacob became an apprentice at a fire unit in the town of Kaminski, Rostov region. Joseph got a job at a plant in the vicinity of Gorky in Ivanovo region. The youngest Froim became an apprentice of locksmith in the town of Rubtsovsk of Rubtsovsk region. He was 15 years old.

On 22 June 1941 the Great patriotic War began. We were woken by the roar of explosions and couldn't understand what was going on. On Sunday morning we heard an announcement on the radio that fascists attacked the Soviet Union. There were many Jewish families in Bairamcha. And only 2 or 3 families evacuated. The rest of Jews perished. They were slaughtered like sheep. My aunt Frida had 4 small children. Lisa was of my age. The youngest was 9 months old. Frida was holding the baby when a fascist came a stabbed the baby with a bayonet. Frida fainted and fascists shot her. Her husband Berl and three older children also perished. Fascists killed our 28 relatives. Many other people perished on that day. We got to know about it when we returned to Bairamcha after the war.

My father insisted that we left Bairamcha. He said that he could only pray for his sons that were in Russia but he wanted to rescue my mother and me. My father was ordered to evacuate fabrics from the store. He loaded a cart and there was little space left for us to load few pillows and some clothes. We headed for Nikolaev where my father handed all fabric over to the sales and consumer department obtaining a confirmation that he had handed over all goods. My mother egged him to leave some fabric for a dress for me, but my father said that he had never in his life touched something that was not his. He said that if we were in need God would help us to get what we needed. We got on a train and moved on. We reached the town of Guriev in Kazakhstan. I was 13, but I was tall and looked like a 17-year-old girl. There was evacuation agency at the railway station in Guriev and its employees offered me a job of a telephone operator. I agreed. This was how my work career began.

We moved to Novobogatinsk where we found a place to live. It was a 4-room hose. Our landlords lived in two rooms. We moved into one room and another room was occupied by a family from Moscow: a mother, a grandmother and two children. My father got a job at a store. My mother didn't work. She was a housewife. She spent her time receiving bread and cereals per our food

coupons. She had to get up early to stand in lines. Sometimes she had to stand in lines a whole day. My mother didn't have any warm clothes with her. My father got a pair of pressed wool winter boots and we took turns to wear them. It was a very cold winter and my mother had continuous colds. She also had to bring and cut wood for the stove and fetch water from the ice-covered well. My mother was doing her best to make something eatable from what was available. I was a telephone operator and was doing well at work. Most of operators were married women whose husbands were at the front.

I didn't go to school. I had to earn my living. My father and I had certificates of employees and my mother had a dependant card. We could get 600 grams of bread per day per our cards. This was different bread of bran and peas. It was heavy and when shop assistants were weighing it there were always smaller make-weights. My mother always told me to eat make-weights as I was growing up and was constantly hungry.

We had no information about my brothers. My mother kept crying. Once we received a money transfer for 1000 rubles. I went to the post office and saw that the sender was Jacob Braverman. That was how we got to know that Jacob was alive. He was wounded at the front and stayed in hospital. He found us through the evacuation inquiry office. My brother got a two-week leave after he was released from hospital and he came to see us. How happy we were to see him! However, we didn't know anything about Froim and Joseph until the end of the war.

In 1944 when Odessa region was liberated we returned to Bairamcha. Half of the town was ruined. There were very few locals that survived. All Jews were exterminated by fascists and non-Jews perished during air raids and bombing. Many houses were empty. We moved into one of such houses. When Chairman of the town council heard that we were back he called my father and said to him: "Isaac, you have a beauty of a daughter. Look, she won't even find a match to marry in Bairamcha, because fascists killed all Jews. I feel sorry for the girl and you have to take her out of here". My father decided to move to Chernovtsy. Chernovtsy wasn't destroyed by the war. Shops were open; there was plenty of food and goods. People treated Jews nicely in Chernovtsy. There was no demonstration of anti-Semitism. We felt there at home soon. The local people told us that it had been so for ages. The Jews were patrons of arts and music. This area initially belonged to Austrian Hungary, then Hungary and Rumania.

There was a Jewish school and hospital for poor Jews and a Jewish children's hospital in Chernovtsy before the war. There were 67 synagogues! At present there is one synagogue in town. At one time Chernovtsy was called "a small Paris", because it was a very culturally developed town. We packed our things and moved to the village of Storozhenets not far from Chernovtsy. We were allowed to move into an empty house. My father went to work at the hardware store. I got a job of telephone operator in Storozhenets. My mother didn't work. She became very sickly in evacuation. Doctors diagnosed heart problems that she had. Her condition got worse gradually and in 1951 my mother fell very ill and had to stay in bed. My father and I were looking after her. Shortly after we moved to Storozhenets my three brothers came to see us. They wrote to the town council in Bairamcha and got our new address from there. They were at the front during the war, but they survived. After leaving their parents' home my brothers forgot all about Jewish traditions. They got fond of communist ideas instead propagating equality and brotherhood of all people. They became Soviet people that had no nationality. Their families didn't observe Jewish traditions or celebrate holidays,

either.

They were all married. Joseph had a Russian wife. He met her at the front. She was a nurse. They had three sons. After the war Joseph returned to Gorky. He was a turner at the same plant where he had worked before the war. He died in Gorky in 1992. My younger brother Froim lived in Rubtsovsk. He had a Jewish wife. His beautiful wife Fania and he had a daughter. In early 1970s Froim and his family moved to the US. He died in 1999. His wife and daughter live in the US. His daughter got married. She has two children. My older brother Jacob went to Guriev after the war. Americans worked on construction of a plant there. Jacob worked at the construction and upon its completion he went to the US. He settled down in Brooklyn, New York, where he opened a store "Yasha Braverman". Jacob died in Brooklyn in 1990.

In March 1953 Stalin died. I cried a lot. But I didn't understand the extent of our loss. Life was much better during the Stalin regime than it is now. It was a good and merry time. I miss this period. There was no unemployment. People had work and received salary with no delays. Stores were full of goods and products. People could afford to buy what was sold in stores. As for now, I can only recall this good old time thinking of how to manage with my small pension. They say there was anti-Semitism during Stalin regime. I don't know, I never faced any myself. I could get a job and I never heard the word "zhyd".

My mother was very sad when my brothers left. When she was dying she said that a flame of yearning for her children was burning in her heart. My mother died in 1953. She was 52 years old. My father and I buried her according to the Jewish tradition at the Jewish corner of the cemetery in Storozhenets. I missed my mother so much. I wore mourning clothing and my eyes were always full of tears.

In 3 months after my mother died I went to see a friend of mine in Chernovtsy. She asked me why I looked so sad. I told her that my mother died and my heart was broken. She poured me a cup of tea and asked me to wait while she went to see her acquaintance. This acquaintance happened to be a sister of my future husband. She lived with her brother and their aunt Rachel. My friend went to see her acquaintance and left a note for my future husband to come and see her as soon as he came home from work. In less than an hour the door opened and my future husband came to see my friend still wearing his working clothes. He wasn't handsome, but he had a very good and kind face. My friend introduced him to me and he said that he was lonely and wanted to have his life organized. He also expressed 3 requirements to his future wife. She was to be a good housewife (I told him that I was good at housekeeping, I learned everything from my mother. Then he said that she had to know how to handle money. I also learned from my mother to save money and handle it well. His 3rd requirement to his future wife was to be a beautiful woman. I said to him 'As for this, it will be up to you'. I had long legs and a mop of thick hair. He asked my permission to meet my father and ask for his consent to our marriage.

My husband David Waiser was born in Dombroveny village in Rumania in 1923. He could hardly remember his parents. They died when he was a small boy. His older sister Haya -Clara in Russian, raised him. During the war Clara was in evacuation in Karaganda. She worked at a coal mine. David was in infantry at the front. After the war he returned home where he was told that their house was ruined and his sister moved to Chernovtsy. David came to Chernovtsy and got a job of laborer at the "Vostok" factory manufacturing domestic chemicals.

Before his arrival to Storozhenets I did shopping at the market and cooked a dinner. My husband met my father and liked him a lot. He talked with my father. My father told him to talk to me about his proposal, because it was me he was going to live with. We got married within a month. I didn't know him. But I took the risk. I always dreamed to have a hardworking husband. I didn't want an intellectual. We didn't have a wedding. We had a civil registry ceremony and his sister made a small dinner at his home. My mother saved all the money I was earning after the war in a bank. When we got married I gave this entire amount to my husband. I also packed my belongings and we moved them to Chernovtsy. In Chernovtsy I went to work as telephone operator and worked there until I retired in 1986. I did well at work and got along well with my colleagues.

We received a dwelling in a basement from the factory. We've lived here all our life. We renovated it for the money that my mother had saved for me. David was very handy. There was nothing he couldn't do. He was good at welding and was a good tinsmith. He could fix sewing machines and was a good electrician and plumber. He did everything at home. He also helped other people to fix things. He didn't charge anything for his services and I always said to him "God forbid to take money from our neighbors. Neighbors are closer than a family. Our relatives are far away and neighbors are here. They need something from you today and tomorrow you will be in need". I get along well with my neighbors.

My husband's aunt Rachel, his father's sister, was a communist during the Rumanian rule. When the Soviet power was established she was sent to Siberia. She was good at sewing and she worked as a seamstress in exile. After she was released she returned to Chernovtsy. She was a presser at the garment factory. My husband's sister and aunt were renting a room. My husband asked my permission to have them move in with us. I had no objections and they moved into this dwelling. Aunt Rachel was looking after our son and we all went to work.

My son was born in 1955. We named him Efim after my husband's father. According to Jewish customs it is a mother's right to name her first baby. When my husband asked me what name I was going to give him I replied that I give this right to name our baby to my husband. My husband loved our son dearly. He even bathed the baby. My father came on a visit to take a look at his grandson. Once he went out, slipped and fell in the street and broke his hip. We had to take him to hospital. After he came home from hospital we realized that he couldn't go on living just by himself and he stayed with us. We put a wardrobe in the middle of the room and put my father's bed in the corner. I looked after my father. My father said to me before he died "I don't know what I would have done without you". My father died in 1969. My husband and I buried him at the Jewish cemetery in Chernovtsy according to Jewish tradition. The rabbi said kadesh over my father's grave. My husband's aunt Rachel Waiser died in 1984.

My husband and I came from religious families. We always believed in God like our parents taught us. We observed all Jewish traditions in our family. We fasted before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and celebrated Pesach. I was a good housewife and had all traditional food made on holidays. I cooked Gefilte fish like my mother taught me. We worked at Shabbat, because Saturday was a working day. But I always cooked on Friday. In the evening my husband and I prayed and I lit candles and only then we sat down to dinner. On holidays my husband and I went to the synagogue. We didn't go to synagogue on Saturday. My husband and I spoke Yiddish and Russian at home. We spoke Russian to our son, but he has heard Yiddish since he was a baby and so he

learned it himself.

We also celebrated Soviet holidays and got together with our neighbors in the yard. We sang Soviet songs and went to parades. Although we couldn't afford much we enjoyed what we had.

In 1970s many Jews were moving from the USSR and my husband and I were thinking about it. We decided to stay. We were born here and grew up in this country. Members of our family were buried here. We decided to stay and live our life here. Not all Jews live in Israel. Of course, it was our dream to visit Israel, but we could never afford it.

My son was very successful at school. I tried to convince him to go to the institute after finishing school, but he saw how difficult it was for us to make our living and he decided to go to work. He took a course of electronic equipment maintenance specialists and got a job at the "Electronmach" plant. My son was a wonderful, kind and caring man. He was interested in the Jewish religion, culture and history and studied a lot. After Ukraine gained independence my son was one of the founders of the first Jewish association. Efim taught Jewish history at Hesed. He was very fond of it. Girls liked Efim, but he didn't have time to meet with them. I told him that he had to think about getting married and having his own family, that his father and I would not always be with him. It could never occur to me that I would bury my own son.

When he told me that he was planning to go on vacation to Poland with his friend I tried to talk him out of it as if I had a bad inkling. He fell ill with encephalitis in Poland and his arms and legs were paralyzed and his friend escorted him back to Ukraine in an ambulance vehicle. He stayed in hospitals for a long time and I was always beside him, but there was no working cure for him. My son died in 1996. My husband and I buried him at the Jewish corner of the town cemetery and installed a gravestone on his grave. After my son's funeral I was overwhelmed with grief. I fell at home and broke my arm. My husband was taking care of me. David was a very good husband and father. I was a happy wife, because I only heard words of love from my husband. In a year I fell another time and broke my hip. I've been confined to bed for 4 years. In January 2001 my husband had an infarction. When he was dying in the reanimation unit he said " I mustn't die. My dearest wife is at home. She is an invalid and can't walk". His grave is beside my son's grave. My husband was a very good, decent and nice man. He didn't smoke or drink. He loved his family, his son and wife. He loved his sister and loved people. My husband's sister Haya lives with me. She is 87. She can't hear or see.

If it were not for the assistance of Hesed and Jewish Charity Committee I would be desperate. A nurse from Hesed comes to help me. She is a wonderful woman. She cleans my room and washes me. I get meals from Hesed. At Shabbat Hesed sends me a hala and dinner. Volunteers come to help me stand and walk. They read me Jewish magazines and newspapers and tell me news. They help me to overcome the feeling of loneliness. I know that there is somebody to bury me when I die. They've become my family.