

Faina Gheller With Her Son Dmitri Gheller, Son Albert Gheller, Husband Mark Gheller



My family:

I, Faina Gheller (nee Zalivanskaya), my older son Dmitri Gheller, my younger son Albert Gheller beside him, and my husband Mark Gheller. We sing greeting verses (that I composed) at the wedding of my niece Nadezhda Chezron (nee Zalivanskaya), daughter of my brother Israel Zalivanski.

This photo was made in Saratov in early 1990s.

After finishing school in 1959 I entered the Faculty of Energy in the Polytechnic College of Saratov.

After finishing this college I worked as production engineer in the electric engineering shop, then operations engineer in a design institute and then I became a designer.

I have two sons: Dmitri Gheller, an older one, was born in Saratov in 1967, and in 1974 my second son Albert was born.

Dmitri entered the Automobile faculty in the polytechnic College. After he finished his second year he had to go to the army.

Albert entered the College of Agricultural Mechanization, but then he got a transfer to its extramural department that he hasn't finished yet.

My sons are married. My older son Dmitri Gheller has a son named Alexandr, born in 1991. His wife Elena Gheller, nee Sorkina, is a Jew.

My younger son Albert Gheller has a daughter named Alina, born in 1999. His wife Anna Gheller, nee Tsykina, is a Jew. They identify themselves as Jews, but they do not observe any Jewish traditions.

My life was always in full swing. I read many books and periodicals and went to the theater or cinema. I tried to spend as much of my free time with children as possible.

I made a rucksack for my younger son and in winter I carried him and my older son was on skis and we went to the woods on Sunday.

In summer we went to the beach: my younger son in the rucksack and my older son holding me by my hand. Later I worked as a tutor in summer camps and they stayed in a camp with me a whole summer.

One of the most interesting events in my life was when in the late 1980s gabbai Brook decided to restore old traditions with young Jewish women, this was happening during perestroika, when religion was allowed.

At first I was reluctant to get involved in this process, but then I even began to enjoy it. He asked me to make teyglakh for Purim. He even bought kosher utensils for this occasion and food products. There were few other young Jewish housewives that brought their pastries to the synagogue and it was a wonderful celebration!

I was very proud to have taken part in this celebration. I attended the synagogue and studied Ivrit. Then I brought my children to the synagogue to have bar mitzvah. My younger son turned 13 and the older one was already 20, but he had a tefillin on and repeated payers after the others.

This Brook also convinced my husband Mark to have this ritual. However, they refused to have brit milah, but they identified themselves as Jews, anyway. Before My children were not raised religious, but I went to the synagogue with them on holidays and my younger son went with me more often.

I retired from the position of leading designer in 1997. In autumn that same year I came to work in the Hesed in Saratov. I was a volunteer at first. Now I am director of the club for the people under patronage of Hesed. We talk about Jewish traditions, celebrate Sabbath and holidays or just socialize.