

Mesko Nikolai With A Rabbi



This photo was taken in my apartment in Mukachevo in the 1990's. I am the man standing on the left. Standing beside me is a rabbi from Budapest, but I don't remember his name anymore. The photo shows him teaching me how to tie a tefillin, because during Communism I didn't attend synagogue and I somewhat forgot how to do it. This rabbi taught it to me again.

During the time of the Communist regime I didn't always go to synagogue, as I was a member of the Communist Party. It wasn't until the creation of free Ukraine in 1991 [Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union on 24th August 1991 - Editor's note] that I began to again visit the synagogue daily, at that time people no longer cared about religion. Up until then they suppressed religion! I hadn't led prayers for sixty years, and I'm still able to do it. Services during the week, that's nothing, but on the Sabbath, that's music! Everyone wonders how it is that I'm able to manage it at the age of 83. During Communism I prayed at home. I didn't observe the holidays like I do now and I didn't keep kosher either. During the high holidays, though, I did go to the synagogue and ate there, because they had kosher food there. During the holidays they always served kosher food at the community, dinner and supper.