

## Arkadi Yurkovetski With His Family



This is our family. From left to right, sitting: I, my younger granddaughter Ida, my younger son Pavel's daughter, my wife Raisa and our younger grandson Efim, our older son Ilia's son. Standing, from left to right: Ilia's older daughter Natalia, Ilia's wife Ludmila, Pavel's middle daughter Polina, Pavel younger son's son Alexandr and my older son Ilia. This photo was taken in Uzhhorod in 2003.

My sons finished a Russian secondary school. They were not raised religious. I tried to spend as much time with them as possible. On weekends we walked, went to the cinema and theater. In 1969 my first wife Rita and I divorced. We happened to be different people. It had nothing to do with nationality issues. However, I've kept in touch with my sons. Sometimes I spent vacations with my boys. When my older son was 17 Rita remarried. Ilia moved in with me. I often met with my younger son as well. I remarried in 1976. I met my second wife Raisa, a Jew, in Vinnitsa when I was visiting my mother's sister Ulia. My sons liked Raisa. We had a civil ceremony and then a chuppah at home at my father's request. There were only closest family members at our Jewish wedding. At Sabbath Raisa lit candles and prayed over them. We began to celebrate Jewish holidays at home.

My son Ilia entered the Faculty of Physics and Mathematic of Uzhhorod University. Upon graduation he worked as a schoolteacher of Mathematics. Afterwards, he entered the Faculty of Producers at the Theatrical College in Leningrad. After finishing it my son went to Yakutia at the Far North where he worked as producer in a theater. My son got married back in Leningrad. In few years my son returned to Uzhhorod where he worked as producer of the Puppet Theater and later he went to work as Uzhhorod TV producer. In 1990 he moved to Israel.

My younger son Pavel finished the Faculty of Russian Philology in Uzhhorod University. He worked as deputy director at school and in the evening he lectured at the University. In 1990 he moved to Israel with his older brother. Ilia had a theatrical studio in Israel and Pavel was his assistant. In 1993 Ilia and Pavel returned to Uzhhorod. They've kept their Israeli citizenship and obtained a residential permit for Ukraine. My older son owns a store in Uzhhorod. My younger professes Judaism. Pavel finished the Faculty of Judaism in Kiev Solomon University and a course at the University of Israel in Kiev. Now he lectures 'Traditions of Israel' in our Jewish community and few

other towns in Subcarpathia. He also conducts seders at Pesach. Pavel had a brit milah ritual as an adult in Israel. Since his mother is Russian he is not a Jew. In a couple of months he will become a ger and rabbis from Israel will arrive to take his exams. My son has excellent knowledge and I am quite confident in him. Pavel teaches Jewish traditions and religion to Jewish young people. There is quite a number of children whose mothers are non-Jewish and they wish to become gers. They wish to adopt the Jewish religion. My sons are married to Ukrainian women. They have four children in each family. Ilia's older daughter Natalia was born in 1978. Natalia finished the Faculty of Philology of Uzhhorod University. She is a housewife. His second daughter Polina, born in 1986, is a student of the faculty of International Relations of Uzhhorod University. Thomas, born in 1992, goes to school and the youngest Efim, born in 1996, will go to school this fall. Pavel's older son Alexandr, born in 1982, followed into his father's footsteps. He studies in Kiev and is going to become a rabbi. Alexandr had brit milah, and is going to become a ger too. Ilia, born in 1988 and Yulia, born in 1990, go to school, the youngest Ida is the same age as Efim.