

Alina Fiszgrund



This is me at home in Cracow. The photo was taken in 2004 by Ola, a girl who comes to help me with shopping, and sometimes goes for a walk with me.

My daughter Wanda is the president of the TSKZ now and since recently has managed the Jewish Seniors Club. She's retiring now and has accepted the Seniors Club job to have something to do. She's just called me and said she's at the club and there's no one there. I guess there are no Jewish seniors in the strict sense of the word in Cracow anymore. Those are mixed families, so I guess the idea of setting up this club wasn't the most fortunate one. I could go there, but I don't always feel

like being among people and I don't always have the energy for it. Wanda identifies herself as a Jewess but she was brought up in a home without religion, without any religious practice.

Once a year, for Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, I go to the synagogue. These days it's been more and more seldom because such an excursion is problematic for me. I have those habits of mine that I cultivate even though I'm neither a believer nor a practicing Jew. I don't like the idea of assimilation. One should preserve one's roots.

I am alone in my old years, and when evening comes, when it gets dark, I see all kinds of things? Because sometimes you can't forget. You return to things? If you go back in your mind to those days? it all seems horrible. Oh, it's better not to live. I don't have the courage to commit suicide, but it seems to me that collapsing into oblivion like that is better than going to living and having to go through all those vexations. How I sometimes am fed up with all this!

I was terribly afraid of pain. I was afraid that if someone hit me, I'd start confessing even to things I had never done. Everyone has gone through things that are terribly important for them. I was always very nervous. So nervous I often forgot things because of that nervousness, mixed things up. But somehow I've reached the age of 84. I've survived, I'm alive, I don't feel like living anymore. I'm fed up with life.

Another thing? I often catch myself thinking that I love life and that's why I fight back when I'm ill, when I'm in pain. I do everything I can then for it to stop. It's survival instinct, determination to live. During the war, that instinct told you: go here, move there, it may be better, you'll survive somehow.