

Stefan Guth In The Synagogue On Simchat Torah



This is a photo taken in 2003, in the synagogue here, in Brasov, when we observed Simchat Torah. The picture was taken during the ceremony. I'm the one in the middle, carrying one of the scrolls. The first person on the left is a friend of mine from the community, Florin Schreier, who has recently returned from Australia, and the person behind me is Samuel Martonosi, a young boy from the community. He is actually from the USA, but his parents moved here ten years ago, so he speaks Romanian well. Today I'm vice-president of the Jewish community here, in Brasov. I became involved in the Jewish community in 2000, when I was first elected secretary of the community, and then vice-president. I'm in charge of all the administrative matters of the community, of its image: I spent most of my time delegating others, and supervising all the ongoing activities. I don't observe any holidays at home, be they Jewish or Orthodox Christian, and my wife doesn't celebrate Easter or Christmas. She only wants me to remember that she is Maria and that I always get her a present on her name day. Today I live a private life; I don't socialize much. I'm at the community only when I work, otherwise I prefer to spend my time at home, with my wife. I prefer to consider myself a conservative rather than a Neolog, because the term 'Neolog' was first used by the Hungarians. When the Neolog synagogue was first built in Brasov in 1901, it was Hungarian. It became Romanian in 1919, after the Trianon Peace Treaty, but it kept its original name. However, what the Hungarians understood by Neolog is what we understand now by conservative; they practically mean the same thing, only the name is different, and I personally prefer to call myself a conservative. Being Jewish for me has no religious connotation, I'm not a religious man; it means tradition for me. I have experienced Jewishness through Zionism, and not through religion. But I'm proud of it, never in my life did I think of hiding the fact that I'm a Jew.