

Leonid Krais With His Cousins Motl Rainstein And Avidor Shakhai



My cousins and I. I am on the left, next to me is Motl Rainstein, Aunt Priva's son, and on the right is Avidor Shakhai, Uncle Yankel's son. The photo was taken during my trip to Israel in 2000. In the 1970s a number of Jewish families were moving to Israel. I sympathized with them, but I had no intentions to leave my country. I liked my town and my job. My mother was buried here. I wanted to stay here. I've often visited Israel. For the last ten years my wife and I have been going to Israel on vacation every year. I like this country. My cousins Avidor, my Uncle Yankel's son and Motl Rainstein, my Aunt Priva's son, live there. Many of my friends live there, too. I admire Israel and its people. I've seen most of the country. During every visit I go to Nazareth, the town of Jesus. There is a white synagogue of Jesus there. I've been to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, and to Jerusalem, where he was buried. This is a living history of Christianity, and I live in a Christian country. I am very interested in this history. I went to the Yad Vashem [4](#) to honor members of my family that perished in the ghetto. I've been to the Wailing Wall. This history is very dear to me. If it weren't for Ukraine and Chernovtsy, I would like to live and die in Israel. In the 1990s, when perestroika began and private business was allowed, I decided to start my own business. It took me some time, but I'm persistent in my plans. I started out with two trucks that I rented. Now I have a shipment and passenger transportation agency. We transport shipments all across Europe. We expanded our business activities recently. My older son and I opened a tourist agency. My younger son owns a vehicle company. I work from early morning till late at night. I worked as a driver for many years, and I know how important it is to create comfortable working conditions for my employees. We started by renting this area first, but we've now purchased it. We've planted fruit trees and berry bushes, and a flower garden in the yard. We also excavated a well which has the purest water. We have recreation rooms and a kitchen where our cook makes food for the drivers that have just returned from their tours. I don't think so many Jews would have left Chernovtsy, if the law on entrepreneurship had been issued earlier. I believe it would have been good for the country. So many state-run plants and factories have been shut down, and their property has been stolen. This happens because there's no master on these properties. This company is in my

ownership, and I would even pick up a screw in the yard. People have forgotten what it's like to work for their own livelihood. It will take time to teach young people to work. I believe that if all those people hadn't left, Ukraine would be a leading country of the world by now. If only people could work and live respectfully. I would hope that our young generation will live until Ukraine becomes a paradise.