

Leonid Margolis

I.M.Gelfand shaped my life. I was his student, associate and a family friend from the age of 14 until I was almost 45 when he moved to the United States. I lived at his dacha, he taught me math at school, he trained me for my University entrance exams, we hiked in the country together, he directed me to biology, and was my mentor and formal supervisor at the Moscow State. Although, after his relocation to the United States our communications almost stopped, I feel his presence almost every day when I enter my lab, talk to my students and post-docs or when I just read a paper in a scientific journal. Sometimes it requires efforts not to mimic his manners and gestures.

It is a trivia that aged people look back and think about their young years as a happy period. For me and my friends, the joy of science was the most important component of our life and in our closed Gelfands circle it was him who made this life as it was. Definitely, it was not all smooth and included not only personal problems but general political pressure. Collapse of communism and of the Soviet Union was the best event in my life. However, it led to an abrupt end of our circle. And like any premature death, it leaves one with nostalgic feelings of how much has been lost and how much could have happen if

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