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I met Rashid Kaplanov, who invited me to join Sefer's conference "Jews in a Changing World" held in Minsk in October 1996. Since 1997, I have been participating in Sefer programs on a regular basis, including Eshnav. Twice I participated in the "Eshnav" program. Since 2002 onwards, my apprentices have been taking part in *Sefer's* conferences and schools.

In the years of its existence Sefer has brought Jewish research back to academic life of Russia and FSU states, united a senior generation of researchers and nurtured a young generation of researchers, many of whom, I believe, will continue their Jewish studies under any circumstances.

As for me, Sefer has given me several things which really matter to any developing researcher. First, Sefer helped me to mature as an academic whose interests lie in the field of Jewish studies. Second, Sefer enabled me to make and maintain much needed academic contacts. Third, thanks to Sefer, I met people whom I can now truly call my friends and colleagues.