

Lilya, Kushel And Lyonya Finberg



This is a family portrait of me, with my son, Lyonya, and my husband, Kushel Finberg. It was taken in 1949 in Kiev. On August 3, 1947, when I was 21, I got married. My husband, Kushel Pinkhosovich Finberg, was our neighbor. His mother liked me and introduced us to each other. He was older than me and worked as a master at a factory, where he certainly could not be called Kushel among all the goyim; there he was Kolya: Nikolay Pavlovich. (Unlike the pre-war times, we tried to change our names into Russian ones). Gradually, these Russian names pushed out our real names even at home - they have now returned to us in our grand- and great-grandchildren. We had no wedding ceremony - we were too poor. We only had an official registration. We lived in one of the two ten-meter rooms with no doors. Another room was occupied by my aunt Ida and her daughter. Our furniture consisted of a table, a wardrobe, and a bed. When our son Lyonya (Lazar) was born in 1948, we ordered a handmade little sofa for him: we had neither cradle nor stroller then; until he began to walk we had to carry him. I had to stop working for several years: I had to raise my son, while putting him into a kindergarten was a real problem. I sewed all his clothes, even slippers and shoes for himself. Praise God, the famine of 1947-48 did not touch us directly. When Lyonya went to the second grade I returned to my old job. From 8 years old my son grew up almost independently. Independence, diligence and firmness of purpose are still his main characteristics. After graduating from high school and technical school, Lyonya tried to enter the Kiev Polytechnic Institute for four times. Finally, he entered it, and graduated from it. Even now my son is the joy and the pride of my life. In 1983 I lost my husband. It was a terrible thing for me, and I remained on this earth with only one half. However, the family of my son had grown by that time. My son and his wife Lena gave me two grandchildren - Marina and Arseniy. Now, all of them are taking care of me, while I'm doing my best to help them at home.