

The First Birthday Of Eshua Almalech's Daughter Zelma Almalech



I at the first birthday of my daughter Zelma with my wife Nedyalka on 4th March 1951 in Sofia.

I married Nedyalka Nikolova, nee Dineva, in 1948. She was born in 1928 in Stara Zagora. She is Bulgarian. Her parents are from Stara Zagora too. Our families knew each other; they had even done shopping in our shop sometimes. Her mother Marinka and my mother Zelma had been classmates as children. But I got acquainted to Nedyalka in the end of 1944 when she came to study in Sofia. We were inseparable after that and later we married. Our daughter Zelma Eshua Almalech was born in 1950 and our son Mony Eshua Almalech - in 1954. My wife has a degree in history. We are both journalists.

When we learned about the trial against the Jewish doctors in the Soviet Union [Doctors' Plot] from the newspapers, my father had not left for Bulgaria yet. My wife Nedyalka and he thought that this was some kind of provocation by the Stalinist regime. I admit I was in two minds. The communist regime forbade listening to foreign radio stations such as the BBC, Deutsche Welle, Free Europe, the Voice of America. But my wife and I were journalists and we listened to them. In 1956 after the events in Hungary, I started having doubts about socialism, all the more when most of Stalin's atrocities became public. [Eshua is referring to the Hungarian revolution against the Soviet type communist regime in Hungary.] But in 1968 after the Soviet armies (i.e. the armies of the Warsaw Pact) occupied Prague, I just could not accept it despite my leftist orientation.

My children grew up in a democratic atmosphere at home. In the old passports issued to all Bulgarian citizens when they become 16 years old, there was a column 'nationality'. When they were old enough to be issued passports, they both wrote 'Jew' in it. Although my wife Nedyalka is a Bulgarian, after she spent a couple of years with my stepmother Luna, she learned the Jewish cuisine. Later when we lived with her parents, they also got to like our cuisine. Both the Jewish and

the Christian holidays have been observed in our family. We lived together with Nedyalka's parents in Sofia until they passed away. My wife's mother died in 1973 and her father died in 1980. At that time our children Zelma and Mony had already married and Nedyalka and I lived alone. We often get together with their families, especially on the Jewish and personal holidays. We have almost never observed the Christian holidays since the death of my wife's parents.