

## Wedding Photo Of Lyubomir And Daniela Punchevi



This is a wedding photo of my grandson Lyubomir Punchev, son of my daughter Streya Puncheva (nee Alhalel) and Ignat Punchev. It was taken in Sofia in the 1990s. At that time they both worked in Bulbank in Sofia. They both have degrees in finance. Daniela graduated after the marriage and Lyubomir was appointed director of the branch of Bulbank in Vidin. Now he is one of the directors of Bulbank in Sofia. Lyubomir has two children. Their names are Konstantin and Mihaela and they live in Sofia.

My husband and I have two children - Streya Mayer Puncheva (nee Alhalel) and Sheli Mayer Vladeva (nee Alhalel). The elder one, Streya, was born in 1949. She graduated from the chemical technical school in Vidin [port city on the right bank of the Danube in Bulgaria, 220 km. away from Sofia]. She has been working as a chemist in the local meat processing plant for some years. My younger daughter Sheli was born in 1954 and is a construction engineer. Unfortunately, she does not have children. Besides Lyubomir I have another grandchild from Streya - my granddaughter Yanita. She lives in a kibbutz now and has a daughter Viara, who is married, but I do not know her new family name.

I am saddened by the fact that the small number of Jews in Vidin (only 26, the others have died or immigrated to Israel) do not have a comfortable life after the fall of the communist regime. The paradox is that now when we have the freedom to gather any time we want, there are too few of us left here. Now the Jewish community is well organized only in Sofia. Here, in Vidin, the organization exists in misery and its chairman Zhak Moshe finds it very hard to raise money. The Jewish community in Vidin has had a sad fate since 10th November [on this date after 35 years of rule, Communist Party leader Todor Zhivkov was replaced by the hitherto Prime Minister Peter Mladenov who changed the Bulgarian Communist Party's name to Socialist Party]. We are mostly elder Jews. We gather once or twice a month to celebrate a holiday, for example Pesach, Rosh Hashanah, Purim, Chanukkah, Yom Hashoah [Holocaust Remembrance Day], Yom Atsmaut [the day of independence of Israel, introduced as a national holiday in 1948]. Unfortunately, we are not as active as the Jews in Sofia. Unlike us, they gather often at specific days during the week and at weekends. They have a number of clubs, for example 'Golden Age' club [of the elderly people], 'Health' club, and the club of the disabled people. They listen to lectures on political, social and economic topics, go to the cinema or to the theater, on excursions, dance and do gymnastics, do everything a pensioner needs to do in order to feel part of society and of the Jewish community. We, in Vidin, do not do most of these activities. We also have problems with our properties. That is what I mean by saying that our organization is in misery.