

The Alhalel Family With Their Two Children Streya And Sheli



This is a photo of our family - my husband Mayer Rafael Alhalel, I, Gitli Alhalel, and our two young children Streya and Sheli. The elder one, Streya, is standing in the center of the photo, above us. Sheli is exactly below her - in the center. This picture was taken in 1957 in Vidin [port city on the right bank of the Danube in Bulgaria, 220 km. away from Sofia].

My husband Mayer Alhalel was born in Vidin in 1923. He has secondary high school education. He is a polygraphist (a printer). I remember clearly the relatives of my husband, because we were neighbors. His grandfather was a confectioner and the Jewish children loved him very much. He owned a small confectionery in Kale and sold ice cream and Jewish sweets made by my husband's grandmother Mazal. For Pesach she made biskuchicos con lokum [Ladino: pastries with Turkish delight], roskitas [Ladino: ring-shaped buns], petikas de almendra [Ladino: almond sweets], which we, the children, loved a lot. His grandmother Mazal was famous as one of the most beautiful women in Vidin. His mother Bulisa Rafael Alhalel was a seamstress, she sewed ladies' underwear and men's shirts.

He has a sister, with whom I have always got on very well. Her name is Lea Yosef Halfon (nee Alhalel). She was also born in Vidin in 1915. She has always been a housewife and she lives in Beit-Avot with her family. Her husband's name is Yosef Halfon. Their son is Simanto Yosef Halfon.

My husband and I have two children - Streya Mayer Puncheva (nee Alhalel) and Sheli Mayer Vladeva (nee Alhalel). Streya was born in 1949. She graduated the chemical technical school in Vidin. 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. I have two grandchildren from Streya, who also worked in the municipality in Vidin. My granddaughter Yanita lives in a kibbutz now. She has a daughter Viara (nee Slavcheva),

who is married, but I do not know her new family name. My grandson Lyubomir, who is director of Bulbank in Sofia, also has children. Their names are Konstantin and Mihaela.

I went to Israel twice with my husband before 10th November 1989 [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]. The first was in 1964 and the second in 1973. The third time was in 1993. I see the remarkable difference between the early and late Israel, in a positive sense, of course. What is important is that we liked Bulgaria more. That is why we stayed here. And we do not regret that at all, neither my husband nor I.