

Ihil And Marina Shraibman At Home



This is me with my wife Marina Shraibman at home, in my room, with our dog Ilda. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1999.

In 1997 I published my book 'Schtendik' [Always] in Yiddish in Israel. I was invited to visit Israel on this occasion. This was my first trip to Israel. It's hard to describe my first impression. It's still vivid in my memory. Is it possible to find words to describe the excitement any Jew feels standing by the Wailing Wall? Marina and I left little notes there like everybody else did. We met with my brother Isrul's family in Ashdod, who came to Israel in 1995. My brother died shortly after their arrival. We

spent three weeks in Israel. We had meetings with writers in Israel, but my meetings with my readers were the most significant ones for me. Presentations of my book took place in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ashkelon, Rehovot, Richon LeZiyon, Ashdod... I was given a warm welcome at those meetings. What I read was received with great attention. I remember a woman in Ashkelon. She and her husband drove us to the station from where we were to leave for Jerusalem. She said with tears in her eyes, 'We've never had such writers before.' My books were read by former residents of the USSR and nationals of Israel. Hebrew is the state language, of course, but Yiddish is also our national language. There are wonderful books in Yiddish and it shouldn't disappear from the life of Jewish people.

My second wife, Marina, is Russian. From the first minute of our acquaintance Marina asked me to spell her name in Yiddish. This was the start of her acquaintance with the culture of my people. This was the first time she met a Jew. She studied Yiddish to be able to read my works and now she knows it better than many Jews. We speak Yiddish at home and she is my first reader now, like Olga was in the past. She tells me that when I work and when I read my works to her she lives the happiest moments of her life. I value her opinion more than that of many critics. I think I'm very lucky: I met two wonderful women: Olga and Marina.