

Matilda And Isak Ninyo On A Holiday



This is a photo of my husband Isak Ninyo and me on a holiday in Chepino village [Pirin Mountain] in 1949. It was a couple of months before our wedding. We both used to go on summer holidays organized by the sport club 'Akoah'.

My mother and brother went to Israel with Maer (my mother's second husband) and his son in 1949. At first, they lived in poverty in bungalows. When they left, I had already met my husband. I married him a couple of months later. There was a tradition for the parents to make sure if their children were going to marry a decent person, so they investigated their children's future husbands or wives and their families. I remember my mother told me once that there was a nice boy who liked me and that she had already checked his family. She said it was a decent one. I married that boy in the same year 1949, soon after my mother had left for Israel.

When we were young we used to gather in the Jewish sport club 'Akoah' every Saturday. It was situated on Opalchenska Street. That was the place where one could meet friends. Stela (Ester), a Jewish friend from the university took me there once and she introduced me to my future husband. Stela lived in the Jewish quarter and that is how she knew my husband and his family. The young people in the club were interested in sports. They went there for training.

I remember I had letters from my relatives in Israel. A couple of years after they moved we were not allowed to visit them, nor could they return. Of course I was very worried if everything was well with them there. I suffered a lot that I could not have any contact with my mother and brother. This suffering was even greater because my mother-in-law was worried about her elder son. He also had left for Israel together with his wife and child.

My husband, Isak Ninyo, and I had a civil marriage. Our wedding was a humble one with a couple of friends as guests. We lived in the same house with his parents Lenka and Yako for 28 years. My mother-in-law was a very intelligent person and we got along very well. She played a big part in our development as individuals.

My husband's family was a patriarchic one. We lived in the Jewish quarter. They observed all the Jewish traditions. There was a strict hierarchy in the family and we had great respect for each other. My father-in-law was a barber. He worked every day until noon, but we never had lunch before he was home. Along with that, every Friday evening we had a family dinner and my husband and I had to be present by all means. His father used to drink brandy and tell stories about the time he was in the army. Our family was very harmonious and united.

When we got married I was studying chemistry at the university and I was in my third year. My husband was attending the evening technical high school. I received no support from my relatives. At that time, my husband didn't have a job. But my mother-in-law was an amazing woman. She could always give advice and she could point out the best solution for any problem. There were special courses which were very popular at that time, they were called 'rabfak' [workers' academy] and they were professional courses taught at high school. My husband graduated from one of those courses and that was how he received a high school certificate. After that he went on studying electrical engineering at the Institute of Machine Electrical Engineering. At first, it was difficult for him to study because he didn't have a good basic knowledge from the high school. Therefore, he had to catch up a lot. He had a small scholarship from the Jewish community. It was 200 Bulgarian levs and it was granted only to Jewish students. He also received a special bag and a pair of Richter compasses, because he studied a technical science. I didn't have a job because I was still at the university. The only person from the family to work was my father-in-law, who was a barber. My mother-in-law had had a job before 9th September [1944], when she was a tailor.