

## The Beniesh Family



This is the Beniesh family. In the second row, from right to left are: my mother, Elvira Lidgi, I (standing, in a white blouse), Mois Beniesh's wife - Rebeka, next to her on the left is Sarah - mum's sister from the second wife of grandpa - Dzhamila, next to her on the right is Mois Beniesh - her brother and next to him is his daughter Maya Beniesh. The photo was taken in a studio. There is no stamp on the back, only an inscription: 7th June 1962. The reason for taking the photo was aunt Sarah's first visit to Bulgaria after having moved to Israel in 1941.

My mother's father, Isak Moshe Beniesh, was born in 1863 in the town of Ruse and died in 1939... My maternal grandmother's name was Sarah Beniesh (nee Eroham). She was born in Ruse in 1880 and died in Ruse in 1918 [from Spanish influenza]. [Before they got married] while he was in Palestine the rumor had it that she was very sickly, which was something terrible at the time but nonetheless, after returning from his pilgrimage, he married her in 1901. My mother was born in 1902, in 1907 in the town of Ferdinand my uncle Mois Beniesh was born (he died in 1976) and in 1910 in the town of Sliven my other uncle Nisim Beniesh was born (he died in 1948). His children were born in different towns because grandpa used to travel a lot. On the one hand, he loved traveling and, on the other, it was connected to his job. Additionally, the frequent change of the place of living was indispensable because of their necessity to find a cheaper way of living, as grandpa didn't earn much.

Exactly forty days after the death of grandma Sarah, grandpa got married for the second time - to Dzhamila. He met her in Ruse where she was born in 1880 (there is no information about the time of her death). After the wedding, in 1919 the whole family, for I don't know what reasons, settled down in Sofia.

The second wife of my grandfather, Dzhamila, got married for the first time to my grandfather when she was 38. At that time my mother was 16, Mois was 11 and Miko (Nisim) was 8. Dzhamila couldn't conceive in the first two years of the marriage and looked after her three stepchildren very well. Afterwards she gave birth to three more children - Sarika, Clara and Solomon. (I don't have

reliable information as to the years of their births. I only know that Sarah - Sarika - was born in 1920.) The appearance of her own children changed Dzhamila's attitude towards her stepchildren. From her stepchildren she loved Mois the most. His brothers and sisters from the second marriage also loved him very much and long after they grew up and left for Israel they went on calling him uncle Mois. My mother was the one who felt worst of all in the family.

I have scarce information concerning my mother's brothers and sisters from the second marriage of grandpa. Sarika studied at a vocational school in Sofia and acquired the specialty seamstress. I can't say anything about Clara's education. Solomon got some sort of technical education, I can't say what exactly. Later my uncle Mois helped him to get a job as a technician in the hosiery factory 'Rufo', in which he, too, had worked.

In January 1941 the three children Sarah, Clara and Solomon left for Palestine by ship. Dzhamila, their mother, remained in Bulgaria, but left later, I can't say when exactly. On board Sarah met Levy Meyuhas - a Romanian Jew. After spending some time in a camp on the island of Cyprus, [The ships which had Jews on board during World War II on course to Palestine sailed under the flags of different countries. In December 1940 from Varna to Palestine started the ship Salvator, which sank after a shipwreck not far from Istanbul. The Jews, Bulgarian subjects, who were about 180, were returned to Bulgaria at the beginning of 1941 whereas the alien subjects were probably taken to Cyprus from where they were gradually sent to Palestine.] they - Sarah, Levy, Clara, Solomon - left for Palestine. Sarah and Levy got married and they bought a house. Later on they had five children - Itshak, Elly, Mony, Beni, Veri. In order to provide for them they went to live in a kibbutz for some time. When the children had almost grown up, the family went back to live in their old house. Clara lived in a kibbutz as well. Her mother, Dzhamila, went to live with her. The other sister Clara married Juda Braha and had five children, but I can't say what their names were. The brother Solomon lived in Palestine, too, and died in 1948 in the first war there. I can't remember his wife's name but I know that he had two children - Itshak and Haviva. I have a picture of the children with granny Dzhamila.