

# Yovka And Bitoush Behar In Israel



In this photo are we: my wife Yovka Zlatanova and I in Israel in 1999. That was our first visit to Israel. There is no inscription on the photo. I wouldn't stay and live in Israel. I feel that I belong to Plovdiv and feel quite chauvinistic about it.

I hail the establishment of the state Israel. I believe that every Jew should have a place to call home. I think that the Israeli state system should be something like federation. It is not the only state in the world where people from various nationalities live together. There were years when the official policy of Bulgaria towards Israel wasn't very friendly. I personally accepted critically some aggressive extremities on the part of the Israelis as well as the Arab attacks.

I regard myself as a citizen of Bulgaria and give examples with football. If Bulgaria plays Israel I'll be for Bulgaria but if Israel plays any other country, I'll be for Israel.

I was impressed by Israel because it is an excellently constituted country, very different from Bulgaria at the moment. In general, democracy is a good thing but we shouldn't have destroyed what we had already achieved.

I've never interrupted my connections with the Jewish community. I've been tightly related to it for 45 years, whenever I've been in Plovdiv. After 1989 the Jewish center expanded its activities and somehow changed in itself. Many holidays preserved their religious nature, as it was before 9th September. But I'm still a complete atheist. I attend the synagogue at memorial services or at the big holidays.