

Liya Kaplan With Her Sons Avi And Rimon



From left to right: my younger son Avi, me, and my elder son Rimon. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1961. Our first son was born in 1946. I called him Rimon. Our second son was born in 1948 and we called him Avi. We kept on observing Jewish traditions at home. Of course, it was hard to do that, but we did our best. We taught our sons the Jewish traditions, the history of the Jewish people. Our sons knew all about the Jewish holidays and the purpose of each of them. We were not ashamed of being Jews and didn't try to hide it. We also marked Soviet holidays: 1st May, 7th November. They were just additional days off at home. Only the Victory Day, 9th May was a true holiday for us. My sons went to an Estonian school. Having finished school my elder son, Rimon, went to Construction College in Tallinn, the department of metal processing. He was given a mandatory job assignment in a jewelry plant in Tallinn. He worked there for 30 years. My son has good hands and a good head. He managed to work on seven machines. Rimon was eventually in charge of the workshop. The plant was purchased after the 1990s during Estonian Independence. Half of the employees, including my son, were fired. Since then my son has done odd jobs. He's 58 and it's pretty hard for him to find a good job. His wife has been a child-minder in a kindergarten for a long time. My son's wife Mariana is half-Jewish: her mother is a Jew and her father is Estonian. I was troubled that my son married a non-Jew, but nothing could be done about that. The most important thing was that they loved each other. They have a daughter, Khana, born in 1983. Having finished school she entered the architecture and construction department of Tallinn Polytechnic University. She does well. Khana will obtain a diploma in engineering. My younger son Avi has been interested in cars since childhood. His toys were just a selection of cars of different sizes. He put his favorite cars under his pillow before going to sleep. He never stopped liking cars. Now he's the director of the automobile school. Avi has been married twice. His first wife, Galina, was a Jew, and together they had a daughter, Sorena. She was named after his wife's aunt Sore. They got divorced after a while and Avi got married again. His second wife is Estonian. They have a happy life together. I took his second marriage as a tragedy. We had such a Jewish family, with

such a Jewish spirit and it was hard for me to get over my son's choice. My sons identify themselves as Jews and I thank God for that. Both of them live in Mordu, a small town about 80 kilometers from Tallinn. Both sons and their families come to us on all the Jewish holidays. My sons are very close to me, they love and respect me. They help support me with anything I need, and call me and come to visit.