

## Isaac Rotman And His Family



This photograph was taken in Leningrad in 1956. It shows my wife, my children, their nurse and me. Here I'll tell you about my family.

I cannot say that I chose only Jewish friends, but for some reason it happened of itself. When I was young I went around with different people whom I did not like (I did not like unwarranted simplicity of relations between boys and girls). I never appeared in such companies for the second time. It resulted in the following: most of my friends were Jewish.

I got acquainted with my wife in one of such companies before the war. We understood that we love each other, but did not manage to say about it: I left for practice, then for front line, and Vera together with her parents was evacuated to Kazakhstan. After the end of the war we met and got married.

My wife's name was Zabezhinskaya Vera Markovna, her Jewish name - Dvoyre Mendeleevna. She was born in 1922 in Leningrad, and her parents came from Belarus. Her mother tongue was Russian, she did not know Yiddish. All her life she worked as a pediatricist. We have got 2 daughters, they both were born in Leningrad. Alla was born in 1947, and Lubov - in 1955. When the younger daughter was about 1, my wife with both daughters went to Latvia to have rest. There they got acquainted with a very kind woman. She was Russian, lonely and very poor. So they returned to Leningrad all together. That woman became a nurse for my children. She lived with us many years and became a member of our family.

Alla graduated from the College of Telecommunications. In 1991 she left for Israel. She has 2 children. She became an orthodox Jewess, she does not work, but does something at a synagogue. Lubov graduated from the Medical College, she lives and works in Petersburg. She has a son.

Together with my wife we told children about Jewish holidays, but not much. Occasionally we reminded them that they were Jewish. As for me, I sometimes visited synagogue, but I did not take children with me (to tell the truth, they would not go). I changed my life style after Perestroika and

openly spoke about it after 1985-1987. I tried to tell my daughters about the war, but they were not much interested. My grandchildren also don't like to listen to me. Certainly we never celebrated either Pesach or Christmas. But we always had a New Year's tree in our apartment.

In 1975 we divorced. It was not easy for me, it still hurts when I speak about it. Despite the fact that my children got no Jewish education, my elder daughter (as I already told you) left for Israel in 1990. In 1994 I decided to go to her. I hoped to find a soul mate there: I was very tired to live alone. I settled in Haifa where my daughter lived with her family. But in Israel I could not fit in: I did not speak Hebrew and understood that I would never master it. I also was not lucky with women: they all seemed to me too self-interested. But most likely I missed Petersburg. In a word, after 2 years of my life in Israel I returned and never regretted it.

It is interesting that now in my native city I receive that Jewish components of life which I lacked unconsciously all my life. I am grateful to the Hesed Welfare Center for it.