

Faivel And Shoshana Fridman



The picture was taken shortly after the wedding of my brother Faivel [Shraga was his nick-name, used by his friends]. The photo was taken in 1955 in Yagur.

My younger brother Faivel (like our paternal grandfather, Faivel Fridman) was born in 1928. He emigrated to Israel as early as 1945. He is a constructor. They have three children with his wife Shoshana: Pnina, Hanita and David. Their children also live in Israel. Before she retired, Shoshana worked as a host at the Bulgarian old people's home in Rishon Lezion, while she was living in Yagur with her family, near to my mother.

Our parents are Yosif and Blanche Fridman, they both moved to Israel and are no longer alive. They were relatively religious, which means that they observed the Jewish traditions, but not every single detail of them. My father was of Ashkenazi origin, that is a Russian Jew, and my mother Blanche Israel is of the Sephardic Jews in Bulgaria. After they left for Israel, they lived in the town of Yagur.

I remember the following event. Once my younger brother Faivel and I went to school (we attended one and the same school in Sofia). I was then in the fourth grade while he was in the first. These days we were allotted snacks in the breaks at school and I still think it's a good thing to do in the school breaks. All right, but it was Yom Kippur then. Faivel went to take his snack and I shouted at him 'You mustn't. How can you eat on Kippur?' and I threw his breakfast away. Now I think what I did was very cruel to the small Faivel.

After 9th September 1944 [the day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria] my family came back to Sofia convinced that we all must emigrate to Israel [Palestine] after two years - in 1946. My brother Faivel, however, emigrated ahead of all yet in 1945 together with some friends of his. In the meantime my relatives lodged their documents in the police so that their emigration might be legally organised. I ran away from home for everybody's surprise. The reason for my flight was that I wanted to stay in Bulgaria. For a certain period I lived with a friend of mine who hid me. Eventually, I plucked up courage and decided to meet with the head of the police office to tell him in person I didn't want to leave. I still remember him finding my passport in the file with all other ready documents of my family that were required for our departure, he opened the page with my picture and crossed it out. That meant he practically had nothing against my remaining in my country. That is how I remained here despite my parents' opinion. As it happens in life, my relatives found me several days later and I got a thrashing for what I did. But what's done can't be undone. They left and I stayed here.