

Mayer And Gitli Alhalel



This is me with my lovely wife Gitli David Alhalel. The photo was taken in Vidin in 1987 during a march on the occasion of the day of Slavic script and culture - 24th May. It was taken in the park, or the town's garden near the Danube. I married my wife Gitli Alhalel on 9th July 1949 in Cherven Bryag. Before that we lived together for a year. We got married before the registrar on a working day. We didn't wear any wedding attire, because we couldn't afford it yet. After our wedding we returned to Vidin, where we looked after our parents. To be honest, there was a moment when we thought about going to Israel too. But our parents, hers and mine, didn't want to immigrate, because of old age. Yet, there were many Jews older than them, who had left Bulgaria for Israel. I didn't have any financial problems. My wife also had a job. She was an accountant in a meat processing plant and in a construction company in Vidin. In fact, she retired from those two positions. I have two children, whom I love very much. The elder one, Streya, was born in 1949.

She graduated from the Chemical Technical School in Vidin. She has been working as a chemist in the local meat processing plant for a number of years. My younger daughter Sheli was born in 1954 and is a construction engineer. Unfortunately, she doesn't have children. But I have grandchildren from Strela, who also worked for a long time in the municipality in Vidin. Her children are Lyubomir Punchev and Yanita Slavcheva. Yanita now lives in a kibbutz. She has a daughter, Viara. She has a family in Northern Israel. My grandson Lyubomir, who is director of Bulbank in Sofia, also has children. They are Konstantin Punchev and Mihaela Puncheva. I have been to Israel three times. The first two times were before 10th November 1989. The first time was in 1964, the second time in 1973 and the third time in 1993. The first two times I was with my wife and the last time I was alone. Of course, I noticed the big difference between the early and late Israel, I liked it there more and more each time. But that doesn't mean that I have something against Bulgaria, to the contrary. The totalitarian times weren't dark times, although young people nowadays are raised to believe so. I remember that I felt good and respected. We lived a normal life.