

Irene Shein With Her Husband, Her Mother And A Friend



This picture was taken in the yard of our house. From left to right: I, my mother Evgeniya Shein, our friend Liza, and my husband Efim Brener. The picture was taken in Tashkent in 1989.

I worked as a chief accountant for many years. My work was appreciated. I worked in the Central Design and Construction Bureau of the Fish Industry of the Uzbek SSR. Everybody treated me very well there. I was awarded with prizes and given bonuses. I felt no anti-Semitism, neither at work nor at home. Nobody paid attention to nationality. In general, the population of Tashkent treated Jews very well. They didn't care what kind of nationality the person was, it was really important whether the person deserved to be respected. People were addressed like: sister, brother, father... There were all kinds of things at work, but nobody ever mentioned my nationality.

I had a pre-arranged marriage with my first husband Moses Melamed. In 1960 our daughter Elena was born. My husband and I didn't stay together for a long time. He had a hard character. He worked at the plant and was too fond of the bottle. After we got divorced, my daughter and I lived with my parents.

My second husband was Efim Brener. We met at work. Efim was a very good person. Life was hard on him, but it did not make him embittered.

My parents probably had a chance to come back to Estonia earlier, but Father didn't even want to hear of it. He said that he had to leave his house twice in Estonia and he was not willing to do that again. When he was dying and losing his memory he said, 'I want to go home.' And where was that home? Maybe it was in Estonia. Father died on 12th May 1985. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Tashkent in accordance with the Jewish rite. An old sophisticated man carried out the ritual and he knew how things were to be done.

Mother survived Father by 14 years. Until the last moment of her life she had a clear mind and wonderful memory. Mother died on 12th February 1999. She was buried next to Father. She died

on Friday evening, on Sabbath. It was hard to find Jews who would do everything in accordance with the ritual on that day. But still, she was buried according to the Jewish rite. They had a common tombstone.

After my parents' death my husband went to the synagogue for a year and ordered Kaddish for them. My husband and I went to the synagogue on the day of the death of our parents. We brought vodka and honey cake for people to have a drink and commemorate the deceased after prayer. We marked holidays the way we did when they were alive.