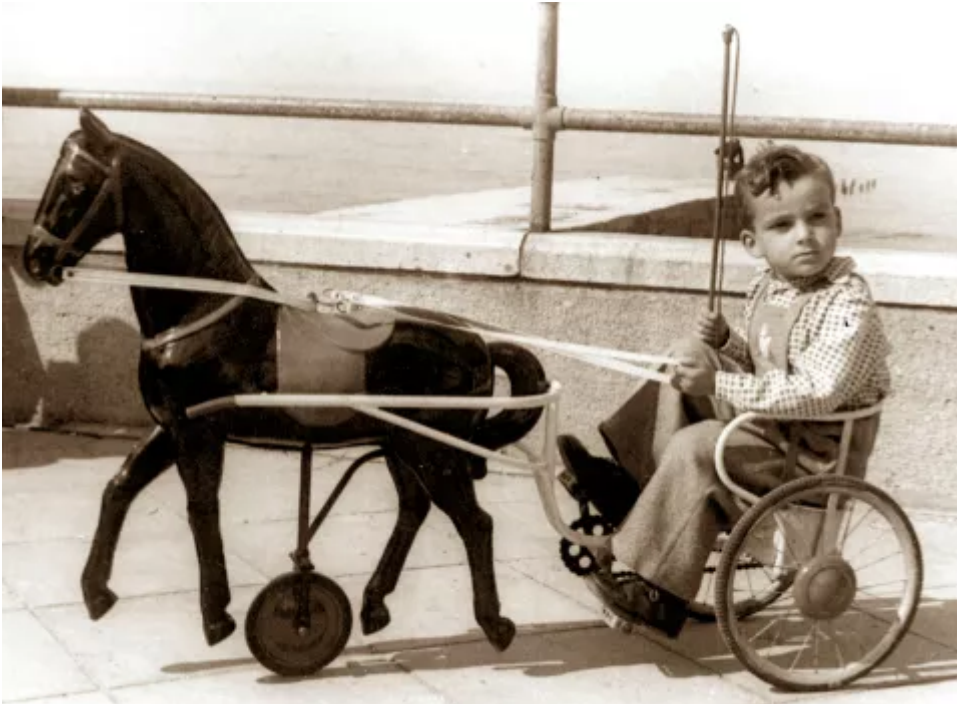


Benjamin Goldstein



This is a photo of my stepbrother, Benjamin Goldstein. On the back of the photo there is written Goldstein Harald Peter, which is his full name, but we all called him Benjamin, which was his Jewish name. The photo was taken in Haifa, in 1952. My parents divorced in 1943 and my father, Bela Goldstein, remarried in 1945. He married a young Jewish woman from Brasov, Margareta Rosenberg, who got pregnant. She was 16 years younger than him. But my father fell ill, he had very high blood pressure. He had a stroke and died before he could get to the hospital. He died in Sibiu in 1946 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery there. And on the very same day he died, his wife gave birth to his son, Benjamin. His wife was devastated; she loved him very, very much. She came from a very poor family. She had another sister and a mother to support. So Margareta had to work as a laborer at a weaving factory here, in Brasov. After my parents divorced, the two families weren't exactly on amicable terms. There were no visits, only Benjamin came to our house. My mother was very fond of the small child. He was very quiet and he looked a lot like my father. Benjamin practically grew up in our house until he was four years old; I used to bring him over more and more often. He was always in our house. We fed him and bought clothes for him. We could afford it because we still had the dental materials depot, which was left to Juhasz because he and my father had been associates. Margareta had to work very hard and couldn't support them all: her parents, her sister and a small baby. But in 1949 she made aliyah with all her family; she was among the first to go. Emigrants still had to leave by ship back then. My mother insisted that she left Benjamin behind, that we would pay for his education and look after him, and she almost convinced her. But in the end, Margareta, who still loved my late father, didn't want to give up her son, so they all left. They settled in Holon, which back then was more of a village. They stayed in Beit Olim - a special place for the new-comers - for two years, in barracks, and after that they could move into a house, at the very end of Holon. Their backyard was sand and nothing else. Margareta used to write to me. Life was very hard for them. Once she asked us to send Benjamin a pair of shoes because she had no money to buy him one. They even endured hunger; they had to steal

potatoes from fields in order to have something to eat; they lived from one day to the next.