

Hirsh-Leib Tsivian



This photograph shows my father, Hirsh-Leib Tsivian, in 1947. It was taken in Tallinn. My father returned from deportation in 1946, just a few weeks before my wedding. He was present at the wedding. He didn't talk much about the camp. He said that it was horrifying and that human life was worth nothing there. My father believed that he managed to survive only due to his faith in God and to the prayers he directed to God. While in the camp my father and other Jewish believers calculated the dates of Jewish holidays and observed the traditions as best they could. On Pesach

my father didn't eat bread even though there was nothing else to eat. After his return our father worked as a manager in a sewing workshop. He had no place to live as he didn't want to trouble me or my sister and he couldn't afford to rent an apartment. For several years, until he was given an apartment, he lived in his workshop sleeping on the table where they cut the fabrics. Every day after work he went to repair the city ruins. He was actually awarded an honorary badge for his active work in restoring the city. Later he worked as a manager of a large department store. My father prayed three times a day; he had a tallit and tefillin. There was no rabbi in Tallinn, but a synagogue was operating in a small old building. My father often went to this synagogue. My father died in Tallinn in 1984. Some time after his death I was issued an official document affirming that he had been subject to unlawful repression.