

David Wainshelboim, With Sister Rahil, Grandmother Sarrah, And Cousin Mikhail



This is my family. This is a remake of the family photograph that my aunt Hona had in Israel: on the left is my grandmother Sarrah Selewskaya, I am beside her wearing a white shirt, on my right is my sister Rahil, standing is my cousin , my aunt Tania's son, Mikhail. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1934.

My maternal grandfather, Avrum Selewski, born in Kishinev in the 1860s, was involved in trade when he was young. When he married my grandmother Sarrah, he became a supervisor at the mill. The mill belonged to a wealthy Jewish man. Avrum's family lived in a small house by the mill. My grandfather was short, wore a kippah or a yarmulka, had a beard and mustache, but despite his plain appearance, my grandfather was known for his intelligence and prudence. My grandfather was very religious. He went to the synagogue on Friday, Saturday and on holidays. On weekdays he prayed at home with his tallit and tefillin on. Grandfather Avrum died in 1930. My grandmother Sarrah, a quiet and kind woman, always wearing a dark dress, a snow-white apron and a matching kerchief, moved in with us. She lived with us till the Great Patriotic War.

The oldest in the family was my mother's sister Tania, born in 1888. All I remember about her is that she was married and worked in trade. Aunt Tania and her son Mikhail failed to evacuate in 1941. They perished in the ghetto in Kishinev, and her husband perished at the front.

My parents got married in 1922. In 1923 my older sister Rahil was born, and in 1928 I, David Wainshelboim, came into this world. Some time later our family moved to a bigger apartment on Alexandrovskaya Street, where I started walking, talking and studying the surrounding world. There were four rooms in the apartment: a living room, my parents' bedroom, two children's rooms and my grandmother Sarrah's room. The rooms were nicely furnished with dark polished furniture, there were velvet drapes on the windows, and a fringed tablecloth on the table. I liked playing hide-and-seek behind it.