

Salvator Israel In The Synagogue In Sofia



This is my husband Salvator Israel in the Neolog synagogue in Sofia in 1982. After Salvator retired in 1974, he became chairman of the Spiritual Council in the synagogue. He started the process of its restoration. The Ministry of Culture told him that they would provide money for the restoration, only if the synagogue was turned into a concert hall. My husband objected and fought very hard to prevent this. In the end, he managed to preserve the original functions of the synagogue. While he held that position, he managed to attract many Jews to the synagogue. All the elderly Jewish men went to the services. He was the first to build a sukkah in its yard on Sukkot. He also used to prepare a short essay explaining the origins of each holiday. He knew the Bible in great detail. This tradition to write a brochure explaining the history of the holiday is still preserved today. In 1978 my husband received the honorary title 'Honored Doctor' and in 1983 he received the title 'A People's Doctor'. Salvator died on 8th March 1986. He was an exceptional man - well read, wise, with a great sense of humor. He knew seven languages. His mother tongues were Ladino and German; he also spoke Hebrew, French and Russian very well. Now the restoration process of the synagogue is almost completely finished and if he could see it, he would be very happy and proud. We organized a religious funeral for him. There were many people present. First we gathered in the ritual hall, then we buried him in the Jewish cemetery in Sofia. We observed the main traditions - we covered the coffin with a special blanket, my older son Marcel said the prayer. In line with the ritual we served only salty food at the funeral and mastika. At least this is what I remember, because I was not myself that day.