

Shyfra And Yakov Sohis



These are my parents Shyfra and Yakov Sohis. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1911, in the private studio of Gisher. My mother is wearing a wig, an expensive gown and has a golden chain on her chest. My father doesn't have his kippah on, though he usually wore it.

My mother was born in Kishinev in 1877. She was short, had a nice physique, big blue eyes and dark hair. She was extremely kind and gentle. My mother was the oldest child in the family and the family couldn't afford to pay for her complete education. That's why my mother finished four years in the gymnasium and got married at the age of 16.

My father was born in 1869 in Kishinev. My grandfather insisted that my father finished a yeshivah. He was very well educated in Judaism. He knew the Talmud and Tannakh and was interested in the Jewish philosophy. In his youth he worked with my maternal grandfather, Gersh Iris. That was when my father met my mother. They liked each other and got married in 1893. Of course they had a traditional wedding under the chuppah. After she got married my mother wore a wig that Jewish women were required to wear. After the wedding my parents settled down with Grandpa Gersh. After my grandpa died, my parents opened a dairy store that became the start of my father's business. At that time my father owned a store of men's clothes on Aleksandrovskaya Street. I know little about his business, though I know that my father made charity contributions to the Jewish community like all other wealthy Jews.

I remember that my parents loved each other dearly. My father was a big tall man with a small beard and moustache. When he would introduce my mother to somebody, he would say, 'You see this small woman. Oh, she is worth a fortune!' There was a warm atmosphere at home, they had

such a beautiful life together. I never heard one swear-word at home. My mother was so smart, kind and gentle. She always wore a hat to go out, dressed like a dame, and wore her golden jewelry. I remember that she had a nice silver purse - it looked like silver net. My father was very witty. He was a big humorist and could make people laugh. I never saw him sad. He was always full of energy and optimism. He wasn't fanatically religious; there was even some frivolity in his character, but he prayed every day. He never started anything without praying first. He started every morning with a prayer with his tallit and tefillin on. My father always had a yarmulke on at home.