

Rev. Isaac Gulis, my father

(1907-1974)

by Abe Gulis 2021



My father married my mother Fruma (Jane) Tzerna Rivkind in Lithuania on 11/11/1925. After their wedding they made their way to Hamburg to board a ship to England and from there sailed to Cape Town. They were met by my Mother's uncle, Mr Geffen, and stayed with them until a position became available in Bredasdorp for a single man. Uncle Geffen suggested that my father accept the position, while my mother should remain with them. He served there for about a year, when one Sunday at an afternoon tea in the town, a traveler passing by popped in, and recognizing my Father asked where his wife was (everyone there was shocked as they had been trying to make a *shidduch* for him). The congregation insisted my mother join them.

From Bredasdorp they moved to Laingsburg and thereafter to Beaufort West where they stayed for 7 years. My sisters Channa and Salome were born there. Their next position was in Paarl where he served for 11 years and where I and my sister Malka were born.

Then they came to Woodstock and Salt River Hebrew Congregation in 1947, for 17 years. This was followed by his involvement in a new programme initiated by the Board of Education for Jewish teachers to teach Religious Instruction at the Public Schools such as in Muizenberg and Wynberg. He also taught Hebrew at Herzlia School and Cheder at Durbanville. He served for about 3 years at the Gardens Shul as Chazan Sheini and assisted in many other places when called on e.g. *Sheichet* at Sheiffers Poultry (they offered a tikkie for each chicken slaughtered) and as an extra *Sheichet* before Pesach and Rosh Hashanah.

My father was instrumental in getting the first Pension Fund for Hebrew Teachers established, despite facing great negativity from the community at the time. Later all teachers at Herzlia

School were included and now benefit from the same Fund. Included at the time was a clause stating that should a member wish to make leave before Pensionable Age, to make *Aliyah*, he would still receive the pension at the due date.

My Father served for many years on the committee of the Jewish Sick Relief Society (Bikur Cholim) and OMER (Jewish Ecclesiastical Association).

Chana Gulis, his daughter, worked for the Zionist Fed in Cape Town and after making *Aliyah* worked for the Zionist Fed in Israel and was a friendly familiar face at the front desk for many new SA olim.

My father passed away in 1974, in Cape Town, where he had served the Jewish community with dedication for so many years. My mother then made *Aliyah* to join her two daughters in Israel, myself following a few years later.

May his memory be for a blessing