

Who: Solmaz

From: Dad from Iran and Mum from El Salvador

When: 1995



Hi I'm Solmaz. My dad came from Iran, he wanted to be free. He couldn't go to school or study what he wanted and he would be imprisoned in his house. He couldn't mix with other children because he was Bahai. So he left when he was 16 and travelled up to Turkey. When dad escaped up through Turkey he took pictures of his family and a prayer book.

He first came to New Zealand 21 years ago and 13 years ago they came to Nelson.

When he was in Israel, he met mum, she's from El Salvador. She was sweeping the temple and he was fixing lights. They got married in El Salvador.

They brought gold necklaces with their names and golden rings. Mum brought a Spanish dress.

Solmaz' father, Baki Bakhshi came to New Zealand as a refugee from Iran in 1987. In 1993 he went to Haifa in Israel to work as a volunteer at the Baha'i World Centre. There he met his wife Dayanira who was also working at the centre on a hostess programme, greeting Baha'I followers from all over the world.

Just before they married they travelled to Turkey to meet Baki's parents who had been granted temporary passports to go and meet Dayanira. Neither his parents or his sister were eligible for passports.

From Nelson Evening Mail, Mon June 29, 1998

