



Rudi's Story, Chapter 7

And your faith has been a constant throughout your life, I know you're a committed member of the Reform synagogue, can you explain to me how you have felt about your faith through your lifetime?

Well both my grandparents - both my grandfathers were very religious people. As I mentioned earlier I didn't know my paternal grandfather and hardly my maternal grandfather, though I did know him, but I knew they were very, in Yiddish, 'frum' people. Frum is the Yiddish expression for being very religious. And we had a religious home, we had mezuzahs on the door, these were little scrolls where the main Jewish prayer is written on the doorposts of all the doors, and we went to synagogue certainly on all the festivals although my father worked on the Saturday so I was his representative in synagogue. I went fairly regularly to services. So being Jewish was - I drank it in with my mother's milk as it were. And when we came to Bradford the first thing we did was to go and visit the rabbi of the Orthodox synagogue because we were orthodox in a mild sort of way. And as I related the minister's wife took me to the school and so we joined the Orthodox synagogue as a matter of course. And again we tended to go to all the services, again my father worked on the Saturday but I had to go to school on a Saturday. But we certainly went to all the services and it was second nature for me to be a conscious Jew. After the war one of the members of the Reform synagogue had persuaded my parents, because there were so few members in the Reform synagogue and there was a danger that it might go under, to change sides and go from the Orthodox to the Reform and I can tell a little story about that. It was one Rosh Hashanah. We used to walk to synagogue, two miles and two miles back, and my parents had already joined the Reform synagogue but I hadn't. I was fresh out of the army and they said "Well we have joined the Reform synagogue, I think you should as well" and I wasn't at all keen, not at all. And as we were walking into town the Reform synagogue was in Bowland Street which came off the right side of Manningham Lane and a few hundred yards further on the Orthodox synagogue was in Spring Gardens on the left hand side of Manningham Lane and as we walked I knew that I had to come to a decision within the next half hour and I was debating furiously what should I do, should I go with my parents to the Reform or by myself to the Orthodox. And when it came to Bowland Street I decided to go with my parents into the Reform. It was a big step which I had to decide

upon in a matter of minutes. But I've been very happy in the Reform synagogue. I eventually joined the council and became treasurer, chairman and then became chairman for the second time, I'm still chairman. There's been a bit of a revival in the synagogue just in the last few months, it was getting very dicey if it would survive.