

One of the features of the festival is a unique opportunity for all the participants to openly discuss the demonstrated material straight after the demonstration. This helps to stimulate the participants since this is the only event where they can get professional evaluation of their work.

- What was your work about?

- Labour migration – is so pressing for our country that sometimes it seems that the subject is completely exhausted by all the media. But I've found a quite unusual story, which, perhaps, is very sorrowful but quite instructive. The story is about a young woman who in her 34 years was left alone with her 5 children. She faces so many problems and obstacles that hardly makes both ends meet. Finally, she leaves her children with her old mother and goes to Russia in search of job. She works in a crew of constructors but as they complete the construction of a building their customers walk away with their money. She has to return back home to her problems. Such problematic life forces her to go to Russia again. She has nothing to do but to fulfill the ranks of labour migrants. This time she was legally protected but the economic crisis hit unexpectedly. The story is not finished but if recommendations of our experts help someone, we will know that our efforts are not useless. We are really striving to protect our labour migrants from all those troubles they may face at the corners of the long way called "labour migration" (Author's note: the article "Ordinary Maria or one more migrant story" was published in the "Mir Novostei. Tajikistan" newspaper, №9, page 10).

- What was the most amazing in the holy land of Israel?

- I can talk about that forever... It is so appealing there that the surrounding things seem like paradise! The Dead Sea is a fantastic place! It is approximately 400 meters below sea level which means that this is the lowest elevation on the Earth's surface on dry land. There is no other place in Israel with such a wild and bare nature that surrounds the Dead Sea. The most unusual thing about swimming in the Dead Sea is that you can't really swim, you just float and you will never sink. You can even read a newspaper while floating, if you keep balance. The concentration of minerals and salts in the Dead Sea is several times the salinity of the oceans. Isn't it a miracle? The Dead Sea is continually fed water from the rivers and streams coming down off the mountains that surround it. But the kicker is this....no rivers drain out of the Dead Sea. There are no fish or any kind of swimming, squirming creatures living in or near the water. Masada located some 20km away from the Dead Sea. Masada is situated atop an isolated rock cliff, overlooking the Dead Sea. Herod the Great, the master builder, built this fortress as a refuge for himself. Even though we had the whole day to sightsee the fortress we had no time to see all the corners of it. People come to the Red Sea not only to swim in it, but mainly to write their wishes down, pack them into vessels and throw into the sea. They say all the wishes come true. I also made a wish and threw my vessel into the sea.

- What kind of wish?

- I'm not going to tell you about my personal wish, but I was not egoistic when making my wishes. I have also written several wishes for my close friends wishing them to find their happiness! I wished Parvona speedy recovery since she was also going to attend the festival in Israel (Author's note: Parvona Ahrori, director of Asia-Plus radio, sustained serious injuries in a car accident), I also made several wishes for my relatives, close friends and hope they will come true. You know, I'm knocking on wood, but something is already coming true!

- Did you like Israeli cooking?

- Israeli food is immensely diverse and original. But I'll open the secret and say that I prefer our traditional food since there is one key principle in Israel: religious Jews eat kosher food only. One more thing is that only those kosher restaurants survive there which meet the requirements of observing rabbis. (Author's note: The word "*kosher*" is the Anglicized form of the *Hebrew* *kasher*, which literally means "good" or "proper." Kashrut is a set of Jewish dietary laws.) This is the right food and I understand that it is very useful and healthy, but I failed to explain that to my spoiled stomach. Apart from its kosher concept, Jewish food is notable for Arab influence and generous use of various flavourings (sesame, cinnamon, mint, coriander) which make local

dishes so unique. Hummus – is a Levantine Arab dip or spread made from cooked, mashed chickpeas, blended with tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, salt and garlic can be found in almost every menu. There is another dip called “tahini” - a paste made from sesame seeds, onion and tomatoes. These two dips are usually served with pitta – a traditional Arab flat cake. Falafel - a ball or cake of ground spiced chickpeas, deep-fried and often served with pitta bread. As for fish – grilled Saint Peter’s fish is a traditional dish. You can also taste marinated tunny fish. Sweeties are very popular in Israel. Pahlavas, nut cookies, caramel pudding, sugared fruits and many other tasty things, but, to tell the truth, I’m not the one who likes sweets.

- Is it true that organizers consider Tajikistan as a potential place to conduct the 5th festival?

- Why not? Tajikistan is a beautiful country and we have all chances to amaze the guests. Our nature is adorable, our cooking is very nourishing, our people are very friendly, the weather is always good for rest! But speaking seriously, this issue will be considered by our culture, TV and radio officials. It’s quite easy to say: let’s conduct the next festival in Tajikistan, in Israel or in Riga! But you have to prepare everything for such event one year in advance. Let’s hope that senior officials will find a common language and will definitely help them to organize the event!

- Irina, I’m trying to understand where do you take your energy from? I remember you used to drive newcomers, worried for their first appearance, for errors during live broadcasts... and same picture can be observed during the past seven years. You tried to work on TV and, if I’m not mistaken, it was good. But why do you still deal with the radio?

- This is a frequently asked question. I used to say that “radio is like an incurable disease”, but now I think that you should not only develop, but also find your mission in both what you do and personal life. One wise man said that “everything is good in it’s season”. And I do not shy to look in my colleagues’ eyes, it’s a pleasure when my voice is recognized, it’s a pleasure to meet people who like the one who works on “Sadoi Dushanbe”, but I just think that it’s a high time for big changes...

- You look mysterious today...

- Maybe this is the influence of Israel? (laughs). I’d like to wish everyone strong health and we should treat each other in a more simple manner, forgive our offenders and be happy for successes of our relatives, find more time for good deeds because we have only one life. Why spending it on lack of talent, anger or depression? Let’s celebrate each day and thank God for our lives! Because this is the most important...



**Academics L. Zolotarevskii and L. Nikolaev
during delivery of the Diploma Irina Umarova**

Interview by Behrooz ZEVAROV

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