

Yasef (Jozef) Baruh



This is a photo of my father when he was a young man. My father always wore a derby hat and sported a cane. He was always in a suit and tie. My mother used to wish he would wear more casual clothes; she used to wish he would forget his cane on the tram on his way to and from work!

My father Josef Baruh's name was Yasef Mishon Baruh. [in his documents] He was born in 1902, and died in 1982. He belonged to a part in the society of the time, which could have been regarded as being intellectual. He was educated in Saint Joseph. [A French catholic high school] My father worked at an Italian bank called Banco di Roma [Bank of Rome], and didn't do any other work in his life. Josef Baruh would go to work carrying a walking stick, and wearing a derby on his head, and "getr" on his socks. [In Turkish this is an ornamental chain worn on the upper part of the socks]. My mother did not like him carrying the walking stick at all. She said that this made him look old. Josef Baruh paid and served in the military for a shorter period of time. He worked as a cleaner at a Military Hospital during his military service. I remember my father as a literary man with a beautiful handwriting. There was also a book named "Bareme" [classification system], which my father had written. He had written this book which consisted of mathematical charts providing more convenient methods for the conversion of foreign currencies. He stayed awake late at night in order to complete the book. By the time the book was published, people had begun to use calculating machines, and did not find the book as helpful as expected. He was terribly disappointed that his efforts had been in vain. His sensitive nature couldn't handle this, he got sick, and was diagnosed with the Parkinson disease in 1945. In those years, the Parkinson disease wasn't that known. There was no treatment for the disease, and nothing to stop it from spreading. I felt very sad when this diagnosis was made. It was very painful for me to think of such a well-spoken man

with such beautiful handwriting, as my father losing his abilities. He would prepare all the billboards that hung on the walls in my class during the "Domestic Goods Week" [Entertaining events were prepared at schools to encourage the students to use Turkish products, and to prevent them from fancying European goods. Children were thought to eat fruits grown in Turkey.] In this way, I had become popular amongst my teachers. My father regularly read a lot of books. He used to put his initials on every book he read to prevent them from being read for the second time. The newspapers of the time, like Journal D'Orient and Stamboul were delivered till Ortakoy, just for my father and his few friends.

When he retired from the Banco di Roma, my father was given a medal, depicting Romulus and Remus, symbols of Rome. Only, my husband went to that ceremony. Neither the wives nor the daughters were invited to such ceremonies at that time. The women did not take part in the social life fully yet. They didn't participate in business relations either. I have kept the medal for years and have given it to my son now for it to be passed on to future generations. My son placed it in a nice corner at his house. My father went to my husband's office for long years after he retired. He took care of the correspondence work in my husband's office. And my husband benefited from my father's banking and foreign language knowledge. My father regularly took his lunch box with him. He never ate outside. Eating outside would be an unnecessary expense and also harm the stomach. When the meals were prepared the amount of food needed for the lunch boxes the next day was taken into consideration. Very rarely, when food was not available, then he would eat a rice pudding from the sweet shop